**Alain-G Gagnon, Montserrat Guiberneau and Francois Rocher (eds.) – The Conditions of Diversity in Multinational Democracies (2003)**

**Thesis:**

It is retrograde to regard sub-state nationalisms as tribalistic, illiberal, or an endangerment to the democratic quality of a country. Such views tend to mask pernicious official majoritarian state nationalisms. Democratic minority nationalist movements – a distinct subset of nationalist movements in the world – demand recognition in the interest of revitalizing civil society, enhancing social cohesion, and reinforcing democratic practices.

**Main Arguments:**

Very few Western democracies define themselves as being multinational, despite their social realities. The result is that minority nations, themselves constituting independent *demos,*are left subject to the democratic will of a majority to which they do not belong.

Nations without states do not pose a risk to the stability of the states they lie within. Nor are they anachronistic or backwards. Such attitudes reflect outdated thinking. Contemporary forms of nationalism differ substantially from the 19th century nationalism that drives these perceptions. The nationalisms of places like Catalonia, Scotland and Spain are grounded on collective rights and the defence of democracy.

It is true that not all nationalisms are democratic, and those undemocratic nationalisms do not fall within this analysis. It is important to make a conceptual distinction between democratic and anti-democratic minority nationalisms, and to treat democratic minority nationalisms as a distinct phenomenon requiring unique social scientific attention.

Democratic minority nationalisms are modern in their response to the changing circumstances of the nation-state system. They are engineered to thrive within a globalizing system.

Democratic minority nationalisms invoke the principle of consent and the idea of popular sovereignty to defend their claims to self-determination. The idea of self-determination challenges the very notion of the nation-state, which is often based on homogenization of citizens and the explicit denial of internal diversity.

As independent *demos*, the recognition of nations without states is necessary to support healthy civil societies and civic engagement. Democratic minority nationalisms should also be empowered to organize their own internal diversity in a just way.

**Method/Approach:**

This is an edited volume that shares a normative orientation but is interdisciplinary and employs multiple methods. There are a few theoretical chapters and then a series of case studies presented comparatively.

**Contribution:**

This collection – with contributions from a bevy of prominent Quebecois political scientists (Gagnon, Rocher, Jocelyn Maclure, Andre Lecours, Martin Papillon, Luc Turgeon) – demonstrates the comparative turn in the study of Quebec. The introductory chapter and general normative orientation is in line with the conventional 'Quebec position' with regards to recognition for the 'other' majority societal culture in Canada. However, the issue has been reframed as a universal challenge to Western democracies with democratic minority nationalisms, rather than a unique failing of the Canadian federation. The comparative chapters include discussions of Catalonia, the UK, the EU, the Basque country, etc. The defense of multinationalism mounted in the text is intended to be generalizable across cases. Canada is one case amongst others, examined critically with respect to the secession reference and resistance to a unique Quebec citizenship regime.

This work follows with Resnick and, to a lesser extent, McRoberts in their move from dualism to multinationalism (along with many of the contributors to this text). Some of its themes – particularly independent *demos* and their need for self-determined citizenship regimes – are expounded at greater length by Gagnon in Federalism, Citizenship and Quebec. The authors' contention that it is fundamentally mistaken to regard all nationalisms alike, and that democratic minority nationalism is a phenomenon apart, is a novel response to Trudeau and the “cosmopolitan anti-nationalists”.