

Annual international conference of the French Association of Canadian Studies
June 10th to 13th, 2020, Université de Caen Normandie

Regions and Regionalism in Canada: constructing and managing political, social and cultural territory.

Among the salient features in the study of Canada is the sheer vastness of its territory. Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King famously remarked in the House of Commons in June 1936 that while some countries may have “too much history,” the difficulties for governing Canada stemmed from the fact that it had “too much *geography*.” Apprehending a country of this size has always been a challenge and certainly accommodating regional differences has been a central feature in shaping Canadian political history and in building the Canadian nation. Beyond the influence of regional diversity on federal politics, this conference proposes to widen the scope and also raise the question of social integration and the construction of a feeling of belonging. Which level of territorial attachment has been most pertinent in constructing identity in Canada? Canada, like other western democracies, has been subject to the forces of globalization and to neoliberal policy initiatives. These policies have centered on the objective of reducing the power of central governments to intervene and regulate, and have been favorable to decentralization within nation-states. How has this set of policies modified the balance of power and the sense of belonging in Canada?

The conference theme of *Regions and Regionalism in Canada* lends itself to an array of disciplinary perspectives. For political scientists, the concept of interaction and competition between different divisions of territory raises the question of the vertical separation of powers within Canadian federalism. Canadian indigenous peoples are particularly attached to their traditional territories: how can their demands for self-government be accommodated within Canadian federalism and what impact will this have on regions and regionalism? Historians may wish to explore questions linked to regional particularities, or to study how political and social allegiances have been constructed over the course of time. Are metropolitan/ hinterland models of analysis still pertinent as a means of understanding the centripetal/ centrifugal forces at play in Canada, or interpreting processes of regional marginalization? Sociologists and geographers have long been interested in the question of how a sense of belonging among citizens is constructed and maintained, notably by analyzing the spatial dimension of power and justice. In a contemporary age in which “think globally, act locally” has become a slogan, has the propensity to favour local initiatives resulted in shifting loyalties, has it modified the level at which citizens feel their strongest sense of belonging? Has it altered conceptions of citizenship? Has it had any impact on the locus of power? Which conceptual tools are most pertinent when trying to apprehend the social, cultural and political dimensions of regions and regionalism in Canada? How has the territorial notion of “region”, which comes out of the European tradition, been articulated to adapt to the Canadian context, especially with regard to the question of belonging (communities, nations, etc)? The conference theme will naturally lead researchers to question traditional scales of reference and to think about the functioning of provinces, territories, and regions within the Canadian system, and to analyze how political projects have shaped territory (special status for Quebec, indigenous land claims, etc). The conference organizers welcome contributions from specialists in literature and the visual arts: How do Canadian writers and artists deal with the concept of creating and building a sense of belonging? Has their artistic expression of regional voices been conditioned by their surrounding environments? What are the unifying elements in the diverse, regionalized corpus of Canadian literature? To what extent is there a tension at work between national, provincial, regional, or local perspectives? The same questions apply to specialists of Canadian cinema, in both fiction and documentary.

Propositions may be submitted to the scientific committee via andrew.ives@unicaen.fr by September 15th 2019. Please limit proposals to a maximum of 400 words and add a short personal bio (100 words).

Comité scientifique/ scientific committee : Frédéric Boily, Cécile Fouache, Yves Frenette, Hélène Harter, Andrew Ives, Jean-Michel Lacroix, Françoise Le Jeune, Richard Nimijean, Lorie-Anne Rainville, Benoit Raoulx, Martin Simard.

Version française au verso