

The Calgary School through the lens of Alexis de Tocqueville

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to further expand on the intellectual influence of Tocqueville in the Calgary School's work. It is aimed at trying to better understand the Calgary School and Alexis de Tocqueville. This thesis tries to address a lack of literature on the Calgary School, there is a lack of literature on them and oftentimes they are dismissed out of hand by left-leaning scholars and critics. This project is not an apology for the Calgary School merely to better understand their ideas and the influences behind them. To accomplish this goal three different themes are used that correspond to the first three chapters of this thesis. The overall common thread or unifying theme used to tie Tocqueville and the Calgary is a critique of the trajectory of liberal democracy, that while critical still supports the basic tenets of liberal democracy. This leads to an understanding that is more subtle, and more generous reading of neoconservative thought in Canada. Categorizations such as neoconservative can in fact be misleading and misrepresentative of the actual thought and ideas of the authors at hand. There are firm philosophical underpinnings to the thought of the Calgary School. Neoconservatism can be perspective that is both sensitive to the values of liberal democracy and critical of the problems inherent with it. While not without its issues, neoconservatism deserves to have its influences more thoroughly investigated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 1: The Mild Despotism of Bureaucracy and Centralization	8
Chapter 2: The Tyranny of the Majority in Canada	15
Chapter 3: Democratic Individualism and Self-Interest Well-Understood	22
Chapter 4: Political Theories in Tocqueville and the Calgary School	29
CONCLUSION	38

Introduction:

This project consists of three different themes which aim to understand the work of the Calgary School through the lens of Alexis de Tocqueville. These should be viewed as separate but together as contributing to an understanding of several academics at the university of Calgary, commonly referred to collectively as the Calgary School, through the lens of the French philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville. This methodology allows for broader examinations and conclusions on conservative political thought in Canada. Evaluating each of these Calgary School thinkers through the lens of Tocqueville will accomplish a better understanding of the nature of conservative political thought in Canada. This project is important to address a lack of literature on conservative political thought in Canada. It is an evaluation of both the work of several Calgary school authors and Tocqueville in an attempt to further understand important texts by Tocqueville such as *Democracy in America* and *The Old Regime*, as well as works by the Calgary School and the relationship between them.

This thesis is aimed at trying to address the fact that conservative political thought in Canada is often unfairly analysed by the left. Conservatism in Canada is not a shallow strain of thought as often posited by leftist commentators, but instead has a firm grounding in the work of Tocqueville. Conservatism contains fundamental ideas about the values of liberal democracy and offers critiques concerning the direction of liberal democratic regimes. Many of these ideas can be linked back to Tocqueville's work in different ways. This shows how this strain of thought has deeper intellectual roots than it is often credited for by many commentators and deserves to be analysed as such.

While it is still valuable to disagree with the basic tenets held by the Calgary School and conservative political thought in Canada, these ideas should not be dismissed out of hand. Better criticisms of the Calgary School can be given because of a more subtle understanding and interpretation of their work. As many critics are unwilling to analyse these academics on their own terms, this thesis is important as it contributes a better understanding of Canadian conservative political thought instead of disregarding and overlooking all ideas held by conservatives in Canada.

An example of some of the accusations that have been leveled against the Calgary School comes from their fellow academic Shadia Drury. Drury is incredibly critical of Stephen Harper, whom she sees as a result of the teachings of the Calgary School and a populist. She sees the critiques offered about liberal democracy as dangerous, and the populist response to these critiques as something that would restrict citizens rights.¹ These sorts of accusations also find a place in the popular media, where peer review does not interfere with the product of more sensational journalism. Flanagan is accused (incorrectly) of arguing against Louis Riel as a hero figure and accused correctly of being against aboriginal rights, although the terms of his arguments are confused. Morton and Knopff are accused of taking 'pot-shots' at the Charter of Rights and Freedoms purely for reasons of advancing the social conservative agenda on abortion and same-sex marriage- again without any reference to the substance of their arguments in the books and articles in question.²

¹ Drury, Shadia. "The Rise of Neoconservatism in Canada," *Humanist Perspectives*, No. 177 (Summer 2011): 8.

² Marci McDonald, "The Man Behind Stephen Harper." *The Walrus*. Last modified May 1, 2020.

These are the sorts of the claims that are usually put out by left-leaning scholars and journalists. While this work is not an apology for the Calgary School, to adequately evaluate their work, the principle of a more charitable reading needs to be applied. Again, this sort of reading can lead to more targeted criticisms of their work and not ideologically motivated deliberate misinterpretations that only serve to increasingly polarize the political issues at question. This project will serve to both expand on and correct existing critiques and evaluations of the Calgary School and conservatism in Canada.

Some of the work that has been done so far on the topic of intellectual influences is by Alberta-based Quebec scholar Frederic Boily. Boily demonstrates that the most well-known intellectual influences of the Calgary School are Hayek, Voegelin, Tocqueville and Locke.³ These are influences that were also found to varying degrees in the politics of Stephen Harper. For Frederic Boily, Hayek, Voegelin, Tocqueville, and Locke help show both the overall structure of thought and the justification behind many of the Calgary School's arguments. These authors constitute in Boily's mind an "intellectual resource"⁴ that help readers understand the nature of the Calgary School and conservatism in Canada. While some work has been done by Boily and his co-authors commenting on how Morton and Knopff reference some of Tocqueville's ideas in their examination of the Canadian judicial system the literature does not go beyond this in linking Tocqueville to the Calgary School and conservatism in Canada.

As mentioned, Drury worked alongside the members of the Calgary School. Her work has been to document the influence of Leo Strauss on conservatism in both Canada and the United States. She ties Strauss's political influence to the neoliberal or neoconservative agenda of Ronald Reagan in the United States.⁵ Drury has also expanded on this thesis and shown how this American brand of conservatism has come to Canada through the Calgary School.⁶ She paints the Calgary School as propagating an American brand of neoconservatism distinctly different from the usual Canadian-British influenced toryism that prevailed before Harper.⁷ However, the exact textual nature of the link between Strauss and the Calgary School is unclear. Drury claims that Stephen Harper, the product of the Calgary School, meant to do away with the rule of law in favor of populism.⁸ While Strauss did write on the esotericism needed for philosophy - the exact links with the positions of the Calgary School writers and Stephen Harper are unclear and Dr. Drury has faced severe criticism for unearthing a non-existent 'conservative conspiracy'.⁹

Some work has been done on Tocqueville and Canada most notably by Stéphane Dion, Liberal cabinet minister and later opposition leader. While Tocqueville did not write as much on Canada as America and France, he did have some things to say on the Canadian debate between

³ Boily, Frederic. "Genèse de l'ouvrage" in *Stephen Harper: De L'École Calgary au Parti Conservateur: Les Nouveaux Visages du Conservatisme Canadien*. Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 2007. 6.

⁴ Boily, Frederic, Natalie Boisvert et Nathalie Kermoal. "Portrait intellectuel de l'école de Calgary. Définition et influence" *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, (2005), 175.

⁵ Drury, Shadia. *Leo Strauss and the American Right*. 1997.

⁶ Drury, Shadia. "The Rise of Neoconservatism in Canada." 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2

⁸ Marci McDonald, "The Man Behind Stephen Harper." *The Walrus*. Last modified May 1, 2020.

⁹ Foster, Peter. "School for paranoia: The not-so-scary 'school' behind Stephen Harper," *National Post*. January 28, 2006.

federalism and Quebec Independence.¹⁰ Dion observes a debate in the literature between two positions on Tocqueville's attitude towards Canada. The first is attributed to Pierre Trudeau (who also wrote on Tocqueville and Canada before he became prime minister) who interpreted Tocqueville as a supporter of federalism particularly in the Canadian context.¹¹ This position is contrasted against that of Jacques Vallées who has collected the writings of Tocqueville in Canada and believes that Tocqueville wanted the Quebecois to retake their nationality.¹² Dion's position is that whether or not Tocqueville saw the assimilation of Quebec as inevitable is unclear, what Tocqueville observed was a tension between the tenets of liberalism and Quebec nationalism that remains unsolved.¹³

To expand on this literature an approach that is sensitive to the relative contexts of the authors discussed is used. This is not an entirely contextual approach nor an entirely textualist approach, looking for timeless truths. Instead of adhering to these methodological labels, a more general argument is made that the three themes which form the focus for the first three of chapters of this project are three different critiques of democracy found in both Tocqueville's work and the work of the Calgary School. A critique of the executive system (democratic despotism), a critique of the legislative system (the tyranny of the majority) and a critique of democratic society (democratic individualism) are found in various works by Tocqueville.¹⁴ These three themes or general critiques of democracy are also found in various forms in the writings of Tom Flanagan, Barry Cooper, and Rainer Knopff, who form the core of what is called the Calgary School. The following chapters aim at understanding Tocqueville in parallel with the Calgary School. To understand the ideological, political, and theoretical underpinnings of the thoughts of Flanagan, Cooper and Knopff connections are made to specific ideas in Alexis de Tocqueville. Furthermore, each of these thinkers illustrate the role of the scholar as it changes in history and how each member of the Calgary School represents different aspects of Tocqueville's own methods of thinking and writing.

The method of using common themes or common critiques of democracy throughout the writings of the Calgary School and Tocqueville was chosen instead of using a methodology of intellectual history informed by Pocock¹⁵ and Skinner.¹⁶ Intellectual history could be used in order to try to find commonalities in an intellectual tradition of neoconservatism. Neoconservatism defined this way is as an ideology holding an emphasis on deregulation, small

¹⁰ Dion, Stéphane. "Tocqueville, Le Canada Français et la Question Nationale" *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (August 1990): 501.

¹¹ Trudeau, Pierre-Elliott. *Le fédéralisme et la société canadienne-française*, (Montréal: Les Éditions HMH, 1967), p. VI.

¹² Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Tocqueville au Bas Canada*. Ed. Vallées, Jacques. (Montréal: Les Éditions du Jour, 1973), 9.

¹³ Dion, Stéphane. "Tocqueville, Le Canada Français et la Question Nationale." 505.

¹⁴ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. & Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Pocock, J.G.A. "The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry." *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.

¹⁶ Skinner, Quentin. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas." *History and Theory*, vol. 8, no. 1, (1969). 28.

government, and individualism.¹⁷ While these ideas are found in the critiques of democracy offered by Tocqueville and the Calgary School the Cambridge School method was not used. Even though the method used differs from that offered by the Cambridge School, an acknowledgment and discussion of the context of the authors discussed, particularly the Calgary School is included. Even though the authors of the Calgary School are examined through the lens of Alexis de Tocqueville, none of these authors is analysed in a way that would draw ‘timeless truths’ from their texts. It is in this way that this method can still be sensitive to the contexts of these authors and avoid some of the problems associated with textual analysis that the Cambridge School bring up.

There are significant differences between the way in which context is discussed in this project and the way set out by the Cambridge school. This is because the Cambridge school are more interested in the analysis of older texts and contexts than the ones associated with the Calgary School. Authors such as Cooper, Knopff and Flanagan are recent Canadian authors with writings dating back for a period of history of only forty years. In Canadian history this means they are writing about events such as the introduction of the Charter, the rise of the Supreme Court¹⁸ and later the rise of the Reform Party and the election of Stephen Harper.¹⁹

Acknowledging this context helps to avoid some of the pitfalls illuminated by the Cambridge School. When using textualist methods oftentimes this kind of method will create meanings that could not have been intended by the original authors of the texts being analysed.²⁰ This is understood as a certain form of misreading in which contemporary meanings are added to older texts.²¹ This is a problem with purely textual methodology, and it is for this reason that context remains important. However, the texts analysed in this project differ in nature as neoconservatism is a recent phenomenon in Canadian politics. The same concerns held by the Calgary School concerning the Charter and Stephen Harper are still relevant today. In these matters of recent history, the problems brought up by the Cambridge School are not as relevant.

The work of the Calgary School is therefore taken partly in a contextual way. Tocqueville is relevant to their context as he offers critiques of liberal democracy and more specifically offers critiques of the future of liberal democracy. The Calgary School use similar arguments and critiques as those used by Tocqueville to critique the trajectory of liberal democracy. Therefore, there is a commonality of context between Tocqueville and the Calgary School. Tocqueville was interested in prophesizing about problems that would arise as democracies advanced into the future. In the Canadian context the Calgary School are also writing about the decline of liberty in Canadian democracy. This reflects ideas found in Tocqueville’s works on American and French democracy. Tocqueville’s critiques from the 1800s can be applied to the context of conservatism in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s because the Calgary School’s work takes for granted a continuity of context. The way in which Tocqueville’s ideas are used by the Calgary School is evaluated with this context in mind. The Calgary School use Tocqueville’s predictions about the

¹⁷ Farney, James and David Rayside. *Conservatism in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 11 December 2013), 4.

¹⁸ Morton F.L. & Rainer Knopff. *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party*. (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2000).

¹⁹ Flanagan, Thomas. *Waiting for the Wave*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009).

²⁰ Skinner, Quentin. “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas.” *History and Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1969), 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

future of liberal democracy. In both cases the authors concerned are looking forward to the future problems faced by liberal democracy. Therefore, the Calgary school critique is dealt with because the Calgary School and Tocqueville are not analysed with “timeless truths”²² in mind but instead with some acknowledgment of context.

This method of common themes is one that treats the Calgary School within their own context and acknowledges a continuity of context between Tocqueville and these authors. This is partly a contextual analysis because what the Calgary school are criticizing in Canada reflects what Tocqueville was criticizing more generally in America and France. However, Tocqueville can be separated from his context because more generally, he deliberately writes in the extended context of liberal democracy’s ongoing historical trajectory. If Canada is a liberal democracy particularly of the sort Tocqueville was interested in the context remains similar. Even if this continuity should be called into question, the Calgary School assume they are writing in the same context and view their criticisms of liberal democracy as being in the same context as Tocqueville’s own analysis.

Many works written by the various members of the Calgary School directly reference Tocqueville’s ideas. For instance, there are references to Tocqueville’s examination of the American judiciary in *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party* by Rainer Knopff, as well as reference to his statements on civilized and barbaric peoples in *First Nations? Second Thoughts* by Tom Flanagan. However, what is more important than these oblique references are the broader similarities in their treatments of Canadian political issues to Tocqueville’s examination of the newfound democracies of America and France and other more general divisive issues within liberal democracy.

It is also important to note that this project relies on a reading of Tocqueville through the interpretive and conceptual approach taken by Harvey C. Mansfield using the version of the primary work used by Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, that is edited, translated and with introduced by Mansfield and his late wife, Delba Winthrop. The Mansfield edition, and translation lends itself to a reading of Tocqueville that is particularly useful for understanding the thought of the Calgary School. This is especially true when considering the apparent misclassification of this group of academics - as neoconservatives. Mansfield has also been treated to this misclassification and writes in a way that allows readers to see the underpinnings of classical liberalism that underlies the thought of Tocqueville and then also the Calgary School. The author of this thesis recognizes that editions and approaches to Tocqueville’s writings could be used to conduct further analyses of the relationship between Tocqueville and the Calgary School.

The three themes evaluated in this project are summarized as follows. The first theme is mild despotism. Tocqueville describes this as a ‘state that suffocates individuals with its mildness’.²³ It is the rise of bureaucracy in government after the fall of aristocracy. This change resulted in placing everything in the hands of the state in France. For Tocqueville this meant observing the increasing control of matters from Paris. In the Canadian context it is shown by the rise of abstract rights which is demonstrated by the Meech Lake Accords of 1987. These trends are primarily understood in political science as the rise of federalism which meant increasing dependence of social programs on Ottawa. This debate also falls into concerns about centralization and the value of big governments over small governments which are some of the same issues debated by Reagan and Thatcher.

²² Ibid., 4.

²³ Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*, 65.

The second theme is the tyranny of the majority. This theme addresses the contradiction faced by policy makers within liberal democracies over whether you can overlook individual rights for collective rights. Furthermore, it is fundamentally a moral question of whether the many should be privileged over the few. Alexis de Tocqueville and the Calgary School would say you should not and that you do not have more moral force simply based on numerical superiority. The Calgary School's critique of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau²⁴ parallels Tocqueville's critique of the new philosophers and the new regime leadership in France. It is a criticism of centralization and abstract rights without basis. What happens when the voice of morality is out of control? It is hard to 'go against the grain' of public opinion in places like Canada. These thinkers understand that privileging diversity might counterintuitively lead to exclusion. A symptom of this tyranny of opinion is shown by less and less regional movements in Canada. Freedom of discussion is increasingly limited in the public discourse found in many Western democracies.

The third theme is democratic individualism. This concerns civil society or the social state. It primarily addresses the increasing isolation citizens face in liberal democracies. The character of liberal democracies means that citizens will no longer value self-sacrifice but work for the public good only if it helps themselves. If philosophical value is only found in what is useful this does not inspire greatness of character. People end up retreating from public life to their own families. Increasingly they become invested in personal wealth and material gains, which works against public virtue. Both Tocqueville and the Calgary School are perhaps best characterized as liberals who are at the same time critical of liberalism. Both have arguments and suggestions for how to foster a more aristocratic character for their peoples. Both hesitate to affirm liberal democracy as unqualifiedly good, especially as it tends to become less liberal. Their idea of liberalism focuses on privileging the rights of individuals and not groups whereas the liberals of today are focused more and more on the rights of groups. Bercuson and Cooper arguing in *Deconfederation* that individuals not groups or peoples who have rights is an example of a liberal, position contrary to this.²⁵ The position on groups which is increasingly held by progressive liberal governments is vulnerable to the fact that if all peoples are supposed to be equal, groups cannot have rights in themselves.

These thinkers evaluate trends in their respective regimes and how they impact the character of the peoples within them. These are all broad themes that tie all these thinkers together. Looking at Canadian conservatism through the lens of Tocqueville helps to understand recent ideas in Canadian conservatism more clearly. Caveats should be made to the method of using a series of themes that each of thinkers have inconsistencies within their ideas and these may have been overlooked in some cases.

²⁴ Bercuson, David Jay, and Barry Cooper. *Deconfederation: Canada without Quebec*. (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1991), 105.

²⁵ Bercuson, David Jay, and Barry Cooper. *Deconfederation: Canada without Quebec*, 7.

Chapter 1: The Mild Despotism of Bureaucracy and Centralization

The themes of “mild despotism” and government centralization are central to Tocqueville’s critique of democracies. Tocqueville is not worried about “despotism hostile to liberalism”²⁶ instead Tocqueville is worried about democratic despotism. Mild despotism means that citizens feel incapable and become dependent on the state and their government becomes “a state that suffocates” individuals with its “mildness”.²⁷ In addition to this major theme, Tocqueville has many warnings concerning government centralization and its consequences in newfound democracies such as America and France.

These are two themes that the Calgary School also bring to their various critiques of Canadian politics. A key point of departure for authors such as Morton and Knopff or Bercuson and Cooper, is the introduction of the Charter of Rights as well as the Meech Lake Accord. These events signaled a new era of governmental action in Canada, and a new strain of conservative thought that opposed this trend.

Evaluating this strain of conservative thought and how it relates to Tocqueville’s own ideas brings a greater understanding of Canadian conservative ideas on the role of government in society. The mild despotism of bureaucracy and centralization are undoubtedly negative forces for conservatives as well as for Tocqueville and this chapter seeks to better understand them. It also helps to further understand Tocqueville’s own thoughts and shows the consistencies between his observations on America and France.

At first glance this theme resembles the small government argument presented in right-wing economics. Most notably it resembles the strand of economic thinking that conservatives (in Canada and elsewhere) have focused on as a way to curtail government intervention. The right-wing movement in Canada may be defined as a mixture of these neoconservative ideas (resistance to centralized policies and market regulation) as well as populists and moral conservatives.²⁸ Populists in this context are linked to the Reform tradition in Canada which has also provided criticisms to centralized power and moral conservatives represent the more fundamentalist branch of conservatism that advocates for social policy along religious terms.²⁹ The trends in the centralization of government, as well as the conservative thought that provides the intellectual grounding to critique this centralization and bureaucratization is not new. Indeed, Tocqueville observes a general trend of centralization following and preceding the revolutions in Europe at the time of his writing. This centralization, shown in part by the disappearance of only local municipalities, leads toward bureaucratic despotism in Tocqueville’s own analysis.³⁰

More specifically, in *The Old Regime*, chapter six, book two, “on bureaucratic habits under the old regime” the new government in France is characterized as being afraid of any power outside itself that tries to intervene in public affairs. Specifically, Tocqueville observes that the desires and attitudes of bureaucrats did not really change before and after the French revolution “they seem to shake hands across the abyss of the Revolution which separates them.”³¹ The trend, in France, was to supervise everything from Paris. The centralized administration spread its control over many

²⁶ Mansfield, Harvey C. and Delba Winthrop, “Editor’s Introduction” in *Democracy in America*, xxxv.

²⁷ Ibid.,

²⁸ Farney, James and David Rayside, *Conservatism in Canada*, 7.

²⁹ For further discussion of these terms see page 7 and page 8.

³⁰ Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*, 65.

³¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Old Regime and the Revolution*, 138.

aspects of business and matters that were previously resolved locally.³² Tocqueville further observes that the bureaucratic administration became a social class in itself. Indeed, he says bluntly: “it was the aristocracy of the new society.”³³ This new aristocracy had its own kinds of virtues or honours. The situation in France, before and after the revolution, was anger from the central government for any individual or entity that tried to intervene in public affairs.

This is contrasted against the governments of southern Europe who “take over everything in order to do nothing.”³⁴ In terms of reformers during the revolution we see that their means were all the same, namely to use centralized power of the state to remake everything.³⁵ The government was even suggested to tell farmers how to grow their crops and to reward them with medals when they did well.³⁶ The government was blamed for everything and expected to intervene in everything. The language of dependence is invoked again and again, particularly in the case of taxing the nobles. These were not unexpected results of placing power firmly within a bureaucratic administration. Tocqueville tells us that “the government having thus replaced Providence, it was natural that everyone invoked it in his own need.”³⁷ This meant the subordination of public interest to private interest and replacing a divine god with an administrative one. Tocqueville’s main point throughout is to show that centralization already had a great foundation in France. This theme is also presented in chapter 7 book 3 “How a great administrative revolution had preceded the political revolution, and the consequences that this had” as Tocqueville says: “Individuals already counted on the government more than themselves”³⁸ which as noted resembles the critique of government dependency offered by right-wing thinkers.

The Calgary School’s critique of Pierre Trudeau parallels Tocqueville’s critique of the new philosophers and the new regime leadership in France. It is a criticism of centralization and abstract rights. In particular, the authors of the Calgary School focus on a period of political change in Canada beginning in the 1980s under Trudeau. Trudeau was intent on consolidating a national identity for Canada as well as centralizing government decision making processes. Pierre Trudeau’s project meant the differences in the Canadian experience were overridden by a bureaucratic project of unity. This happened through Trudeau’s political agenda to combat French nationalism and bring Quebec into the national fold. Cooper argues that Trudeau is understood to be the last Canadian prime minister to actively oppose the “nationalist myth” of Quebec’s role in Canada.³⁹ Westerners like Cooper were alienated by the 1982 constitutional changes which were supposed to advance Prime Minister Trudeau’s vision of national unity. These changes instead led to an increased role of the federal state, greater fragmentation in Canadian politics and created a “bureaucratic inertia” which promoted greater dependency on centralized in Canada.⁴⁰ This evolution is similar to the slow slide Tocqueville warns against in terms of citizen’s individual power decreasing and the role of the state increasing. The story is also told by Morton and Knopff who say that Trudeau countered Quebec nationalism by promoting a new sense of Canadian

³² Ibid.,

³³ Ibid., 139.

³⁴ Ibid., 141.

³⁵ Ibid., 143.

³⁶ Ibid.,

³⁷ Ibid., 144.

³⁸ Ibid., 237.

³⁹ Cooper, Barry. *It’s the Regime Stupid* (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 2009), 81.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 131.

citizenship through a multicultural agenda.⁴¹ Multiculturalism in this case resulted in centralization. The Canadian government already had centralizing tendencies for reasons of economy, however a multiculturalist agenda in particular required a shift of power to Ottawa to regulate the provinces on this issue.

This kind of centralization and the preservation of national identity is also a reason for a split in conservative thoughts (namely into neoconservatism and toryism). Toryism in Canada effectively ended with Mulroney and the Progressive Conservative Party and neoconservatism rose through Preston Manning's Reform Party (a party seen as populist) and then into Stephen Harper's election. Bercuson notes the initial feelings from Western Canada were favourable to Mulroney.⁴² However, Mulroney promised a change that didn't come and made the government preserve the welfare state and reduce debt.⁴³ The changes that Mulroney promised were initially premised on the classic right wing economic ideal of the 1980s that governments were too big and needed strict cutbacks. Reagan and Thatcher are two examples of politicians that achieved many of these goals.

However, in Canada, Mulroney did not execute these cutbacks as successfully in the opinion of writers like Bercuson.⁴⁴ There was a staunch Tory refusal to cut federal social programs (even with the perception that they would) which meant that Canada's history was not a mirror to America's program to combat economic depression under Reagan. Mulroney's promise to preserve social programs and reduce the debt was therefore overly ambitious.⁴⁵ This leads Bercuson to conclude that Mulroney was simply engaged in "old style patronage" almost on a par with the previous Liberals for misuse of funds and this made Mulroney just another "conservative aberration" from the usual Liberal order in Canadian politics.⁴⁶ This opinion is based on many of the actions Mulroney took while in government. These included bank bailouts⁴⁷ the introduction of new staff positions which lead to further politicization of the bureaucracy⁴⁸ and allowing continuing subsidies for crown corporations rather than privatizing them as promised.⁴⁹ This created a "corporate welfare system...where every corporation relies on the government in the society of "The Great Handout."⁵⁰ The point of using this language is that Brian Mulroney, 'the boy from Baie-Comeau', was altogether too socialist (in economic terms) for western writers such as Bercuson. Socialism in this context is interpreted as economic policy, namely support for welfare systems and regulation of industry by the state. Under this definition authors such as Keynes who support welfare economics (government spending in depression times) are socialist whereas those who suggest limitations to state control of the economy such as Milton Friedman and Friederich Hayek are not. Preserving the welfare state to this degree and not forwarding the other pillar of right-wing economics (privatization) are primarily what distinguishes Mulroney's Tory party from Stephen's Harper's Conservative government thirteen years later. Also, as an Irish

⁴¹ Morton and Knopff, *Charter Revolution and the Court Party* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2000), 105.

⁴² Bercuson, David. *Sacred Trust?* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1986), 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*,

Catholic from Quebec, Mulroney was too sympathetic to Quebec's cause (trying to keep them in the fold) and made decisions contrary to many of the views in Bercuson and Cooper's later book *Deconfederation*. Namely these views are that it would be less work to expel Quebec from Canada than to constantly work to accommodate claims to its special status since Quebec nationalism is a persistent force.⁵¹ In particular they cite the failure of the Meech Lake Accord under Mulroney.⁵² These are two reasons that authors such as Bercuson and Cooper would depart from the Tory agenda in favour of a neoconservative one.

Both Tories and Liberals are accused of centralization and bureaucratization. Bercuson's sometimes writing partner, Cooper says that Liberals had given up on liberalism and that they are "directing the affairs of citizens" making them "subjects... of the bureaucracy."⁵³ He takes a stance against the centralizing impulse of most federal politicians. Cooper directly quotes Tocqueville saying that "when people pay more attention to political matters that have nothing to do with local affairs... they are isolated and then dropped one by one into the common mass."⁵⁴ This passage more than any others shows the debt to Tocqueville in the conservative strand of thinking used to critique centralization. Writing together David Bercuson and Barry Cooper also express a disappointment in the politics surrounding the status of Quebec in Canada. They critique both the federalist view from Ottawa and the independence movement in Quebec. Bercuson and Cooper observe a tension between universal legal rights and particular collective national rights in Canadian politics. They argue that claims to collective rights such as Quebec's desire for special status as a distinct society are flawed and that a proper interpretation of liberal democracy requires equality of individuals in the eyes of the law.⁵⁵ The platform of the Reform Party and later Stephen Harper reflects this tension.

The new Conservative party under Stephen Harper inherited many of the characteristics of the Reform Party. While the new Conservative party was a merger of the Canadian Alliance and the Reform Party, the values of the Canadian Alliance party were largely dissolved into the new Conservative Party.⁵⁶ On the other hand the Reform Party, of which Harper was a member, working closely with its leader Preston Manning lead to a large degree of "populism" a key value for Manning being inherited by Harper's own party.⁵⁷ What is populism in terms of these parties largely considered to be "conservative"? The Reform Party and later the new Conservative party were largely trying to break away from traditional conservatism and fundamentalism and place themselves in the "reform tradition" of Canada which is equated with the term "populism"⁵⁸ by Thomas Flanagan. By reform tradition this means in the tradition of other Western parties such as the Social Credit Party (lead by Preston Manning's father) who suggested radical monetary policy to oppose government intervention in the economy;⁵⁹ i.e., the opposite of the definition supplied

⁵¹ Bercuson, David Jay, and Barry Cooper. *Deconfederation: Canada without Quebec*, 17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vii.

⁵³ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid*, 32.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁵ Bercuson, David Jay, and Barry Cooper. *Derailed: The Betrayal of the National Dream* (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1994), 33.

⁵⁶ Flanagan, Thomas. "Something Blue...? Conservative Organization in an Era of Permanent Campaign," *Canadian Political Science Association*, (2010), 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁸ Flanagan, Thomas. *Waiting for Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning*, 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

for socialism which supports government regulation. Reform parties (which as noted is equated with the term populist party) were parties quite literally interested in the reform of the dominant party platforms available at one time. For example, Louis Riel could be an example of an early Western Reformer, and on the other side of Canada the Quiet Revolution in Quebec (as well as the Bloc Quebecois) would both be considered reform parties or “populist” movements under these definitions.⁶⁰ These parties are not necessarily against “elite control” of society as has become one of the main justifications for current “populist” movements in Europe and the United States. Instead it is challenging the dominant parties at any one time through a justification that “the people” need better representation in government.⁶¹ Interestingly, Flanagan argues that populism is not an ideology but a methodology and one that is inherently flawed.⁶² Flanagan argues that there is no actual “will of the people” and that this means that populism is “incoherent”.⁶³ Flanagan criticizes the Reform Party’s (Preston Manning's) use of the word “consensus” which he believes can never truly apply to a political issue with more than two alternatives.⁶⁴ Flanagan and Manning himself saw that the Reform Party was a platform for Western representation and struggled to obtain voters in Quebec and the Maritimes.⁶⁵ This meant that the definition of “the people” under this party was largely based on regional concerns.

It is true that Canadian politics does follow regional divides. Cooper sees that Western Canada is largely where support for “conservative” parties comes from, while Ontario and especially Toronto is a “Liberal bastion”.⁶⁶ The Liberals are able to win because they are able to “swallow up” regional parties in Western Canada and the Maritimes. For Cooper and many of Calgary School writers, Canada is not a unity but a collection of regional identities. However, since the beginning of Canada’s history the concept of British Empire was brought over to Ontario and Quebec first making them the center of the Empire and carrying an implication that economic policy should work primarily toward their benefit as a trading center.⁶⁷

An example of how this is supported by other authors is shown by Bercuson who also focuses on regionalism in Canada and its negative effects saying that: “confederation was no marriage of love and affection” instead it was convenience.⁶⁸ Central Canada is where votes matter and elections are won and lost.⁶⁹ This is an important thesis for Bercuson - that the federal government does not aim to stimulate industry in the periphery. Furthermore, immigration is limited in these regions and population growth stays low, while the remaining residents in Western Canada and particularly the Maritimes stay dependent on welfare checks from the government.⁷⁰ Bercuson says that federalism won’t work if it uses the belief that what suits the majority suits all. He draws on Canadian historian Arthur Lower to prove this. Lower covered the 1887 Provincial Conference where many premiers asked for less federal power. Bercuson combines this with the

⁶⁰ Ibid.,

⁶¹ Ibid., 22

⁶² Ibid., 23

⁶³ Flanagan, Thomas. “Something Blue...?” 4.

⁶⁴ Flanagan, Thomas. *Waiting for Wave*, 27.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 35

⁶⁶ Cooper, Barry. “Electoral Politics, Political Myths and the Future of Canada.” *VoegelinView*, (2020).

⁶⁷ Ibid.,

⁶⁸ Bercuson, David. *Canada and the Burden of Unity*. MacMillan of Canada. 1977, 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid.,

riots and racial hatred because of Riel's execution in which the federal government stepped in.⁷¹ The moral of combining these two stories is to show the power of central Canadian bureaucracy and federalism over the interests of the periphery provinces.

This central focus has led to regional inequality. There has been an outward flow of resources and people from the peripheries of Canada to the center. One co-author describes this as the "metropolitan tradition" which has appeared in Canadian scholarship as both "staple theory"⁷² and Laurentianism.⁷³ The term Laurentianism was initially coined by Cooper in his book *It's the Regime Stupid* and has been further validated and continued through the work of other scholars such as Darrel Bricker and John Ibbitson in their book *The Big Shift*.⁷⁴ It is taken to be the geographical region around the St. Lawrence river valley, otherwise known as central Canada (Ontario and Quebec). However, it is more than just geographical, and Cooper also points to the beliefs and values of persons in the staff of the CBC, civil servants in Ottawa and many members of parliament as "Laurentian". He will furthermore include institutions such as the Canadian Social Science Council, and also literary authors from University of Toronto such as Northrop Fry and Margaret Atwood who propagate a false myth of Canadian unity.⁷⁵ For Cooper, Laurentian Canada is understood to be the "real Canada" often to the exclusion of Western Canada (Alberta) and the Maritimes, alienating them from the central Canadian agenda.⁷⁶ This agenda or "Laurentian consensus" is that Canada needs unity and its biggest challenge is to keep Quebec. This agenda also implies that equalization payments are necessary, and that Canada needs to protect itself from American culture through institutions such as the CBC. This agenda is aggressively pursued by Liberal leaders such as Ignatieff, Dion, Martin and Chretien who are all Laurentian Liberals under Cooper's definition.⁷⁷ For the rest of Canada, the decision-making center of Canada, Ottawa becomes a place where "taxes do die" leading to increasing divisions of westerners and easterners against Ottawa bureaucrats.⁷⁸

Bercuson is also interested in the movement of industries to Central Canada and the periphery provinces being drawn into dependency. Indeed, this whole discussion hinges on whether group rights and protections have a place in liberal democracy.⁷⁹ Bercuson and other members of the Calgary School do not believe they should. However, central power in Canada has focused on creating group protections through institutions such as the Charter of Rights. Bercuson and others believe that privileging individual freedoms over group rights would help alleviate the dependency experienced by periphery provinces. Popular movements in particular have been able to draw this distinction and fight for individual freedoms. The distinct popular character of many periphery political movements leads Bercuson to conclude that "every important farm movement in the Canadian West prior to 1940" had a republican character.⁸⁰ This implies that republican

⁷¹ Ibid., 10.

⁷² Innis, Harold. *The Fur Trade in Canada*. University of Toronto Press. 1999.

⁷³ Ibid., 87.

⁷⁴ Cooper, Barry. "Fresh News from Laurentian Canada". *Frontier Centre for Public Policy*. no. 2. April 2013. 3.

⁷⁵ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid*, 113.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁷ Cooper, Barry. "Fresh News from Laurentian Canada". *Frontier Centre for Public Policy*. no. 2. April 2013. 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹ Bercuson, David. "Regionalism and Unlimited Identity in Western Canada". 124.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 126.

ideals have been used as a way to combat the focus on Central Canada. Do neoconservatives have traditional constitutional republican values? The Calgary School is neoconservative especially on monetary policy, following in the tradition of reform parties. It means many of their arguments overtly prioritize economics which is different from classical republicanism. What makes the Calgary School (and especially Barry Cooper) more republican is that they argue against the centralization of power in Canada. Other authors, not associated with the Calgary School, have also argued that the creation of a strong executive in Canada is a betrayal of republican principles.⁸¹ Large bureaucracy and centralization are not republican tendencies under this view.

This position is moderated by Ian Brodie, in his book *At the Centre of Government*, in which he argues that there is less central power than most scholars believe exists in Canada and that the prime minister is not a dictator. Brodie favours the Ajzenstat school that current liberal institutions are better than the alternatives.⁸² This position is contrasted against the views of Donald Savoie's book *Governing from the Centre* in which he examines the movement of power towards the federal government (with the caveat that organizational know-how is at a low point for the Prime Minister's Office). Savoie concludes finally based on discussions with ministers that the trend is to follow the party leader on most issues.⁸³ This demonstrates a disagreement in Canadian political science on what form bureaucratic despotism has taken in Canada and whether power has actually been either dispersed or centralized.

The ideas concerning bureaucracy and centralization held by the Calgary School use Tocqueville effectively. The Calgary School concerns themselves with the results of increasing dependency on the federal government in Canada. They are concerned with what happens to the character of a people when everything is done for them by their government. This analysis is Tocquevillian in nature and has not yet been analyzed elsewhere in the literature.

⁸¹ Buckley, F.H. *The Once and Future King*. Encounter Books. 2014. 6.

⁸² Brodie, Ian. *At the Centre of Government*.

⁸³ Savoie, Donald. *Governing from the Centre*.

Chapter 2: The Tyranny of the Majority in Canada

The definition of the term “liberal” is frequently the subject of debate in political science. While by today’s standards both the authors of the Calgary School and Tocqueville are “conservatives” and shed light on conservative thought - through a certain lens they can also be understood as liberals.⁸⁴ Some authors (Harvey Mansfield) have argued that having reservations about the path of democracy such as the fear of the “tyranny of the majority” (which is present in the writings of the Calgary School authors and is perhaps one of Tocqueville’s most well-known maxims) has split the liberal tradition and that those liberals who would acknowledge the idea of the tyranny of the majority are conservatives and have been rebranded in a pejorative sense as “neoconservatives”.⁸⁵

Mansfield illustrates two different kinds of liberalism, one that holds onto individual rights and a more utilitarian liberalism that says individual rights can be overlooked in certain cases.⁸⁶ Tocqueville and the Calgary School would fall into this first definition of liberalism while the political majority in Canada would fall into the second. The tyranny of the majority that both Tocqueville and the Calgary School warn against would override individual rights in favor of collective rights.

Evaluating this theme shows the changing definition of terms such as liberal and conservative. The Calgary School themselves would most likely think of themselves as classical liberals. This chapter further aims to understand whether the Calgary School use the same ideas as Tocqueville when talking about the tyranny of the majority. It also questions the differences between Tocqueville’s evaluation of the tyranny of the majority in America and France.

Tocqueville’s idea of the tyranny of the majority is similar to that of Aristotle’s and the ancients who frequently related democracy to tyranny. It is interesting that Aristotle might have held democracy to be a perverted form of polity in which “the many” are ruling for themselves instead of ruling for the common interest.⁸⁷ When Aristotle examines democratic justice he finds that justice in a democracy is equality but not for everyone, only for equals.⁸⁸ The idea of democratic justice that Aristotle finds is also distinctly utilitarian as he says that: “democratic justice is based on numerical equality, not on merit.”⁸⁹ This is where Aristotle’s idea of democratic justice comes to resemble Tocqueville’s tyranny of the majority. Aristotle says democratic justice is “whatever seems right to the majority” and this means that in a democracy the poor have more power than the rich because they are the majority.⁹⁰

Similarly, to Aristotle, Tocqueville does not accept that many men should have more moral weight than a single individual in society simply based on numerical grounds.⁹¹ The numerical majority in democracy has an “omnipotence” that is dangerous to society, Tocqueville goes so far

⁸⁴ Mansfield, Harvey Jr. “Cucumber Liberalism” in *The Spirit of Liberalism*. Harvard University Press. 1978. 89.

⁸⁵ Ibid.,

⁸⁶ Ibid., 91.

⁸⁷ Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by C.D.C. Reeve. Hackett Publishing Company, 1998. 26.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 79

⁸⁹ Ibid., 176

⁹⁰ Ibid., 177

⁹¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. University of Chicago Press, 2000, 240.

as to say that the majority is an “irresistible force” in a democracy.⁹² What constitutes the force of the majority is public opinion. This is the majority in democracy and everything else becomes an extension of this majority (the executive, juries, and even judges).⁹³ The tyranny of the majority is at once a “material” and “moral” force that affects everything in a democratic society.⁹⁴

The will of the majority will not always be what is in the common interest of all people. As Tocqueville says in Chapter 1 “How one can say strictly that in the United States the People Govern” Tocqueville means the majority governs in the name of the people.⁹⁵ The common good of the people and the will of the majority are therefore not always the same. The fear of the unrestrained power of the majority (or the masses) comes to us both through Aristotle and Tocqueville. However, Tocqueville can give a more specific critique with his experience of new American democracy.

This experience allows Tocqueville to see that the tyranny of the majority is primarily a problem in large-scale governance. Tocqueville examines the township system in New England and seems to find no problems - local administration of matters proceeds smoothly. However, on a federal level it is different, from the beginning the founders of America wished to mitigate popular power by the introduction of representative institutions. These were designed to stop “demagogic manipulation of factious majorities”.⁹⁶ However, Tocqueville is not confident that representation will prevent this manipulation (and indeed populist politics in Canada and the United States rely more and more on factious majorities).⁹⁷ For Tocqueville the majority cannot understand the common good or even have a reason to desire it in the first place. Good men who are busy in their private affairs will be convinced by popular power.⁹⁸ This means that the more virtuous citizens in a democracy may not be the ones running for office. It also means that the will of the majority is to increase popular power but with no assurances that what is the will of the majority is the most just or wise course for society.⁹⁹ While representation may mitigate the will of the people - it is a necessary but not sufficient condition to a healthy democracy in Tocqueville’s opinion (and one would expect students of Tocqueville to share this opinion).¹⁰⁰

The character of the American majority can be contrasted against Tocqueville’s understanding of the French tyranny of the majority leading up to the revolution. The tyranny of the majority in France came from “men of letters” who weren’t involved with public affairs but were concerned with government.¹⁰¹ These writers created an “abstract and literary politics” that was concerned with the original forms of society.¹⁰² It was designed to get rid of more complicated

⁹² Ibid., 241

⁹³ Ibid.,

⁹⁴ Ibid., 243

⁹⁵ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. University of Chicago Press, 2000, 165.

⁹⁶ Mansfield Harvey C. and Delba Winthrop. “Editor’s Introduction” in *Democracy in America*. lv.

⁹⁷ Harper, Stephen J. *Right Here Right Now*. McClelland & Stewart, 4.

⁹⁸ Mansfield Harvey C. and Delba Winthrop. “Editor’s Introduction” in *Democracy in America*. lv.

⁹⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁰¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Old Regime and the Revolution*. Trans. Alan S. Kahan, University of Chicago Press. 1998. 195.

¹⁰² Ibid., 195

and traditional customs in favor of simple ones using the justifications of reason and natural law.¹⁰³ This kind of politics, which had a disgust for old things, seized all writers' minds, influencing even peasants.¹⁰⁴ Previously, the aristocracy in France had been a strong force in society but by the 18th century they had lost their “moral authority” and so writers and philosophers of this nature replaced them.¹⁰⁵ These philosophers and peasants were “demanding too much freedom” which ultimately lead to them getting too much slavery in Tocqueville’s opinion.¹⁰⁶

The character of the tyranny of the majority in Canada falls under the American model, rather than the French model. In Canada and the United States, the tyranny of the majority is characterized by the timidity of giving opinions that are contrary to popular opinion. This means that the majority is not an evil party dominating weaker groups in society, instead it should be understood that the public opinion of the majority often supports collective equality at the cost of individual liberty. In Canada examples of collective equality include indigenous rights movements and Quebec separatist movements. In terms of government the character of the American majority leads them closer to a welfare state and similarly in Canada the majority also leads the government to a welfare state. Applying the concept of the tyranny of the majority to the Canadian context uncovers a ruling political culture for Canada. In Canada collective rights are the ruling culture while "conservative" and reform movements that the Calgary School support are in a minority that privilege individual rights.¹⁰⁷ The doctrine of collective rights is primarily advanced by the Liberal party in Central Canada. The reactions against this dominant way of doing politics are movements from the West (Alberta) which focus more on individual rights. This is the distinction between the two kinds of liberalism that Mansfield finds. It is important as increasingly the reactions against the dominant liberalism of collective rights are labeled as “conservative” but are really a form of liberalism that advocates for individual rights over collective rights. There is a dominant attitude by the Liberals in Canada that diversity should be privileged that conversely overrides and excludes regions and limits their rights.

To combat the tyranny of the majority Tocqueville recommends representation and the division of powers. These are concerns that are also held by some of the Calgary School students. For instance in *Not Quite Supreme* Baker uses Mansfield’s observation that the exercise of powers is a combination of formal rules and actual behaviors which result in the government system (a cooperation of powers between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary).¹⁰⁸ Scholars usually critique legal coordinate theory (of the sort that Baker is advocating for in his book) for being conceptually anarchic - where every official is a law unto themselves - and political society moves away from the basis of the constitution and judicial supremacy.¹⁰⁹ To respond to this objection Baker uses Montesquieu (one of the three authors Tocqueville’s claims to have read every day). Montesquieu argued that the division of powers was a necessary and good condition as unity in institutions would inevitably lead to tyranny.¹¹⁰ Indeed oftentimes arguments for the division of

¹⁰³ Ibid., 196

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 197

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 198

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 199

¹⁰⁷ The term “conservative” references both the politics of the Reform Party and later the Conservative Party of Canada under Stephen Harper.

¹⁰⁸ Baker, Dennis. *Not Quite Supreme: The Courts and Coordinate Constitutional Interpretation*. McGill-Queen’s University Press. 2010. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 58.

powers are made on the grounds that it will increase liberty. For this reason, Baker argues for coordinate theory in which no institution has the final say and all are “not quite supreme”. These arguments mirror ones made by Dennis Baker’s teacher Rainer Knopff in *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party* concerning the current overreaching of the courts in Canada and the phenomenon of new “Charter politics” starting in Canada in 1982 with the introduction of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by Pierre Trudeau.¹¹¹ While the Charter may appear to privilege rights for individuals it has actually been used to pursue an agenda of collective rights for special interest groups such as Indigenous peoples.

As discussed in chapter 1, for the Calgary School, Canada’s majority is central Canada (Quebec/Ontario). Cooper’s “Laurentian thesis” is a reaction against the federal government’s favoritism of this region in terms of development. Cooper’s fear of the tyranny of the majority is couched in terms of the identity and culture of this part of Canada. Cooper makes reference to a ruling culture in Canada.¹¹² He notes in the 1920s in Canada the popularity of farm parties, maritime rights and progressives - a number of dissenting views in parliament.¹¹³ The Liberals under Mackenzie King were the first to be able to limit this regional factionalism.¹¹⁴ The Liberal Party in Canada has now become the majority in government much of the time. The Liberal party is regional itself with a large base in Ontario. The attitudes and interests of this liberal majority are taken to represent Canada as a whole. This creates a political regime that sees very little change (only a few Conservative tenures compared to the duration of Liberal leaders). This is Cooper’s fear that most resembles Tocqueville’s warning concerning the tyranny of the majority.

However, what concerns Cooper the most is culture understood as a myth of national unity. Specifically, he argues that the culture of Quebec and Ontario are being privileged above the rest of Canada. Cooper thinks the regionalism of Ontario is expressed in a ‘pan-Canadian myth’. The implication of this myth is that the identity of Ontario is the same identity that the rest of Canada should have. This critique of Ontario seems Tocquevillian in nature as Tocqueville also sees that the majority has a moral force behind it. In a democracy there is almost nothing outside of the majority that can “resist” the force of the majority.¹¹⁵ The moral force is translated into a “moral empire” which is based upon utilitarian principles. These utilitarian principles are primarily that the “wisdom” of many persons should be better than the wisdom of a single individual.¹¹⁶ This kind of utilitarianism is not just in wisdom but in the idea that the “interests” of the greatest number of people should outweigh the interests of the few.¹¹⁷ This is Tocqueville’s own warning of one of the biggest dangers in a democracy as compared to an aristocracy (in which the wisdom of single individuals can be valued above the many). This kind of tension for the Calgary School authors is not couched in terms of wisdom - which is the language Tocqueville uses - but in terms of rights. Specifically, it is understood as a difference between groups rights and individual rights. Bercuson

¹¹¹ Morton, F.L. and Rainer Knopff. *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party*. Broadview Press, 2000. 13.

¹¹² Cooper, Barry. *It’s the Regime Stupid! A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. Key Porter Books, 2009. 34.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 61

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 62

¹¹⁵ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*, 235.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 236

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 237

addresses this tension between group rights and individual rights. He questions whether group rights and protections have a place in liberal democracy at all.¹¹⁸

This tension between group rights and individual rights is what splits the liberal tradition Calgary School authors such as Bercuson and Cooper are adhering to. They claim that they advocate a form of liberalism that is more “libertarian” in nature (Bercuson and Cooper self-identify as libertarians in the introduction to their book *Derailed: The Betrayal of the National Dream*) holding freedom understood as the autonomy of individuals and the rights of individuals as the highest good.¹¹⁹ Valuing the rights of individuals is contrasted against a theory of collectivism which supports ideas of community interests and the public good as being the most important.¹²⁰ The majority in Canada undoubtedly adheres to a theory of collectivism and it has become the dominant method for conducting politics in the country.

The division between individual rights and group rights is created in part by the fact that the authors believe that the Canadian state has become more interventionist (closer to a welfare state) in the years following the Second World War.¹²¹ The Liberal majority in Canada has embraced the ideas and values of collectivism and branded arguments for individual freedom as “conservative”. This makes Bercuson and Cooper more in line with authors such as John Stuart Mill who wrote on the subject of state intervention claiming that the English people simply wanted to be left alone by a government that could not possibly well manage all of their affairs.¹²²

The results of the dominance of a collectivist mindset in Canadian politics has led to increased public spending, increased taxes and increased unemployment.¹²³ The public service becomes more and more bloated and an ethos of welfare economics has become the norm.¹²⁴ Claims to collective rights include the Quebec separatist movement (the idea that Quebec could be recognized as a separate nation) and the claims of Indigenous peoples to monetary restitution from the government.¹²⁵ Bercuson and Cooper are against these kinds of collective claims and argue instead that rights are for individuals.¹²⁶

The “moral force” of the majority for Cooper is the values and specifically the values of the ruling culture in Canada. The values of the ruling culture of Canada mean that Canada is conceived as a unity when it is in fact a diverse collection of identities. What this pan-Canadian myth does is limit the number of Canadian identities possible. The material aspects of this tyranny of the majority are in economic regulation.¹²⁷ Namely that oil, gas, uranium, and wheat are regulated federally and not copper or nickel (primary industries of Ontario). Cooper also takes a literary tack to culture and specifically criticizes Frye and Atwood.¹²⁸ He makes some reference to

¹¹⁸ Bercuson, David. “Regionalism and Unlimited Identity in Western Canada”. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Volume 15, Number 2, Summer 1980.

¹¹⁹ Bercuson, David Jay, and Barry Cooper. *Derailed: The Betrayal of the National Dream*. Key Porter Books, 1994, 11.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 15

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 17

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 33

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 86

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 71

their conception of Canadian culture as “garrison life”.¹²⁹ This is a conception in which motives are not as important and Canadian history and culture takes a path that is informed primarily by reasons of survival. Literary authors who both influence and reflect Canadian political life are reminiscent of the French “men of letters” Tocqueville critiques. While Frye and Atwood may not be writing about government, their depictions of Canadian culture are equally influential. The language of politics itself was influenced by philosophers’ general edicts in France.¹³⁰ Similarly ideas in Canadian politics can be reflected by Canadian literature.

Cooper also critiques the conceptions of Canadian culture these authors use, believing their idea of garrison life to be narrow definitions of what makes up Canada. Cooper says that there is not a ‘Laurentian feeling’ in BC or a shared conception of a loyalist heartland fighting against the wilderness. Instead, in other places in Canada such as Saskatchewan or Alberta there is open animosity towards Central Canada. The garrison mentality does not explain this enmity - and glosses over the moral force of the majority held by Central Canada. This Canadian identity located in Ontario as the loyalist heartland is not a pan-Canadian identity. However, Ontario is not the only majority and Quebec is a part of this Central Canadian consensus. As far back as the Lord Durham Report there has been an accusation of French intellectuals appealing to populist impulses within Quebec - to the detriment of Canadian unity.

Finally, consider that Tocqueville observes no place with less freedom of discussion than in America. This seems particularly true now given the rise of “politically correct” culture and the vehemence with which many react on hearing oppositional views (particularly conservative ones). Regarding this in Chapter 4 “On Political Association in the United States” Tocqueville says the freedom of association is necessary to work against this majority. In a democracy the majority carries with it a moral force that is dangerous¹³¹ and in this context the will of the majority exercises a “moral empire”.¹³² Tocqueville’s idea here is remarkably similar to the ethics of John Stuart Mill- that the interest of many should always prevail over the few. Tocqueville thinks that this kind of utilitarian ethics come naturally to the citizens of democracies. However, this is less true in places that have previously held aristocracies and can conceive a good where the few are privileged above the many. Morton and Knopff also cite John Stuart Mill’s version of the tyranny of the majority, an author who shared many concerns with Tocqueville.¹³³ They cite his version of the “tyranny of the majority” with reference to the Court Party, and particularly Ontario as the heartland of the Court Party.¹³⁴ The way in which they describe the movement towards judicial activism is as a battle between high-paid intellectuals and working masses. This is further complicated by the fact that courts make decisions that seem to trump the will of majority elected officials.

The danger of the “omnipotence of the majority” is so bad that it necessitates dangerous measures to counteract it.¹³⁵ These dangerous measures include the freedom of association which is dangerous because it can lead into anarchy.¹³⁶ Tocqueville says freedom of association is

¹²⁹ Ibid.,

¹³⁰ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, 202.

¹³¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America.*, 180

¹³² Ibid., lvii

¹³³ Morton F.L. & Rainer Knopff. *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party*. Broadview Press, 2000. 64

¹³⁴ Ibid.,

¹³⁵ Ibid., 183

¹³⁶ Ibid., 184

required to combat the moral force of the tyranny of the majority. This freedom is demonstrated by the rise of Western politics in Canada through grass-roots movements and the reform party. It was not initially credible that Stephen Harper could win an election in Canada without Quebec.

Barry Cooper references Tocqueville's observations that freedom in public life is important to combat the tyranny of the majority.¹³⁷ However, in Canada Cooper observes a government takeover of civil society preventing the development of public life. This critique is best represented by the joke "I'm from the federal government and I'm here to help you".¹³⁸ This joke stems from a government that is perceived as being too large and unwieldy. These nine words are in fact attributed to United States president Ronald Reagan during an era in which he was enacting government cutbacks and criticizing previous government intervention in the economy. This joke also addresses a wave of thinking in support of smaller government, which is in line with many of the reforms Stephen Harper enacted in Canada.

The need for the freedom of association that Tocqueville feels is needed to combat the tyranny of the majority is best explained by Flanagan. Tom Flanagan observes that the West and Quebec have proved the most open to new parties and social movements in Canada.¹³⁹ This is shown not just with Stephen Harper and the Reform Party but also previously in nationalistic movements. For example, the Metis icon Louis Riel had a suspicion of external control and the reach of centralization or power from Ottawa. He drew on populism (much like Preston Manning) to combat this centralization. Flanagan posits that this populism came from America into the West, characterizing it as the "myth of the popular will".¹⁴⁰ Flanagan's critique of Riel's populism (and later Preston Manning's) is similar to Tocqueville's larger critique of the tyranny of the majority in democratic societies (a fear of the will of the people gone unchecked).¹⁴¹

These two fundamental concerns of Riel's, first external control and second the rejection of Canadian parliament led to his search for solutions to the social problems he observed (increasing isolation and an absence of religious values). This observation of flaws in democracy and the search for solutions to these problems leads to Millenarian dreams (eschatological philosophy) and futurism that is found in Louis Riel as well as recent parties like the Social Credit and the Reform Party.¹⁴² It is interesting that these same observed flaws in democracy can lead individuals such as Tocqueville to one conclusion - and on the other hand inspire the sorts of social movements he would have condemned.

This theme is not effectively used by the Calgary School. Cooper in particular references a different set of ideas than those held by Tocqueville concerning the tyranny of the majority. Cooper's Laurentian thesis has come under fire from many leftist commentators and is indeed perhaps an oversimplified account of culture and politics in Canada.

¹³⁷ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid! A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. Key Porter Books, 2009, 155.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹³⁹ Flanagan, Thomas. "From Riel to Reform (And a Little Beyond): Politics in Western Canada" *American Review of Canadian Studies*. Vol. 31 No. 4, 2001. 623

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 625

¹⁴¹ Preston Manning and Louis Riel had many similarities in their political projects that can be understood either as "reform" or "populist" movements. These similarities are alluded to by Thomas Flanagan in his book: *Waiting for the Wave*.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 630

Chapter 3: Democratic Individualism and Self-Interest Well-Understood

Democratic individualism is a theme concerning civil society or the social state as opposed to centralization (which concerns the executive) or tyranny (the legislative). For Tocqueville it means mourning the loss of aristocratic or religious values in democracies which goes hand in hand with a loss of legitimacy for the government and increasing isolation for its citizens. This critique concerns the good of society as a whole. To have the goals set forth by a democratic society (freedom and equality) be realized the citizens within the society must have some conception of these and the common good. However, while the noble goals of equality and freedom exist oftentimes democratic culture stifles individuals. Democratic culture seems to receive many of the same critiques as the Byzantine Empire- a descent into bureaucratization and hedonism over the pursuit of noble goals.

This theme concerns the character of democratic peoples. Examining this theme leads to greater understanding of the lineage of Canadian conservative political thought. Beyond the obvious tie to Tocqueville, and a greater understanding of his thought on individualism, this theme goes beyond this and individualism is found in many different thinkers in the classical liberal tradition (such as Locke). Understanding that the Calgary School's ideas ties into this broader tradition means a better understanding of the intellectual legacy of conservative political thought in Canada.

Tocqueville has a fear that because legitimacy is transformed from custom into principles, government has less validity in the eyes of people in a democracy than in an aristocracy.¹⁴³ The idea of the common good should be an extension of self-interest but can also add to feelings of individualism and self-isolation: when there's the belief that an individual can do nothing against the huge power of social forces. The democratic social state and the sovereignty of the people results in the increased power of public opinion. This dissociates men from citizens to subjects to individuals. This finally ends in timid individuals who feel powerless.¹⁴⁴

Virtue is still possible within our isolation and seems to demand a new idea of what self-interest might entail. Self-interest well-understood is explained as a form of enlightened self-interest. Something Tocqueville observes in new American democracy is that people no longer praise the idea of "self-sacrifice" in and of itself in sermons and moral texts.¹⁴⁵ Therefore justification for moral acts has to be more self-centered to sway the American mind. The idea of "working for the happiness of all" is justified in terms of "individual advantage" as this is what appeals most to the new American mindset.¹⁴⁶ The basic moral idea is that if you help those around you, who are like you, you will also be helping yourself. Combining your own wellbeing and that of others becomes a new form of virtue in America. This is not virtue being valued in and of itself but a virtue that is based in terms of what is "useful".¹⁴⁷ The social order requires that this is not an appeal to virtue in itself but more of what Tocqueville calls an "honest materialism".¹⁴⁸ This means that materialism triumphs over other societal goals in a democracy. What this means is that while self-interest well-understood does not inspire "greatness" (great human actions) as in an aristocracy, it can help to prevent "depravity". Self-interest well-understood is designed as an easy

¹⁴³ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. University of Chicago Press, 2000. xxxvii.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, xlv

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 501

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 500

theory to grasp for any individual.¹⁴⁹ As Tocqueville says it is “accommodating to the weakness of men” which means that this theory “attains a great empire with ease”.¹⁵⁰ Self-interest well-understood does not produce great actions or allow some to rise above the ordinary level of humanity but prevents many from falling below it.

The end result of a loss of greatness, due to the doctrine of self-interest well-understood, both in human action and more specifically in politics is a problem not only for Tocqueville but for the Calgary School. For example, Barry Cooper repeatedly says that Canadian politics has descended to the level of monetary transactions. He says the rise of bureaucracy means money becomes the everyday politics and great human actions are replaced by complacency. The kind of greatness Cooper is talking about is interpreted for him as a form of “national pride” in Canada.¹⁵¹ He believes the Liberal party has a doctrine of serving only certain special interests at the cost of national self-respect. Therefore, for Cooper the election of Stephen Harper was a way in which Canadians could reclaim some “national pride” (national pride could be understood as an antidote to the loss of great actions Tocqueville observes in democracies).¹⁵² This could be interpreted as a critique of materialistic politics over the pursuit of a more idealistic politics that Cooper supports.

The individual selfishness Tocqueville observes in democracies (and Cooper observes in Canada) means that in a democracy the government of the majority is badly administered. This means that the goals of the state will be short-term and subject to change because of the fickle attitudes of the public.¹⁵³ This critique of democratic governance by Tocqueville is similar to the critiques Cooper makes concerning the Liberal party in Canada. Cooper believes the Liberal party has devolved into a “complacency” concerning many important Canadian issues.¹⁵⁴

Cooper uses the example of Ad scam to show that greatness has disappeared from Canada in favour of complacency and entitlement.¹⁵⁵ The example of Ad scam is not supposed to show the greed of Canadian politics but illustrate a certain sort of political culture that the Liberal party brings to Canada. Specifically, this culture is understood as a “culture of entitlement” for Canada.¹⁵⁶ Indeed that a “culture of entitlement” was the norm for Liberal ministers was the main finding of the government commission investigating a scandal involving the Canadian federal government giving money to Quebec corporations for advertising.¹⁵⁷ Specifically, Ad scam was a sponsorship scandal involving advertising for the federal government on the issue of unity prior to the Quebec referendum. Cooper understands this scandal as a clash between Laurentian Canadian ideas of what constitutes Canada and the Quebec separatist movement.¹⁵⁸ The Liberal party was following a Keynesian idea of federal spending that had Ottawa set as the guardian of national unity. Simply, put it was a disagreement on the concept of “public interest”.¹⁵⁹ The Liberal party

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁵¹ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid! A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. Key Porter Books, 2009, 22.

¹⁵² Ibid.,

¹⁵³ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*, 250.

¹⁵⁴ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid! A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. 25

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 210

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 191

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 193

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 221

believed they were following the public interest by putting into place measures that allowed them to transfer money to provinces and specifically to combat the rising wave of Quebec separatism. However, by doing so Cooper argues they brought a certain kind of pettiness to Canadian politics and cost Canadians self-respect in return for a flawed version of Canadian unity that was based on Central Canada. This example shows a materialistic approach to Canadian politics, similar to the one Tocqueville observed in American democracy. The “culture of entitlement” that was promoted could be understood as a flawed form of self-interest well-understood, as what was good for the individuals involved was not necessarily in the “public interest”, even though the actions taken by those involved in the scandal were justified by an idea of the public interest. This culture of entitlement and initial complacency toward bureaucratic scandal could also be understood as stemming from individualism, namely the idea that the forces involved were far too large to be changed by any one person.

Individualism is not just supported by self-interest well-understood. Individualism can also be understood as the lack of social capital. Knopff is an example of someone from the Calgary School who would see it this way because he uses economist Robert Putnam’s basis for social capital theory. Indeed, Putnam cites Tocqueville as a major influence.¹⁶⁰ Tocqueville discusses social capital in *Democracy in America*, but obviously does not use this more modern term. Tocqueville understood that the high rate of participation in American politics during his time helped progress the goal of equality.¹⁶¹ Equality spreading from the social sphere to the political sphere was an inevitable result of democracy for Tocqueville.¹⁶² Knopff seems to agree with this thesis, and says that civic community and social capital sustain civil society and democracy.¹⁶³ Particularly as Knopff works in Alberta he sees a very high rate of participation in his own province as compared to others in Canada. He sees that Alberta’s history of participation happened not through formal politics but collective movements. To prove this Knopff uses an empirical method that combines results from the World Values Survey and the Canada National Election study. He finds a relationship between trust and participation (in Alberta) that is circular. To bring this about he notes that Alberta must have had a lot of trust or a lot of participation to begin with.¹⁶⁴

Knopff also makes the argument that representative democracy is under attack by populism and judicialized politics of rights. Knopff has two targets here as opposed to just judicial politics as in *The Charter Revolution and the Court Party* and is attacking “populists” as well.¹⁶⁵ An example of this “populism” is found in Preston Manning’s politics and an example of judicialism is found in the 1982 Charter. Knopff sees that populism is interested in moving power down while judicial activism moves power up. The reason Knopff is suspicious of both of these trends is that both of these might be a perversion of liberal democratic principles. This is the same support of democracy that Tocqueville offers (support but with reservations) and Knopff’s version of liberal

¹⁶⁰ Putnam, Robert. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, 1993, 89.

¹⁶¹ Ferragina, Emanuele. “Social Capital and Equality: Tocqueville’s Legacy: Rethinking Social Capital in Relation with Income Inequalities”. 2010. *The Tocqueville Review*. University of Toronto Press, 31 (1). 81.

¹⁶² Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*. 52

¹⁶³ Knopff, et al. Social Capital and Civic Community in Alberta.”2004. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37 (3). 617.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 630

¹⁶⁵ Knopff, Rainer. “Populism and the Politics of Rights: The Dual Attack on Representative Democracy.” 1998. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 31 (4). 683.

democratic support includes similar warnings as well. Knopff believes that the danger found in populism and judicial activism is because both include an appeal to ideas beyond ordinary politics. For one it is “The People” and the other “Rights” both are ideas that are used as trans political trump cards.¹⁶⁶ The idea of “the people” having moral authority is a form of the tyranny of the majority. On the other hand, the idea of rights is a form of soft despotism. Rights are a result of the democratic tendency toward equality and Tocqueville says that equality produces two tendencies one of which “conducts them (citizens) by a longer, more secret, but surer path toward servitude”.¹⁶⁷ Tocqueville is wary of the results of equality, as he believes it can elevate men to greatness but it also inspires feelings of resentment and a wish to bring down those who are perceived as “strong”.¹⁶⁸ Therefore when all peoples are made equal through rights (Tocqueville says that rights will be given to all citizens as it is the only way to have equality in the political world) it will be harder to defend themselves since no single person will be “strong”.

Tocqueville is not the only person to critique these results of being in a democratic regime. Using terms like “the people” or “rights” is a form of religious tyranny for Knopff. Indeed, using these kinds of appeals has historically led to disaster. Knopff says that in the context of the French revolution, the use of the term “The people” allowed figures such as Robespierre to dominate the revolution.¹⁶⁹ Knopff further suggests that divisions among people are manufactured by populism in order to overcome traditional parties.¹⁷⁰ Similarly rights are an expression of “oneness” that attempt to bridge political divides and use a form of transcendental politics.

It is interesting that Knopff is wary of transcendental politics while Cooper bemoans the loss of greatness in politics. On the one hand Knopff wants to stay true to liberal democratic ideals of the sovereignty of the people. Knopff is defending an idea of “ordinary politics” which supports (although with reservations) the dominant Canadian parties and liberal democracy. However, Cooper believes that ordinary politics (for him understood as the day to day of Canadian politics and the culture of Ottawa) is precisely the problem that must be reformed. Cooper consequently supports the Reform movement and particularly the evolution of this movement into Stephen Harper’s Canadian Conservative party. As shown later in this chapter, Knopff is not the only one to critique the Reform movement led by Preston Manning out of Alberta, Flanagan also has his reservations about Manning’s style of “populist” politics. This is a point on which the “Calgary School” members seem to diverge in their opinions.

For Knopff the idea of the “liberal” part of our liberal democracy took a while to be fully realized in Canada.¹⁷¹ Knopff cites Tocqueville who says that previously in America it was a battle of great parties. The parties would see the opposition as “heretics” totally devoted to destroying the others’ way of life. Reviewing the section in which Tocqueville actually deals with parties he says that great parties “overturn society” but great parties no longer remain in America at his time of writing and instead it is a large number of small parties. By great parties Tocqueville understands these to be parties totally devoted to principle, small parties on the other hand are less attached to ideals and more to individual men. This distinction is similar to the division made in

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 684

¹⁶⁷ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*, 640.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 52

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 693

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 699

¹⁷¹ Knopff, Rainer. “The Triumph of Liberalism in Canada: Laurier on Representation and Party Government.” In *Canada’s Origins: Tory, Liberal, or Republican?* edited by Janet Ajzenstat and Peter J. Smith. Ottawa. 1995. Carleton University Press. 159.

political science between “programmatic” parties (parties with firm principles) and “brokerage” parties which are political parties trying to subsume many opinions under one umbrella- such as the Canadian Liberal party. The rise of small parties over great parties has resulted in a situation in which America has “gained much in happiness but not in morality”.¹⁷² This seems to identify the primary problem of liberal individualism. As Knopff himself says: “the liberal solution was to turn the question of the best way of life into a matter of private choice and to limit the public sphere to securing the conditions of life itself.”¹⁷³ This meant a diminishment of the public sphere and a corresponding increase in individualism.¹⁷⁴ These are Knopff’s primary criticisms of liberal democracy which are also found in Tocqueville.

A better understanding of the societal order and how it fosters individualism needs an understanding of what lies outside of that culture or boundary. It is for this reason that Tocqueville's discussion of indigenous matters and Flanagan’s own treatment is important. Tocqueville was not unaware of the inequalities between the three races present in America: “The white man, the negro and the Indian”. Tocqueville observes the nobility of native Americans and says that Europeans were not successful in civilizing them.¹⁷⁵ He says they possess a “barbarous independence” outside of law and order. This combination of proud barbarism and hatred of civilization characterizes the native American people for Tocqueville.

On the Calgary School side Thomas Flanagan investigates the ‘aboriginal orthodoxy’ in Canadian political discourse, which he finds to be flawed. Flanagan’s position relies on an ideological position of balancing freedom and equality for individuals without the government. Flanagan critiques not only the liberal orthodoxy but later the conservative one as well under Stephen Harper. Flanagan eventually says that progress for indigenous peoples requires freedom from the control of politicians and bureaucrats.¹⁷⁶ More specifically, Flanagan’s Louis Riel commentary is a criticism of theocratic governance and less about being a millennial movement (social group oriented towards extreme change). Riel was a proponent of the Ultramontane version of Roman Catholicism (although he wished for a change in the pope). Riel adopted the name David because of perceived similarities with his own life and the Biblical figure.¹⁷⁷ In terms of his theological rationales Riel wanted the restoration of “Mosaic Law”.¹⁷⁸ This means that he favored certain aspects of the old Testament such as polygamy. His reason for this was sociological. He believed polygamy would dampen the individualism he saw spreading in society. Riel, like Tocqueville, observed trends in individualism that he believed to be dangerous.

Tocqueville’s observation of individualism is that man in a democracy “turns all his sentiments to himself alone”, this is what Tocqueville and Riel have a problem with.¹⁷⁹ It is not

¹⁷² Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 167.

¹⁷³ Knopff, Rainer. “The Triumph of Liberalism in Canada: Laurier on Representation and Party Government.” 159

¹⁷⁴ This kind of critique brings to mind Jordan Peterson who has bemoaned the loss of responsibility for individuals in return for a liberal discourse based largely on “rights”.

¹⁷⁵ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 305

¹⁷⁶ Flanagan, Thomas. *First Nations? Second Thoughts*. 2nd ed., McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008. 112

¹⁷⁷ Flanagan, Thomas, “Sexual Politics of Louis Riel”. *The Dorchester Review*. Autumn/Winter 2013. 60

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 61

¹⁷⁹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*, 482.

selfishness but a “reflective” and “peaceable” feeling.¹⁸⁰ The tendency in a democracy is for each person to “isolate himself from the mass of those like him to withdraw to one side his family and his friends, so that after having thus created a little society for his own use, he willingly abandons society at large to itself”.¹⁸¹ Individualism works against public virtue. It is a product of a democracy, different from an aristocracy in which classes are immobile.¹⁸²

Democracies work to separate man from both his ancestors and his descendants. Tocqueville’s basic idea is that equalization leads to solitude.¹⁸³ This also leads to despotism as citizens do not have to have love for the government just as they do not love other citizens, or inspire change with them.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, while individualism works against public virtue, the new public virtue in democracy becomes “indifference” towards all matters.¹⁸⁵ Tocqueville does not attribute individualism to a particular party (at his time either Republican or Federalist) and neither to a particular kind of ideology (either conservative or liberal). For Tocqueville individualism stemmed only from the fact of a regime being a democracy rather than an aristocracy. However, for Riel individualism was also tied up in a conception of liberalism, something he saw as a negative force. Flanagan recharacterizes Riel’s personal politics as conservative (the left usually claims Riel as their own in Canada).¹⁸⁶ Interestingly he says that Riel cherished the French Ancien Regime - another link to Tocqueville’s writing. Riel is often adopted as an icon of the political left in Canada. Flanagan sees the advent of a figure such as Riel as inevitable.¹⁸⁷ The left needed a national liberation leader or anti-imperialist figure.¹⁸⁸ However Riel doesn’t fit this and is actually a conservative.¹⁸⁹ He viewed liberals as being occupied in a “moral self-indulgence”.¹⁹⁰ He wished instead to combine the church and state (his millenarianism) which is more at home with conservative versions of Islam than contemporary liberalism.¹⁹¹

While Riel may not be a leftist thinker, Flanagan himself acknowledges his role as a resistance figure: “a social scientist could see him as a millenarian prophet the leader of a nativistic movement of resistance against colonial domination”.¹⁹² His religious justifications such as naming himself David was meant metaphorically. For him, the Metis were the new Hebrews¹⁹³ and he wanted to lead them to a nationalistic Metis Nation.¹⁹⁴ His rebellion shows his natural

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁸¹ Ibid.,

¹⁸² Ibid., 483

¹⁸³ Ibid., 484

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 485

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.,

¹⁸⁶ Flanagan, Thomas, “Sexual Politics of Louis Riel”, 62

¹⁸⁷ Flanagan, Thomas. “Louis Riel: Icon of the Left”. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*. Series V. Volume I. 1986. 220

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 221

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 222

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 224

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 225

¹⁹² Flanagan, Thomas. “Louis Riel: Was He Really Crazy” in *1885 and after: Native Society in Transition*. 1968. 105

¹⁹³ Flanagan, Thomas. “Louis Riel’s Name David” *Riel Mini-Conference Papers*. 1979. 63.

¹⁹⁴ Flanagan, Thomas. “Louis Riel and Metis Literature”. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. 18 July 2008. 114.

profession was politics as the leader of a popular movement.¹⁹⁵ He wanted a new religion for the new world¹⁹⁶ - a break with Rome¹⁹⁷ and the promise of a new millennium (an extended period of peace and happiness for his people). Riel's life taken this way is also a form of resistance to the individualism present in democracies. His goals were more than materialistic, and he wanted to bring some form of greatness back to politics similarly to Tocqueville and Cooper.

Are individuals ends in themselves with freedom as the highest goal or is the liberalism decried by Riel more valuable because of the equality it brings along? It is interesting when Bercuson and Cooper discuss Mackenzie King and his book *On Reading Industry and Humanity* they see that for authors such as Mackenzie King¹⁹⁸ - the individual is an end in himself.¹⁹⁹ King was also a supporter of "industrial democracy" but with reservations. These reservations were particularly with respect to industry and its negative effects.²⁰⁰ Some commentators see this focus as because King moved from small town Ontario into Toronto for his studies. His solution for the ills of industrialization and modernization was to apply humanitarian religious principles to his politics.²⁰¹ Mackenzie King was definitely a liberal (and the first leader of the Liberals who was able to subsume regional causes under the umbrella of the Liberal party). For him, the other factions of his time such as Progressives or CCFers were simply "liberals in a hurry".²⁰² By this he meant that the Liberals could bring about the more extreme social goals of these parties but by a longer route. For Bercuson, Mackenzie King put in this light had a call for action in millennialist terms (a similarity with Riel). It is interesting to note that King did end up creating much of the welfare state and its apparatus in Canada. This welfare state is precisely what the Calgary School finds to be so problematic in Canada.

The rise of bureaucratization in Canada, and a political culture of entitlement and complacency at the cost of an active civic life. These are the critiques that come to light when viewing the Calgary School members through the lens of Tocqueville. Oftentimes the authors of this "school" do not agree on issues that some might think of as fundamental to a conservative agenda (such as Preston Manning's way of doing politics). However, they all share concerns concerning liberal democracy and the spread of individualism that are similar to ones Tocqueville brings up two-hundred years earlier. All of these authors (Tocqueville included) support liberal democracy, it is because of this support that their warnings concerning society should be taken seriously.

¹⁹⁵ Flanagan, Thomas. "The Religion of Louis Riel". *The Quarterly of Canadian Studies for the Secondary School*. Vol. 4, No. 1, 1975. 4

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7

¹⁹⁸ Also, Karl Marx.

¹⁹⁹ Cooper, Barry. "On Reading Industry and Humanity: A Study in the Rhetoric Underlying Liberal Management". University of Toronto Press, 2018. 31.

²⁰⁰ King, Mackenzie. *Industry and Humanity: with an introduction by David Jay Bercuson*. University of Toronto Press. 1973. viii.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, ix

²⁰² *Ibid.*, xxii

Chapter 4: Political Theories in Tocqueville and the Calgary School

Tocqueville approaches theorizing about politics through several different voices and methods. His understanding of political issues varies depending on the role he plays- either as an observer or an actor. He gives advice on how to understand politics and how to persuade people to understand politics. This can be compared to the methods of several authors in the Calgary School. Cooper, Knopff and Flanagan together show the same kind of diversity that is found in Tocqueville's thought. Each of these authors combine elements in their writing of philosophy, history, and legalism as well as their personal experience in politics. Examining the method of the Calgary School, that is, not only what they are saying but how they are saying it also leads to a better understanding of their ideas. A better understanding of the method of these academics as well as Tocqueville's own method means a better understanding of Canadian conservative political thought.

Tocqueville's political science is best summed up by his claim that "a new political science is needed for a world altogether new."²⁰³ He is not interested in "abstractions" or a science for "disinterested observers" instead Tocqueville's political science is to be used, to be practiced.²⁰⁴ Specifically, Tocqueville is interested in explaining the values of democracy and how to keep it in check. There are distinct features to Tocqueville's political science in Mansfield's opinion.²⁰⁵ First is that the social state is both the product and the cause of itself. Tocqueville wants to avoid causality between politics and society.²⁰⁶ Therefore his analysis of the social state is "naturally suggested" by laws and political values.²⁰⁷ Political science for Tocqueville is not just the instantiation of ideas into society.²⁰⁸

Tocqueville's political science is designed principally for understanding democratic revolutions and not all circumstances as with Aristotle.²⁰⁹ He repeatedly states that the democratic revolution is an "irresistible" fact.²¹⁰ Therefore he tailors his political science to deal with this newfound fact. Tocqueville is doing an analysis of the progression from aristocracy toward democracy. Democracy is unavoidable but can lead to despotism. Tocqueville understands democracy is here to stay so he deals with tempering it. He is a liberal but not one interested in universal principles or rights. Instead, he is interested in an analysis of a society that is founded on liberal ideas.²¹¹ He repeatedly claims he is not doing a history of America. Instead, he wants to understand the influence of opinions and mores in French and American society.²¹² Tocqueville is also interested in making predictions with his political science. His predictions are made based on trends in society.²¹³

²⁰³ Mansfield, Harvey C. "Editor's Introduction" in *Democracy in America*. xliii.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*,

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*,

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, xlvv

²⁰⁷ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 399.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 675

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, xlviii

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 400

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, xlviii

²¹² *Ibid.*, 683

²¹³ *Ibid.*, xlvii

Some of Tocqueville's most accurate predictions are made during his time as a political actor in the French revolution (1848-1849). In his *Recollections* his role as a statesman is the most prominent.²¹⁴ A primary problem he observes leading up to the revolution is that:

A taste for holding office and a desire to live on the public money are not with us a disease restricted to either party but the great chronic ailment of the whole nation; the result of the democratic constitution of our society and of the excessive centralization of our government; the secret malady which has undermined all former powers, and which will undermine all powers to come.²¹⁵

In this passage Tocqueville is not taking an ideological or partisan position, speaking as a statesman in France. Instead, he is focused on causes and giving a general warning concerning society.²¹⁶ The results of centralization and a democratic constitution are two of Tocqueville's most often repeated warnings throughout his texts. These two issues are also frequently taken up by Flanagan, Cooper and Knopff.

Flanagan, similar to Tocqueville in his role as a statesman, held a role as a political adviser to Stephen Harper before he became Prime Minister. This period of time, while not a revolution, could be described as a time of change in Canadian politics, a break from the previous prevailing order under the Liberal party. Flanagan is more interested in the particulars of partisan platforming than Tocqueville. His book *Winning Power*, written in the aftermath of the Conservative rise to power, begins with a discussion of the politics of chimpanzees. The purpose of using this example is also to make Flanagan's point that campaigning is "not abstract."²¹⁷ That is, general rules cannot be made to fit all circumstances. Campaigns happen under a different set of rules each time and there is no "universal winning strategy."²¹⁸ Flanagan is trying to make the same point as Tocqueville, namely that political science should not try to come up with a set of generalizable rules.

Flanagan's analysis, similar to Tocqueville's, does try to go beyond partisan politics without pretending that partisanship can be overlooked. He mentions that while campaigning some issues will not fit the traditional "left-right" divide but still remain critical to winning a campaign.²¹⁹ The only real partisan issue of the Conservative Party of Canada (with whom Flanagan worked) that Flanagan takes himself is a stance against federal subsidies towards political parties.²²⁰ This is cast as a partisan issue because the Liberal party relies more heavily on these subsidies whereas the Conservative Party relied more on individual donations. Flanagan supports this notion as federal subsidies on a per-vote basis tend to encourage one dominant party. This is similar to Tocqueville's own observation of the elected government desiring to be the beneficiaries of public monies and how this is a malady common to both parties during his time. Indeed, Flanagan goes on to critique the Conservative Party for starting the era of the permanent campaign in which parties are always focused on the next election even while holding office.²²¹ Flanagan and Tocqueville alike in discussing matters of state, take a more critical role and try to stand outside

²¹⁴ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*. 3.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

²¹⁷ Flanagan, Tom. *Winning Power*. 30.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

²¹⁹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 69.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

of party lines. Flanagan stands for conservative principles even should they go against the strategic interests of the Conservative Party.

Further evidence for this similarity in approach with Tocqueville is that Flanagan initially supported Preston Manning and Stephen Harper but later in his career took issue with both leaders. Flanagan clarifies the ideological position that Manning takes, defending him from characterizations as a hard-right conservative. However, Flanagan also critiques Manning's tendency to control the party through centralization rather than delegating resulting in resolving party conflicts by "expulsion and suppression".²²² Tocqueville has his own criticism of centralization.²²³ He does not think the state should become involved in all areas of private fortune.²²⁴ The rise of bureaucratization and centralization suppress some forms of individual virtue in Tocqueville's opinion. This idea is shared by many of the Calgary School; therefore, it is not surprising that Flanagan might critique Preston Manning on these grounds.

Flanagan seems partly to abandon his support of Manning's political project in favor of Harper. He notes that Harper also had reservations about Manning's brand of leadership.²²⁵ Flanagan depicts the story of the merger of the Canadian Alliance party (successor to the Reform Party) and the Progressive Conservative parties as a result of Stephen Harper learning the mistakes of the kind of populism Manning espoused.²²⁶ Flanagan, having served as an advisor to Stephen Harper, supported the kinds of reforms he promised. However, Harper later distanced himself after the publication of Flanagan's book *Harper's Team*. Flanagan later gave an interview where he states: "Harper decided that if he wasn't going to be able to reform the Senate, he was going to play politics even more ruthlessly than his predecessors".²²⁷ Flanagan seems to initially support the political projects of Manning and Harper but later finds they compromise on their political principles. Tocqueville was equally suspicious of the political machinations of his day. For both authors political parties do not fulfil their recommendations which leads to disenfranchisement from partisan politics. This is particularly true for Tocqueville leading up to the French revolution of 1848 who even tried to dissuade members of both parties from continuing to antagonize the situation.²²⁸

Tom Flanagan most closely mirrors Tocqueville's role in *The Recollections* as a statesman who is critical of the system, he was working in. Tocqueville acted as a scholar and a participant in government during the French revolution who repeatedly warned the members of his government and the opposition of the problems to come. Flanagan as a supporter of both the Reform Party and later as an adviser to Stephen Harper's conservative party shows a similar role of a scholar who repeatedly critiqued the dangers of the populism of the Reform Party as well as the tendency of Stephen Harper to centralize decision making processes. Flanagan follows some of the same philosophies found in *Democracy in America* such as a critique of bureaucratization and centralization and his philosophical concerns are instantiated in his personal politics.

²²² Flanagan, Tom. *Waiting for the Wave*, 19.

²²³ Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy in America*. 482-507.

²²⁴ Tocqueville, Alexis De. *Democracy in America*. 655.

²²⁵ Flanagan, Tom. "Something Blue", 5.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

²²⁷ Stone, Laura. *Global News* "Lunch with Tom Flanagan: Back in favour, but not in politics". 2014.

²²⁸ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*. 24.

Tocqueville's political science is interested in souls and how they might be degraded in a democracy as compared to an aristocracy.²²⁹ This is similar to how Aristotle is interested in the quality of souls and how they are affected by a regime. Aristotle's position is that to find the best regime one must first determine "which life is most choice worthy".²³⁰ The best life is tied to what the circumstances of any particular regime allow. Aristotle believes the soul is more valuable than the body or possessions; therefore, the best states of the soul are to be valued more.²³¹ The best regime needs those who will act 'nobly', and to act nobly relies on the state of the soul.²³² Therefore the best regimes call forth the best characters of the soul, and the best regimes need those with the best characters of the soul.

Tocqueville's opinion is that most souls are not as energetic in a democracy.²³³ He believes democracy lowers some and raises others up, creating a sort of uniformity in the character of citizens' souls. This sort of uniformity saddens Tocqueville coming from an aristocratic perspective which is designed to cultivate or call forth greatness in some souls. Cooper is also interested in how souls are influenced by the regime they are in. For him, the Canadian soul has been degraded toward complacency due to a regime rife with corruption and entitlement.²³⁴ Cooper's ideas can also be traced to Aristotle.

Cooper follows in the tradition of 20th century political philosopher Eric Voegelin, who was also interested in the relation of regimes within cities and the regime of the soul.²³⁵ Voegelin's book *The New Science of Politics* was partly a response to a positivist revolution in the field in which only fact judgments were taken to be objective and judgments concerning the order of the soul and a society were taken to be subjective.²³⁶ Voegelin disagrees with this thesis. His own analysis starts with Plato, namely his famous quote "polis is man written large".²³⁷ He sees that Plato was trying to explore the human soul and that the "order of the soul turned out to be dependent on philosophy".²³⁸ Certain experiences form a constitution of the soul, a certain character. This necessarily requires that a theorist measures human types and the social orders in which they reside.

Voegelin's method is about the interpretation of symbols in history. This method is used by Cooper when he says he pays attention to the "language, myth and symbols" of Canada.²³⁹ Cooper himself refers to political science as "a science of human beings and history".²⁴⁰ This is a point of difference between his philosophical roots and Tocqueville who wanted to avoid the idea he was doing history in *Democracy in America*. Each of Tocqueville's works is written in a different style. For instance, *The Old Regime* is a theoretical history aimed at understanding the

²²⁹ Ibid., 8.

²³⁰ Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by C.D.C. Reeve. 191.

²³¹ Ibid., 192.

²³² Ibid., 192.

²³³ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 674.

²³⁴ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid: A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. 41.

²³⁵ Voegelin, Eric. *The New Science of Politics*. 64.

²³⁶ Ibid., 11.

²³⁷ Ibid., 61.

²³⁸ Ibid., 63.

²³⁹ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid*. 20.

²⁴⁰ Cooper, Barry. *The Restoration of Political Science and the Crisis of Modernity*. viii.

roots of the French revolution. *The Recollections* on the other hand is more of an autobiography of Tocqueville's own life.

However, Tocqueville does seem to have some similarities to Voegelin in that both avoided a political science that would be the instantiation of ideas or values directly into society. Tocqueville also sees that different regimes encourage citizens to have different characters. When talking in the Assembly he repeatedly called upon them to change the "spirit" of the government and even then warned of a revolution.²⁴¹ Cooper also repeatedly challenges the spirit of Canadian politics warning that money has become the most important part of Canadian politics to the detriment of the country.²⁴² Tocqueville gives a critique similar to Cooper's when giving anecdotes on the French government saying that at its worst it resembled a trading company that was "conducting profits to shareholders".²⁴³

This is not the only time Tocqueville critiques materialistic philosophy. He also observes the philosophy of materialism and material well-being in the democracy of America. He notes that in an aristocracy people feel well-being, or the lack of it (poverty), as a constant meaning there is little social mobility in this class system and therefore individuals do not seek out material wealth to the same degree as democracy.²⁴⁴ On the other hand in a democracy there is a constant desire to seek out material well-being. This search for material well-being leads to a sort of restlessness of spirit in the American soul.²⁴⁵ Tocqueville is not critical of the possession of material well-being in itself. However, he does say that one of the negative effects of equality is that it "carries men away toward permitted enjoyments".²⁴⁶ Tocqueville believes this sort of taste for permitted material enjoyment leads to a softness of soul. This echoes Cooper's critiques found in *It's the Regime Stupid* in which he investigates the Gomery Commission and the level to which Canadian politics has descended into monetary compensation.²⁴⁷

Cooper and Tocqueville believe it is the way it works on both sides of the partisan divide, that resting on the laurels of public money is natural to politicians. Even removing the dominant Liberal party which Cooper often argues against would not fix the fundamental problem with the Canadian regime.²⁴⁸ These critiques have to do with the nature of their respective regimes and observing the failings of parliamentary democracy are crucial to these two authors. Cooper says that democracies have no character except that which is provided by the citizens and elected officials.²⁴⁹ This sort of science of "regimes" is drawn directly from Aristotle.²⁵⁰

Apart from his interpretive works of philosophy Cooper has written many newspaper articles and works for the Fraser Institute. This sort of writing is too democratic for Tocqueville, while there were individuals writing political pamphlets at the time such as American and French revolutionaries, Tocqueville was not one of them. Tocqueville was writing for anyone literate at his time seeking to understand the political upheavals of the time, Cooper on the other hand is writing about specific regional issues for a specific audience. Many of Cooper's articles were

²⁴¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*. 16.

²⁴² Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid*. 33.

²⁴³ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*. 9.

²⁴⁴ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 506.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 507.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 509.

²⁴⁷ Cooper, Barry. *It's the Regime Stupid*. 207.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

written for the everyday citizen of Alberta. His issues include how the progressive agenda has tainted political culture, and he often makes arguments against the rise of “politically correct culture.”²⁵¹ This is similar to some of Tocqueville’s remarks on the tyranny of public opinion, which he observes can become omnipotent to a dangerous degree in a democracy.²⁵² Political correctness is indeed a product of public opinion and through the majority changes society. Tocqueville’s worry is that citizens will have no other means of judgment in a democracy other than public opinion, he believes the extent to which citizens have power over each other should be limited.

Cooper differs most from Tocqueville when he critiques many parts of what is traditionally considered the “left-progressive” agenda of the Liberal party such as the legalization of marijuana, deficit spending and pipeline regulation.²⁵³ In doing so Cooper writes for people who are already conservatives. Once again Tocqueville tries to write for a much more general audience, while Cooper doesn’t write to the Canadian public in total but rather a specific segment. This is shown most when Cooper writes about Jason Kenney becoming leader of the provincial Conservatives in Alberta. His argument is that conservatives should be more receptive to Kenney as it is in the party interest, to set aside egos and take a leader who might actually win an election based on firm principles.²⁵⁴

Cooper closely mirrors some of the more generalizable philosophies found in *Democracy in America*. Specifically, his focus on the way in which bureaucratization and centralization lead away from public virtue is similar to Tocqueville’s ideas in that text. Cooper shows this in his approach to Canadian politics (investigations of political scandal) and his method and main scholarly influence Eric Voegelin. Eric Voegelin’s science of regimes has some similarities when placed besides Tocqueville observations on democracy. The reliance on Aristotle to investigate which kinds of regimes promote public virtue is similar in both cases. While his social commentary does not mirror as closely texts such as the Recollections, he does give many of the same general warnings that Tocqueville did. Particularly the warning concerning the omnipotence of the tyranny of the majority in a democracy mirrors Cooper’s observation on political correctness and offers a philosophical grounding for this position.

Tocqueville was a liberal but not one committed to abstract doctrines of “universal rights and freedoms”.²⁵⁵ Knopff is a liberal but one interested in critiquing the formal institutions of the Courts and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.²⁵⁶ For Tocqueville discussions of the benefits of liberal democracy were quite new, the doctrine of having liberal democratic government with rights for individual citizens was being brought about by the revolution he examined. However, for Knopff writing within a firmly liberal democratic regime of Canada, this is taken more of a given. In criticizing the articulation of rights in a liberal democracy Knopff could be taken to be critiquing liberal democracy itself.

²⁵¹ Cooper Barry. “Progressives refuse to agree that people can simply disagree”. *Calgary Herald*. 4 February 2017.

²⁵² Tocqueville Alexis, de. *Democracy in America*. 278.

²⁵³ Cooper Barry. “Expect reason to win out over pipeline protests”. *Calgary Herald*. 7 December 2016.

²⁵⁴ Cooper, Barry. “Tories' unease with Kenney could hand the NDP the next election” *Calgary Herald*. 14 September 2016.

²⁵⁵ Mansfield, Harvey C. “Editor’s Introduction” in *Democracy in America*. xlviii.

²⁵⁶ Knopff, Rainier & F.L. Morton. *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party*. 9.

What then might be called the unifying method or theme between Knopff and Tocqueville is a perspective that is both liberal and critical of liberalism. However, Knopff is more positivistic Tocqueville, following in what Voegelin would describe as the “positivist” tradition.²⁵⁷ For Voegelin the positivist tradition is the tendency to present political findings as “scientific” by mirroring the methods used by sciences of the external world.²⁵⁸ Knopff follows this by oftentimes taking a realist perspective, dealing with the modern institutions of NGOs and the United Nations and following the flows of political power.²⁵⁹ Knopff also relies on specific cases and statistical methods to make his arguments.²⁶⁰ It should be expected that a modern author writing for policy journals would differ significantly in method from philosophers such as Tocqueville and Voegelin. However, the critique of positivism is presented by Cooper as well.²⁶¹ It is interesting that Knopff and Cooper represent a divide in the field of political science on whether or not the field of political philosophy is empirically relevant. Knopff’s perspectives sometimes seem to take an approach that is tailored to modern audiences of policy analysts and government. Examples of this include Knopff’s investigation of whether legislatures or courts provide the best institutional protection of rights²⁶². Here Knopff is adapting to current modes of political speech, namely “rights talk”. In Tocqueville’s time people were not as interested in these debates and Tocqueville adapted to his own modes of the more divisive political issues.

Examples of these issues include Tocqueville’s discussions in *Empire and Slavery* and *Report on Slavery* where Tocqueville gives political council to the National Assembly. He recommended a change in approach to the colonization of Algeria. He believed great governmental effort was being used to achieve very limited ends. The centralization and decision of key matters from Paris did not result in favorable conditions for the acceptance of French methods in Algeria.²⁶³ A similar attitude to colonized peoples is found in Flanagan’s consideration of indigenous peoples. Flanagan appreciates that there have been many different societies and cultures over time. He takes a relativist position in stating that ideas of the ‘good’ are different in each society and culture. This implicitly recognizes the right of different peoples and cultures to be accommodated side by side.²⁶⁴ While, Flanagan (like Tocqueville) is critical of his government’s approach of centralization and the Canadian government’s management of the reserve system,²⁶⁵ he still seeks to find more successful measures to accommodate Indigenous cultures into the country albeit through methods of potential economic contribution.²⁶⁶

This approach to multiple ideas of the good leading to the accommodation of different cultures while critiquing the central government’s overreach can also be compared to Knopff, who has written extensively on Quebec nationalism and the constitution reforms that came from talks

²⁵⁷ Knopff, Rainer. “Civil Society vs. Democracy” *Connections Between Governments and Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations: Public Policy and the Third Sector*. 1.

²⁵⁸ Voegelin, Eric. *The New Science of Politics*. 8.

²⁵⁹ Knopff, Rainer. “Civil Society vs. Democracy”.

²⁶⁰ Knopff, Rainier & F.L. Morton. *The Charter Revolution & The Court Party*. 19.

²⁶¹ Cooper, Barry. *The Restoration of Political Science and the Crisis of Modernity*. 3.

²⁶² “Parliament vs. The Courts: Making Sense of the Bill of Rights Debate.” Knopff, Rainer. 1988. With a Comment by Peter Bailey. *Legislative Studies (Journal of the Australian Study of Parliament Group)* 3 (2): 3.

²⁶³ Tocqueville. Alexis de. *Empire and Slavery*. 62.

²⁶⁴ Flanagan, Tom. *First nations? Second Thoughts*. 33.

²⁶⁵ Flanagan, Tom. *First nations? Second Thoughts*. 5.

²⁶⁶ Flanagan, Tom. *First nations? Second Thoughts*. 167.

about separation and independence. Part of the issue is language and culture for Indigenous peoples as well as peoples in Algeria and Quebec. The accommodation and preservation of the French language in Quebec²⁶⁷ partly mirrors the discussions around the accommodation of the existing culture in Algeria, specifically of the Moors who Tocqueville believed could be left as a distinct society and would be beneficial to the economic enterprise of colonization.²⁶⁸

These were some peoples of Algeria who Tocqueville was sympathetic to. The Moors and the Kabyles in particular were of interest to Tocqueville in terms of how the French could create peaceable relations with them. These peoples were both more materialistic and more individualistic than the more nomadic Arab tribes.²⁶⁹ Tocqueville says that the Moors had “sedentary tastes and desire to enjoy their wealth in peace or acquire it in trade have kept them in the towns.”²⁷⁰ This reflects an attitude of assimilation towards an independent people rather than one of colonial domination. Tocqueville wished France to treat these peoples much more gently than those that followed Abd-el-Kader (the revolutionary leader of the nomadic peoples of Algeria). “As for the lands in the Mitidja and the Massif that belong not to Arab tribes but to Moors, it would be useful for the government to acquire them either by mutual agreement or by force, paying liberally for them. The Moorish population deserves our consideration because of its peaceful character”²⁷¹ The Moors or the Kabyles could not serve as a link to other Arabs, however. The Moors were to be preserved as a distinct society separate from the rest of the country

This finds similarities in the context of Quebec where Knopff argues that Canada faces a crisis in the nature of the relationship between French and English communities.²⁷² The issue for the French peoples is to preserve their own language and culture in the face of an English majority.²⁷³ Pierre Trudeau is the Canadian prime minister who addressed this issue with the most force. The original policy in Canada was of two official cultures, bilingualism, and biculturalism.²⁷⁴ The later idea of biculturalism becomes problematic in a country such as Canada that wishes to advance an agenda of ‘multiculturalism’ as it implicitly disadvantages other cultures by the idea that there are only two official cultures in the country. Knopff argues that Trudeau bases this argument on ‘liberalism’ that the government should not concern itself with promoting particular cultures and doing so is ‘inimical to human progress towards the good’²⁷⁵. Trudeau’s approach is hand in hand with the sorts of ideas Tocqueville was advancing with respect to the Moors. He was not interested in forming official French and Moorish cultures but rather fitting them into the new order of Algeria.

Tocqueville was not always optimistic that his philosophy would be taken to heart. However, he still gave many recommendations concerning personal well-being, concerning himself with how peoples might be freer and less servile in a democracy.²⁷⁶ Knopff similarly to Tocqueville is interested in the preservation of freedom in a democracy. When investigating the

²⁶⁷ “Language and Culture in the Canadian Debate: The Battle of the White Papers. Knopff, Rainer. 1979. *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 6 (1): 64-82.

²⁶⁸ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Empire and Slavery*, 20.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Empire and Slavery*, 87.

²⁷² Knopff, Rainer. “Language and Culture in the Canadian Debate”, 66.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁷⁶ Correspondence of Alexis de Tocqueville and Louis de Kergorlay, 242.

accommodation of Quebec as a distinct society within Canada, he proposes only two options either separation or constitutional revision.²⁷⁷ Revising the constitution requires answers to what it means to have constitutional government in a pluralistic society. Knopff believes the solution for accommodating a plurality of religions and cultures into one nation requires a certain form of “limited government” which is:

limited in the particular sense of pursuing only such policies as are compatible with the political equality of men. But the only kind of policies compatible with equality are those which do not contravene the freedom which flows from that equality; namely, the freedom to pursue happiness as one sees fit, limited only by the requirements of a similar freedom for others. Political equality leads to this freedom because if all men are equal then no man can judge better than I in what my happiness consists. This means, for example, that government is barred from concerning itself directly with the salvation of the souls of its citizens.²⁷⁸

Knopff comes across as a liberal of the same variety as Locke, namely that he privileges freedom before equality. Interestingly in this passage he uses the language of souls and happiness (well-being). This is similar to Tocqueville who is concerned with the state of men’s souls in a democracy that renders them increasingly servile. Knopff as well as Tocqueville do not believe the government should limit these freedoms. Tocqueville and Knopff want men to be led away from being servile by their own account not through the government. The state should not advise its citizens on how to attain personal well-being in these authors' opinions. Furthermore, Tocqueville and Knopff show some similarities in their application of liberalism to issues of language and culture. Accommodating a plurality of cultures within one nation remains a political and philosophical problem. Both of these authors attempt to address this problem by arguing that the government should not concern itself with promoting particular cultures or particular ideas of the good as this is contrary to the tenets of both freedom and equality.

Flanagan as a political adviser trying to rise above partisan ties and Cooper following closely in the tradition of Voegelin and Aristotle represent some of the same methods in Tocqueville’s thinking. Knopff is the most different of this trio, sometimes relying on thinkers like Putnam,²⁷⁹ a thinker influenced by Tocqueville. His own philosophy of privileging equality and democracy has similarities which Tocqueville’s even though his methods differ.

Flanagan, Knopff and Tocqueville all contribute a perspective which adheres to the liberal principle of freedom to avoid mandating particular visions of the good while still critical of the prevailing order of liberal democracy. The diversity in Tocqueville’s thought is not fully captured by these three thinkers from the Calgary School. In some ways these thinkers are Tocquevillian but not all. They all have different priorities that come out when viewing their work as a whole. Covering multiple aspects of these authors' work shows their predominant methods. The role of the scholar in society undergoes change, however some of the same kinds of roles that were filled by individuals such as Tocqueville 200 years ago are the same today. Even for individuals who do not support the Calgary School’s positions on policy understanding the relation of these thinkers’ writings to Tocqueville’s philosophy is valuable.

²⁷⁷ “Nationalism, Liberalism, and Federalism: Elements of Canada’s Constitutional Crisis.” Knopff, Rainer. 1979-80. *Dalhousie Review* 59 (4): 651.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 652.

²⁷⁹ Knopff, Rainer. “Civil Society vs. Democracy”. 1.

Conclusion

This analysis matters to understand more subtly, and through a more generous reading than has been found elsewhere in the literature, neoconservatism in Canada. Because of how Tocquevillian the Calgary School is we can see that neoconservatives in Canada have deeper intellectual roots than have been examined elsewhere in the literature. The question remains when the Calgary School appeal to the Tocqueville as an intellectual resource whether this is an accurate use of Tocqueville. Tocqueville was used correctly by the Calgary School with respect to the themes of centralization and individualism in chapters one and three. However, in terms of the tyranny of the majority and how they do political science there is more of a disjoint between Tocqueville and the Calgary School. The most coherent argument running throughout the Calgary School's thought is that certain forces such as bureaucratization or individualism can negatively impact the character of a people living within a liberal democracy.

The critiques of bureaucracy and centralization presented by the Calgary School use Tocqueville effectively. They are using Tocquevillian ideas to critique "a long slow slide" in Canada towards dependency on the federal government. However, this is not just a critique of economic government intervention or the welfare state. The position of economic austerity is how the neoconservative position is usually understood, but the position of the Calgary School and Tocqueville regarding their critique of centralization and bureaucracy is more subtle than this. It is what over-bureaucratization and centralization do to the character of a people living in a democracy where everything is centralized (this critique of centralization is a large part of Tocqueville's writing and is missing from the literature on the Calgary School).

There are incredible similarities between the arguments for small government that Tocqueville and the Calgary School offer. They are both concerned with the subordination of public interest to private interest (a concern also held by the left). The concern of the Calgary School is that increasing centralization, and larger government apparatus works against the values of democracy, particularly individual liberty. For them, the public interest is conceived of as the good for each individual democratic citizen. Private interest on the other hand results from the concentration of power in a centralized authority in an increasingly bureaucratized system. This comes from Tocqueville's observation that in a democracy public life is always mixed with private life and this results in a "general abasement of souls".²⁸⁰

What Tocqueville describes as a 'long slow slide' into despotism, is like what the Calgary School observe in Canadian politics following Pierre Trudeau. It is interesting that while critical of Trudeau the Calgary School support some of his decisions (particularly with respect to Quebec's role in Canada) although these policies did tend to result in more centralization. The other Prime Minister of note in this project, Brian Mulroney, is given short shrift by the Calgary School authors. The Calgary School and the new conservatism of the 21st century has tried to distance itself from toryism, particularly on the grounds that Prime Minister Mulroney did not enact enough cutbacks of the variety favoured by Thatcher and Reagan. The critique of the 'Great Handout' and the joke "I'm from the federal government and I'm here to help you" are emblematic of this kind of politics.

The Calgary School's use of the tyranny of the majority is an inaccurate use of Tocqueville. This is because of the way language has changed surrounding this idea. Today when talking about the tyranny of the majority it is couched in terms of identity, either along regional lines (such as the Calgary School do— for instance Cooper makes reference to a ruling

²⁸⁰ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 246.

culture in Canada²⁸¹) or along racial lines (minorities). This is because the language of “solidarity” has become more common in the modern context. A call for solidarity now means calling for more reliance on a central authority. This kind of appeal does not make people more reliant on their own communities but on centralized authority, something Tocqueville would have warned against. Contrary to this Tocqueville’s idea of the tyranny of the majority was that the numerical majority will not necessarily act in the common good. Principally it is that the legislature that beys the majority.²⁸² The majority exerts a “moral empire” on society²⁸³ and carries the assumption that there is more intelligence in the many than the few. It is an “irresistible force” that surmounts all obstacles before it.²⁸⁴

The Calgary School’s reaction to their idea of the tyranny of the majority in Canada is to recommend something like a libertarianism²⁸⁵ (Cooper and Bercuson identify with this term) that holds individual freedom as the highest good.²⁸⁶ For them this is a reaction against the Liberal way of doing politics in which collective rights are privileged above individual rights. While this concept of individual liberty does fit with Tocqueville’s writings the Calgary School’s use of the tyranny of the majority is an imprecise use of Tocqueville. This is because what Tocqueville means when he uses this term is that people of democratic sentiment and attitude will tyrannize over people with aristocratic sentiments and attitudes.²⁸⁷ Tocqueville is worried about the supremacy of the democratic soul and democratic values that work against great individuals. He notes the “small number of remarkable men” in political life in America that is a result of the tyranny of the majority and that this trend will end up harming democratic citizens.²⁸⁸ The proper interpretation of Tocqueville’s tyranny of the majority is his fear that the “great”, or those few individuals who excel in the sorts of fields democracies lack most in (the arts and public life)²⁸⁹ will be tyrannized over by the many.

This does not fit with Cooper’s Laurentianism thesis (i.e., that Central Canada holds a position of economic, political, and cultural dominance over the rest of the country), however it does fit with his implicit assumptions about the differences between the character of people living in Central Canada and the West. The assumption that lies within his Laurentian thesis is that the people who live in the West (Alberta) have a greater character (are more courageous, adventurous, rugged) than those who live in Central Canada. This assumption comes out particularly strongly when Cooper speaks of the cattle culture of the ranchers in his home province.²⁹⁰ This strong character that Cooper envisions is better than the character of peoples in

²⁸¹ Cooper, Barry. *It’s the Regime Stupid! A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. 34.

²⁸² Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 236

²⁸³ *Ibid.* 236

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 241

²⁸⁵ While “libertarianism” is not a term most readers of the Calgary School would associate with their ideas and libertarians would not identify with the Calgary School, Bercuson and Cooper explicitly use this term in the introduction to their book *Derailed*.

²⁸⁶ Bercuson, David Jay, and Barry Cooper. *Derailed: The Betrayal of the National Dream*. 11.

²⁸⁷ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 240.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 246

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 449- 450.

²⁹⁰ Cooper, Barry. *It’s the Regime Stupid! A Report from the Cowboy West on Why Stephen Harper Matters*. 10.

Central Canada who have grown soft relying on the apparatus of the welfare state. This implicit assumption in Cooper's Laurentian thesis is much closer to what Tocqueville would have had in mind, with the aristocratic few being dominated by the democratic many. It is perhaps a romanticized vision of the people who live within these provinces; however, this is also in line with the nature of Tocqueville's writing. Tocqueville also romanticized the character and spirit of the American people²⁹¹, perhaps in hopes of inspiring them to strive for greatness. This kind of rhetoric is the same that is found in Cooper's writings, a hope that people who live in the regime can aspire to greatness even though the forces found within democracy will act to suppress it.

One of these negative forces is democratic individualism which Tocqueville explains as democratic peoples becoming more and more timid and powerless. The doctrine of self-interest well-understood is meant to work against this effect in that it is a philosophy in which an individual works for themselves by working for others. This is the 'well-understood' part of Tocqueville's doctrine of self-interest, it is not solely working for oneself that is important but working together, this philosophy is meant to address the individualism that is more present in democracy than in aristocracy.²⁹² Both ideas work together to isolate citizens from one another. The idea of an individual existing in themselves and by themselves is an old fiction of liberalism but is also acknowledged as such by liberals. This idea, known sometimes as 'liberal individualism' can also be traced back to thinkers such as John Locke. Cooper talking about corruption in Canada is not really talking about democratic individualism or self interest well-understood, but instead everyday corruption. This is an inexact use of Tocqueville. On the other hand, Knopff critiquing ideas of "The People" or "Rights"²⁹³ is much closer to what Tocqueville would have had in mind. These terms are ways in which democratic citizens can be subjugated. Using terms like "the people" as political justifications and arguments limit the freedom of discussion available in public discourse. This is again an argument about the character of democratic peoples. An example of this is also found in Flanagan's analysis and critique of Riel. Louis Riel was a reformer or populist and is claimed by both the left and the right. Flanagan critiques his brand of populism and religious claims to authority on the grounds that this sort of appeal is a form of subjugation and subversion of democratic ideals.²⁹⁴

Tocqueville's idea about individualism is that America's philosophy concerning this leads people to more happiness and less morality. By this he means that they are increasingly concerned with more hedonistic pleasures at the cost of higher values and goals. This is a parallel to the Canadian conservative position. This position holds concerns about the fall of morality, the increase of individualism and the effect this will have on the character of the people in the Canadian regime. This is a good use of a Tocquevillian idea in Canadian conservatism. Tocqueville's negative conception of democratic individualism is also used well by Cooper when he talks frequently of the 'fall of greatness' in Canadian politics. Cooper talks about corruption, but also how because Canadian everyday politics has descended to discussions over money – that the character of the nation itself moves away from greater goals, and actions. This parallels Tocqueville's writings concerning the idea of self-interest understood which results in the fall of

²⁹¹ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 264.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 500

²⁹³ Knopff, Rainer "Liberal Democracy and the Challenge of Nationalism in Canadian Politics." 1982. *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 9 (1): 23-42.

²⁹⁴ Flanagan, Thomas. "From Riel to Reform (And a Little Beyond): Politics in Western Canada". 623.

public virtue. As mentioned earlier Tocqueville sees smaller and smaller numbers of ‘great men’ who are a part of American politics, politicians instead become more self-interested, private life intrudes on public life, and once again the character of the nation is diminished. It is evident that there is increasingly a diminishment of meaningful public forums within democracy and increasing limitations on speech within those forums that still exist and that this is a valid concern held by neoconservatism.

This idea of critiquing negative forces that work against the flourishing of people in democracy is a common argument or thread that runs throughout Tocqueville and the Calgary School. More generally neoconservatism in Canada, when interpreted more even-handedly, and not dismissed out of hand, also makes arguments, and raises concerns about forces that affect people who live within Canadian democracy such as individualism and centralization. This does not mean all readers should therefore agree with the tenets of neoconservatism (such as small government) merely that when evaluating the work of the Calgary School in a way that is not automatically hostile, the validity of their concerns (increasing individualism and centralization) can be better analysed. Furthermore, evaluating their work in this way means that critiques that are more targeted can be brought to bear on their work.

Some of these critiques are that the Calgary School do not consider the potential negative implications of small government (i.e., the rise of private corporations). It is also the case that they do not suggest enough alternatives to the current situation and are merely making criticisms. In the light of Stephen Harper’s failures (i.e., Senate Reform), more options for the future should be considered by these authors. Instead, many of the Calgary School writers seem to have devolved into writing about Albertan separatism.²⁹⁵ This is perhaps understandable in light of the disenchantment with Canadian politics many of these writers express— however, to better address current issues more realistic policy alternatives should be explored.

Furthermore, the way in which political science is done by the Calgary School is much different than how it is done by Tocqueville. The Calgary School write more reactively than Tocqueville. As an aristocrat over several periods of radical transformation in France and America Tocqueville made a much wider range of predictions. This is taken against the modern academic context where the Calgary School write. Cooper for example when not writing more opinionated pieces on regional policy, writes more philosophically relying on Voegelin.²⁹⁶ He is more interested in addressing broader questions than the ones Tocqueville was interested in such as the nature of technology and human pre-history.²⁹⁷ He is either more specific or much broader than Tocqueville in this sense.

Flanagan on the other hand is more interested in relations of power than Tocqueville.²⁹⁸ Flanagan is interested in specific political mechanisms or “electoral” political science and how leaders come to power.²⁹⁹ Flanagan’s writings have a much more cynical character than Tocqueville’s. They come from a position of disenfranchisement with the traditional forms of doing politics. This is exacerbated by Flanagan’s own falling out with Stephen Harper and the Conservative party. Barry Cooper also falls into disenchantment with traditional forms of politics in the wake of Stephen Harper’s failure to make good on promises such as Senate reform.

²⁹⁵ Flanagan, Tom, Mintz, Jack. M. & Morton Ted. *Moment of Truth: How to Think About Alberta's Future*. Sutherland House, Sept. 23, 2020.

²⁹⁶ Cooper, Barry. *Consciousness and Politics*.

²⁹⁷ Cooper, Barry. *Paleolithic Politics: The Human Community in Early Art*.

²⁹⁸ Flanagan, Tom. *Winning Power*. 30

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*,

Knopff on the other hand is perhaps the least disenchanted with Canadian politics, actually writing to defend Stephen Harper's decisions concerning proroguing parliament.³⁰⁰ Knopff is perhaps the most specific in his writings out of all the Calgary School, targeting specific parts of the Canadian regime such as the court system or the charter.³⁰¹ His critiques of the court system in Canada are quite Tocquevillian as he raises questions of whether a government body that is not directly elected should have so much control over policy.³⁰² However, many of his other writings address more specific matters from the judicial system such as the charter.

Taken together the Calgary School think they are writing in the same context as Tocqueville, addressing the current problems of their democracy and how these will unfold into the future. Together with Tocqueville they value the liberal principle of freedom which avoids regulating one conception of 'the good life' and are critical of liberal democracy while still supporting it. Alexis de Tocqueville remains extremely relevant to 21st century Canada. His idea about people of democratic sentiment and attitude that will tyrannize over people with aristocratic sentiments and attitudes is particularly relevant. The rise of politically correct ways of speech, while advancing an agenda of equality, works in dangerous ways against liberty.

Tocqueville was able to observe that while in an aristocracy under a king, people's lives were in danger if they did not obey, it is now men's souls that are threatened by tyranny. If a person has a view contrary to the majority, they lose their rights of humanity, those like them will flee and those who believe in their innocence will abandon them.³⁰³ The majority in a democracy is in constant "adoration" of itself. This is also the case for 21st century democracy in Canada. The number of dissenting voices is increasingly fewer, and freedom of discussion is increasingly regulated. Tocqueville's observation that there will be a smaller number of remarkable men seems equally true. Canada seems to have moved away from its era of 'great' leaders, or at least those with a remarkable character. As the Calgary School observe and, although they are critical³⁰⁴, show that Pierre Trudeau may have been the last Prime Minister with a larger vision for Canada.

Canadian conservative political thought has not been fairly treated in the literature. Through the examination of three themes (bureaucratic despotism, tyranny of the majority, democratic individualism) and how they relate to Alexis de Tocqueville a more thorough understanding of Canadian political thought has been accomplished. These themes show how conservatism can be a perspective that is both sensitive to the values of liberal democracy and the problems inherent with this kind of regime. While conservatism, especially understood through the Calgary School is not without issues, it should be analysed on its own terms and its influences should be further investigated. This kind of analysis can serve to better understand a strain of political thought in Canada that has become estranged and show both its strengths and weaknesses.

³⁰⁰ Knopff, Rainer, and Dave Snow. "'Harper's New Rules' for Government Formation: Fact or Fiction?" 2013. *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 12: 12-21.

³⁰¹ Harding, Mark, and Rainer Knopff. "Charter Values vs. Charter Dialogue 2013." *National Journal of Constitutional Law* 31: 161-181.

³⁰² Morton, F.L. & Knopff, Rainier. *The Charter Revolution and the Court Party*.

³⁰³ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 245.

³⁰⁴ Knopff, Rainer. "Pierre Trudeau and the Problem of Liberal Democratic Statesmanship." 1980-81. *Dalhousie Review* 60 (4): 712-726.

The Calgary School's use of Tocqueville is highly effective. Many of Tocqueville's ideas come across clearly in the texts of Flanagan, Cooper and Knopff, particularly those concerning individualism and centralization. While this may not be evident in their most well-known texts, for instance Flanagan's ill received, *First Nations: Second Thoughts*, and Knopff's *Charter Revolution*, when examining their work as a whole these ideas come across, for instance in Flanagan's analyses of Louis Riel and Knopff's broader more philosophically minded reflections on liberal democracy.³⁰⁵ There are many benefits to their using the Tocquevillian lens to the extent they do.

Having a philosophical basis to their arguments, gives a firmer standing to some conservative ideas that are dismissed out of hand. This project is not an apology for the Calgary School but to give more robust criticisms that have not been found elsewhere, as many critics are unwilling to analyse these academics on their own terms. Many of the concerns brought up by neoconservatives in Canada deserve a fairer and more even-handed treatment, rather than being dismissed out of hand. However, critiques can be made along the lines of their own disenchantment with politics and more recent fixation on Albertan separatism.

It is always important to find subtlety of interpretation in different strains of political thought. This has not been the case with analyses of the Calgary School and conservatism which has largely been discounted and unfairly treated by commentators from the left without thought for its deeper influences or without reference to the substance of the ideas under discussion. This school and conservatism more generally evaluate important underlying assumptions in liberal democracy, both affirming them and challenging them.

³⁰⁵ Knopff, Rainer "Liberal Democracy and the Challenge of Nationalism in Canadian Politics." 1982. *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 9 (1): 23-42.

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