

The Role of the State in Creating a Cosmopolitan Canada

Authors : Scott Staring

Abstract : This paper critically examines the claim that Canada represents a uniquely 'postnational' model of political existence. Canadian political thinkers and politicians alike have played a role in casting their country as the vanguard of an order wherein national sovereignty is gradually being eclipsed, while political authority is increasingly integrated at the international level. Proponents of this view frequently cite as evidence Canada's high number of foreign-born citizens, its official policy of multiculturalism, its ready embrace of international institutions, and its enthusiasm for international trade deals like NAFTA, CETA and the TPP. This paper builds on historical research to show that the postnationalist thesis has precedents in a Whig-inspired view of Canada that has long challenged the role of a strong central state in the country. An alternative portrait of Canada will be put forward, one that contests both the historical evidence for the Whig view as well as its theoretical presuppositions. The claim will be made that Canada's celebrated diversity and openness is not the product of a nation-state in retreat; instead, it is largely the product of a strong and sovereign state that has intervened to create a sense of a shared concern amongst its citizens. Canada does indeed offer the world a model of cosmopolitanism, but it is a model that is rooted in the nation-state rather than its eclipse.

Keywords : Canada, cosmopolitanism, postnationalism, statism

Conference Title : ICGGJD 2017 : International Conference on Globalization, Global Justice and Democracy

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : July 10-11, 2017