

Multiculturalism and the Welfare State

edited by Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 405 pp.

When I began my tenure as book review editor for *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de politiques*, my predecessor advised me to be very cautious about reviews of edited volumes. The diversity of subjects and perspectives usually contained in edited volumes does not always lend themselves to succinct exposition in a review. *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State* completely belies this criticism, and for this Banting and Kymlicka must be congratulated for masterful editing. The editors have marshalled the efforts of 18 experts to shed considerable light on one simply stated, but remarkably nuanced question, "Do multiculturalism policies undermine the welfare state?" In their insightful introduction, the editors take pains to prevent the reader from arriving at a simple "yes" or "no" answer to the central question of this volume. Nevertheless, the arguments and evidence presented in this book are enough to prompt me to conclude that multiculturalism policies are not harmful to the welfare state.

Most of the chapters are structured in such a way as to examine one or more of three strands of arguments that might lead one to believe that multicultural policies harm the welfare state: that these policies divert political activists away from pro-welfare state activities (the crowding-out effect); create a backlash against certain groups, thereby eroding a sense of social solidarity needed to underpin a welfare state (the corroding effect); and can be presented as solutions to problems for which they have little hope of being the solution, for example, as a way to address the economic woes of certain ethnic groups (the misdiagnosis effect).

An important methodological undercurrent also flows through this volume. There are multiple cautions against accepting and generalizing from a master narrative. In this book, the master narrative is a caricature of the experience of the United States.

Racial and ethnic divisions, it is argued, have attenuated support for redistributive policy in the United States. Multicultural policies, by highlighting these divisions, are claimed to make redistribution still more unpopular. Even if we accept this narrative as broadly descriptive of American experience, it does not follow that it has any explanatory power elsewhere. Indeed, in Chapter 2 of this volume, Banting, Johnson, Kymlicka, and Soroka use international comparisons to cast doubt on the widely accepted premise that ethnic diversity is a source of strain on the welfare state.

The master narrative also fails to isolate the effect of multicultural policies on the welfare state. It may very well be the case that lack of solidarity with members of other ethnic groups is a causal factor in both welfare state policy and multicultural policy, rendering any correlation between the two spurious. The contribution of Hero and Preuhs (Chapter 4) to this volume recognizes and further exposes this gap in the master narrative by finding that changes in multicultural policies have little impact on changes in redistributive policies among US states.

A series of chapters focusing on European countries broadly discredits the notion that multicultural policies are an important cause of resistance to redistribution. However, these chapters highlight an important caveat to the central message of the book (and, incidentally, illustrate the nuanced nature of its central question): attitudes toward established minority groups often differ from attitudes toward recent immigrants. The interests of historical minorities are perhaps woven into the political fabric, assuaging any fears of the majority. New arrivals, on the other hand, are viewed with more suspicion. Thus, the corrosive effect might be felt most strongly in policies directed toward new arrivals.

The theoretical argument against the crowding-out effect is that political activism is not in fixed supply. James's chapter on campaigns for historical redress in Canada clearly illustrates this point. The

members of these campaigns often go on to further activism using their new-found skills and voice. While this further activism is not commonly directed at saving the welfare state, I draw the tentative conclusion that most of the campaigners would probably not campaign for the welfare state in the absence of their experience in fighting for historical redress. Likewise, Van Cott and Assies, in their respective chapters on the Latin American experience, argue against crowding out. Recognition of indigenous groups has, instead, given voice to the previously disenfranchised and allowed for new political coalitions that can bolster the welfare state. These chapters also provide a powerful theoretical rebuttal of the misdiagnosis effect: allowing groups political space in which to articulate their identity and interests should lead to a more informed debate about the sources of their problems.

In my view, this book is an example of scholarship done right. The central question is clearly stated. The theoretical framework of the introduction is woven through the empirical chapters. Evidence is drawn from multiple sources, including comparative studies (including cross-country regressions), opinion surveys, and a variety of country studies. That is not to say that there is no room to criticize some of the specific findings. I would like to see a few more robustness checks in some of the regression analyses, for example. The diversity of approaches in this volume makes its general conclusion greater than the sum of its parts. Almost all of the evidence points in the same direction—away from multicultural policies as a significant source of erosion in the welfare state.

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Celebrity Diplomacy

by Andrew F. Cooper. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008, 150 pp.

This fascinating book deals with a topical and important issue. Celebrities working for some cause or other is not a new phenomenon. The causes are wide ranging: eliminating landmines, putting an end to whaling and the culling of seals, solving humanitarian issues in Darfur, bringing debt relief to desperately poor countries, eliminating poverty, etc. Some of these activities, but not all, have similarities with diplomatic action by well-known diplomats like Henry Kissinger. This book is about celebrity activities that are diplomatic in nature in that the activity is formally recognized by established institutions like the United Nations, individual governments, or group of governments like the G8 and the European Union.

The author asks a number of important questions and tries to answer them. Who are these celebrity diplomats? What do they actually do? Why do they do what they do? The book also brings out the important differences in style and content between some of these celebrities. Although numerous celebrities take part in these types of charitable activities, the author focuses on only a few individuals such as Audrey Hepburn, Bono of U2, Bob Geldof, and Angelina Jolie. The book successfully demonstrates the sincerity of these individuals; their work is time-consuming and unselfish, and it is not as if they are participating in reality TV shows to resurrect flagging careers.

As mentioned before, celebrities concern themselves with diverse causes. The book concerns the work they do for the benefit of the poor in developing countries. Within this boundary, there are many different ways that celebrities try to help, including offering emergency aid after a natural disaster like the recent tsunami in Asia or the cyclone in Myanmar, helping people affected by famine or prolonged malnutrition, helping people caught up in a civil war, and advocating debt relief for desperately

poor nations. Each of these problems requires different approaches from celebrities. For example, dealing with a famine crisis demands very different actions than confronting ongoing hunger, and these differences are not always well understood. Similarly, solving a civil war may be beyond the scope of celebrity diplomacy as the celebrities may not be able to use the instruments (carrots and sticks) that regular diplomats can and do use. Is George Clooney then wasting his time working on a solution to the Darfur tragedy? I think what he is trying to do is to harness public opinion on this issue so that Western governments do not turn a blind eye toward the much suffering people of Darfur, while not confronting the parties in the conflict directly. I shall return to this issue of public opinion a little later.

There are other reasons why celebrity diplomacy may have limitations. The individuals may be celebrities in the West but may not be that well known in the countries where they go to serve. In addition, the issues are complex. There are many reasons why many people in developing countries are in abject poverty, for example. On the one hand, people in the West are not always willing to provide the necessary assistance (case of aid fatigue) and, on the other hand, policy-makers in the developing countries often do not follow pro-poor development policies and do not use the existing assistance effectively (case of fungibility of aid). The role of the celebrities in the West has been primarily to deal with the first problem, and they have succeeded to some degree in this respect. But their success in dealing with the problems at the other end has been limited for understandable reasons. The author does discuss the role of local celebrities in dealing with local issues, but there is not much evidence to suggest that they have had much success in changing government policies in their own countries.

Have the celebrities in the West been successful in what they are trying to achieve? Are there differences in this respect between the celebrities in the United States and those in Europe? One way to assess their success or otherwise is to look at the fig-

ures for overseas development assistance (ODA) and private aid (which are available from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development website). For expositional brevity, let us look at two countries, namely, the US and the UK. In 1998, ODA, as a percentage of GNP was 0.10 percent in the US and 0.27 percent in the UK. For the US this figure remained the same in 2000, but rose to 0.16 percent in 2004 and then to 0.21 percent in 2005. As for the UK, the figures are 0.31 percent in 2000, 0.36 percent in 2004, and 0.47 percent in 2005. The steep rise in the figures from 2004 to 2005 has a lot to do with debt relief agreed upon at the G8 summit in Davos in 2005. British celebrities such as Bono and Geldof thus have succeeded in their efforts to persuade Western governments to deal with the issue of heavy debt among the poorest of the poor countries in the world. In this respect, the author's analysis of Bono's attempt to broaden lobbying from just the UK government to other Western governments is an apt one; such a strategy for lobbying seems to have paid good dividends. British celebrities also seem to have succeeded in persuading the UK government to increase ODA over the years.

Have the US celebrities been less successful, then, compared to their counterparts in Europe? It is tempting to say so, but I think they have succeeded in some other dimensions. If we look at the figures for private foreign aid as a proportion of total aid (ODA plus private foreign aid), we find that for the US the figures are 25 percent in 1998, 29 percent in

2000, 30 percent in 2004, and 24 percent in 2005. The relatively low figure for 2005 should be understood in the context that in 2005 the US ODA for debt relief increased significantly. For the UK, on the other hand, private aid as a percentage of total aid has dropped from 10 percent in 1998 to about 6 percent in 2005. Once again the decline over the years has to be understood in the context that ODA from the UK has risen more significantly than that from the US over this period. The work of the likes of Audrey Hepburn, Angelina Jolie, and others over the years seems have been successful in persuading the American *public* to give more foreign aid, whereas celebrities in the UK have succeeded in persuading their *government* (via harnessing public opinion) to provide more ODA. People in the two countries appear to work differently and, accordingly, the celebrities in the two countries also approach the problem differently.

To summarize, I have enjoyed this delightful book, which is full of interesting and novel analysis. As for the future, tentative figures coming from the OECD seem to suggest that ODA from the major donor countries such as the US, the UK, and France has fallen significantly (by up to 10 percent) in recent years, and the celebrities have a lot of work in hand to reverse this trend. My request to the celebrities is simple: Please keep up the good work!

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Multiversities, Ideas, and Democracy

by George Fallis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 475 pp.

Questions about the purpose and role of higher education have been at issue since the inception of universities. Critics of universities cite the movement toward economic models of operating as a separation from the public goods implicit in public higher education. Relative to earlier critiques of industry/university partnerships in research, the decline in priority for excellence in teaching, and the relationship between the public and institutions, this book takes a softer view on critiquing higher education. In this book, which is as ambitious as its title, George Fallis provides a positive and adaptive view toward the future of multiversities. Multiversities, he argues, are the multipurpose universities that emerged out of the second half of the twentieth century. They are a subset of universities—they represent what others refer to as “research universities” in terms of their scope of programs and wide range of students. In this book, he outlines a history of “Anglo-American” multiversities, identifies five characteristics of these institutions in current times, and then builds on those characteristics to envision what the future of these universities might look like.

George Fallis is a professor in the Department of Economics and Division of Social Science and former dean of the Faculty of Arts at York University. It is from this perspective that he wrote this book; it represents an insider’s view on the role and purpose of higher education in society. Importantly, he notes that this book was “written with the conviction that undergraduate education was, and remains, the central task of the multiversity. Also, undergraduate education must always be a liberal education, and must include study in the humanities and be an education for citizenship—although even as we draw upon these fundamental ideas of liberal learning, we must reinterpret them for our age” (p. 12). These views go unchallenged as he outlines his vision for the future of academia.

This book begins with an overview of the history of multiversities in Canada, the United States, and England. This broad history includes the large-scale changes and policies that influenced the development of the universities in North America and is very descriptive in nature. In comparison to other books on the histories of higher education in Anglo-America, this book contributes in that it provides a synthesis on a variety of topics across the context of higher education. This aspect of the book is informative for those who are new to the context or history of higher education—or for those looking for an abbreviated overview of the past 100 years in the field.

In part two, Fallis identifies the five characteristics of our age that he believes will play a significant role in shaping the future of multiversities. He begins with “The Constrained Welfare State,” where he describes how the four pillars of the welfare state play (and will continue to play) a role in shaping the interaction between universities, the public, and students (p. 148). In this section, Fallis identifies some of the “new sources of revenue” that institutions are generating, including fundraising (p. 173). The discourse here focuses on a comparison between systems in Canada, the US, and the UK, but does not ground the discussion of fundraising in relation to the philanthropic economies of each of the contexts. The second characteristic of our age Fallis identifies as the “Information Technology Revolution.” Here he relies on the work of Michael Dertouzos in categorizing the revolution as taking place in computing, communications, and “how information is assembled, analysed, and moved around” (p. 179). This chapter provides an overview of the role of technology in higher education along those three themes. It does not provide much discussion about the controversies and resulting laws governing researchers within multiversities that surround copyright, patents, and intellectual property rights that one might expect from a policy-oriented text. Fallis draws on his experience as a dean in identifying “Postmodern Thought” (p. 222) as the third characteristic of our age in Chapter 8. While an interesting discussion,

he does not go far enough in the analysis and implications. His fourth identifying characteristic of our age is Commercialization; specifically, he focuses on the role of multiversity research as a tool for economic policy and the explicit role of commercialization of research at multiversities. His final characteristic of our age is Globalization as both a force on the institutions as well as by the institutions.

The final third of the book looks ahead to the changes in the relationships between the multiversities and their stakeholders in “Renewing the Social Contract” (p. 337). Reminiscent of the debates over the introduction of electives into the post-secondary curriculum nearly 200 years ago, Fallis

argues for a liberal education for democratic citizenship.

This book is useful to those who are looking for a resource that gives a broad historical overview of the developments and interrelationships in higher education over the past 100 years. For those interested in specific areas of investigation regarding policy or governance, this source will not be sufficient alone. If policy-makers or scholars of policy are interested in a fairly representative perspective of a dean, this is a reliable account and source of insight.

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