A. Cairns, “The Fragmentation of Canadian Citizenship,” in D.E. Williams, ed. *Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship and Constitutional Change* (Toronto, 1995)

**Overview**

Paper draws together 2 conceptualizations of Cdn citizenship – the “three nations view of Canada” and “the new diversity and citizenship”

**Background**

Enhanced visibility and prominence of citizenship brought about by:

* Gradual weaning of Cdns from the British connection, confronting Cdns with questions of sovereignty, identity, and place in the world
* Gbz presents new identities within Canada that threaten to destabilize links between citizens and state
* The threatened breakup of Canada
* Citizens born as well as made (immigration-induced change)
* Behaviour that the modern state requires of its citizens cannot be achieved by coercion
* Constitutional recognition vigorously demanded by Aboriginals in Canada
* Charter – has had profound effects on citizenship
* Constitutional crisis has undermined the authority of elites and of executive federalism

A three-nations view of Canada:

* From a non-federal perspective, Canada is home to three sociological nations – Quebec, the ROC, and Aboriginals – whose boundaries are unclear or contested
* Federalism fits only crudely and imperfectly with the three nations reality of Canada
* Non-Aboriginal Canada has long been seen through a dualist lens – but the contemporary view has moved on
* This poses certain issues from a constitutional perspective:
  + Search for constitutional agreement between Quebec and ROC is complicated immensely by the emergences of a set of Aboriginal national players
    - Aboriginal nationalism is the aggregate reaction of many indigenous peoples to their shared experience of historical subordination – do not constitute a homogenous nation in the same way Quebecois do
  + This view implicit in Charlottetown efforts
* Nation-to-nation bargaining strategies of Quebec and Aboriginals act as powerful symbols
  + Both types of nationalists act as if their people did not have dual identities and loyalties, one of which is Canadian and is legitimately represented by the federal government
* If the Canada of the future is to be made up of three national communities, Cdns will have to learn to live with fundamentally divergent notions of citizenship. In Taylor’s terms, both Quebec’s Francophone majority and Aboriginal peoples are bearers of “deep diversity” that goes beyond the shallow “first-level” diversities of multicultural/multiracial Canada.

The New Diversity and Citizenship

* Nationalisms of Quebec, Aboriginals and ROC are not the only contemporary challenges to the idea of a single standard of citizenship – another comes from the political articulation of various social, ethnic and gender diversities of modern society
* Reflects convergence of 3 phenomena: (1) ethnic, social and cultural diversity of Cdn society is increasing; (2) these diversities, based on gender, ethnicity, lifestyle, etc, are now politicized and in some cases constitutionalized; (3) the politicized identities and group self-consciousness building on these diversities support the assertion that X cannot represent Y, if X does not share/possess the characteristics that Y considers essential to his/her identity and as necessary for the vigorous pursuit of Y’s political goals
* Pressure for recognition of diversity contributes to the enhanced symbolic role of the constitution – it has become the vehicle that confirms (or not) one’s acceptance by society and the relative status enjoyed by particular groups vis-à-vis others

**Conclusion**

The struggles today of these three national communities undermine the pan-Canadianism that Anglophone Cdns – at least – thought of as a transcending identity. The norm of equal citizens’ rights, crystallized by the Charter, and equality of the provinces, as embodied in the amending formula and in the rhetoric of provincial ideologists of a federalism of principle, are both challenged by Aboriginal and Quebec nationalism. Differential support for the Charter from the three national communities exerts pressure for its differential application, or at a minimum, for a differential in the willingness to override some of its clauses. The result will be *de facto* asymmetry.

Cairns sees this as putting Canada and Cdn citizenship as a unifying force at risk.