R. Preece, “The Anglo-Saxon Conservative Tradition,” *CJPS* 22 (1980)

**Overview**

Paper argues that the mode of analysis used by many in the political culture literature – using “toryism” to explain differences between the old and new worlds, and really, between Canada and US – is misleading and that the major distinguishing mark **is not**between old and new worlds, but rather between Anglo-Saxon nations and others. The paper argues that the political ideas of Britain, Canada, and the US (and other Anglophone nations) are best understood as varieties of, and as rooted in, Lockean liberalism, that there have been no significant tory elements in the Anglo-Saxon nations, and that Lockeanism is more pervasive in English Canada than in the US.

**Background**

* “Tory” is employed in common parlance as synonym for “conservative” – it contains notions of organism, corporatism, and collectivism – and is used by some to differentiate the ideological constitution of the old world from that of the new, and by some, to distinguish Canada from the US by pointing to alleged lingering by significant remnants of collectivism in the Cdn polity
* Modern conservativism in Anglo-Saxon nations is readily – and frequently – portrayed as possessed of an inherent contradiction between collectivist and individualist elements. The confusion is so transparent that it is commonly characterized as “an inconsistent mix of ideologies”
* The traditional conservative is normally depicted as collectivist –
* Much of the misunderstanding of conservatism arises from its apparent continuous development from toryism – which might appropriately be considered to have been at least somewhat friendly to feudalism and the idea of divine right before 1688 – and from the intelligent description of it as a balance between competing forms
* Argument comes down to –
  + If the US is predominantly a rejection of things mediaeval and feudal, as Hartz and Hartzians belive, then Locke is not its appropriate philosopher – Locke has been Americanized, simplified and boiled down, and devoid of his complexities
  + Locke is, more appropriately, the founding father of the modern British and Canadian constitutions than he is of the American
* What differentiates the Cdn and British conservative from the American conservative is in part a matter of political structure – since Britain and Canada each has a major political party bearing the name “Conservative” there are many who belong to, or associate themselves with that party and accordingly describe themselves as conservative, for other than ideological reasons. Indeed, familial, regional, social, and class factors are usually thought to play a major role in party allegiance
* Hartzian thesis: there is an ideological dialectical process at work that determines societal belief systems. Where conservatism and liberalism exist contemporaneously, they will interact to produce socialism. In a liberal fragment society, there will be no dialectical interaction and thus socialism will be absent (for Hartz, the US is such a society)
* Its use in Cdn political science:
  + McRae initially employed the model to demonstrate that “Canada offers almost a classic instance of a two-fragment society”
  + Horowitz used Hartz to demonstrate Canada’s uniqueness – Canada was significantly less feudalist than Britain but could accommodate a legitimate social democratic party alien to the culture of the US

**Conclusion**

* The Hartzian model is an inadequate account of Britain’s and Canada’s differences from the US
* Analysis suggested that Britain and English Canada represent the complex, cautious, pragmatic Lockean society reinforced (in different degrees) by Burkean prudence and order. Comparatively, the US represents the unqualified, abstracted Lockean society reinforced only be Burkean sterner virtues
* As such, we may expect Canada’s political life to be more pragmatic and prudential, the mystique of government (of authority in general) to be more pervasive in Canada.