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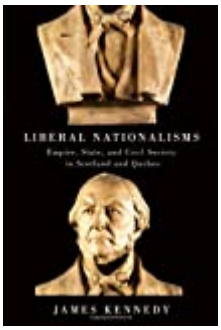


**James Kennedy.** *Liberal Nationalisms: Empire, State, and Civil Society in Scotland and Quebec.* Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013. 322 pp. $100.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7735-3898-6.

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## The Sociological Basis for Liberalism and Nationalism within Empire

James Kennedy in *Liberal Nationalisms: Empire, State, and Civil Society in Scotland and Quebec* has crafted a truly unique work–the only monograph comparing the formation of nationalist movements within Quebec and Scotland between 1899 and 1914, a period bookended by the Second Anglo-Boer War and World War I. Kennedy, a professor at the University of Edinburgh, focuses on the nationalist movements of the Ligue nationaliste canadienne in Quebec and the Young Scotsâ Society of Scotland. While both nations were components of the British Empire, similarities prove few and far between, and the text proves most illuminating in revealing differences within the two societies. Those differences allow Kennedy to explore the manner in which religion, industrialization, great power politics, and civil society shaped nationalism within the two regions. The key similarity, as the title indicates, was the profound influence that nineteenth-century liberalism, with its commitment to individual rights, had on the nationalist movements that emerged in these two societies. Kennedy is quick to recognize and lay out the dangers that nationalist movements can pose to individual liberty, but within the British Empire federalism and consociationalism offered potential solutions to these dangers. Kennedy has mastered a wide range of primary and secondary literature, but for Scotland he draws primarily upon the papers of the large and well-organized Young Scotsâ movement. Given the lack of the same organizational depth, the sources for the nationalist movement in Quebec tend to be more limited. Consequently Kennedy relies largely on the papers and journalistic efforts of five central leaders: Olivar Asselin, Omer HÃ©roux, Armand Lavergne, Jules Fournier, and Henri Bourassa.In the first chapter the author reviews the secondary literature on both nationalism and liberalism, and concludes that nations are modern and created, which guides his focus to nationalist organizations and the intellectual history of the elites who guided them. Imperial and local governments in connection with civil society shaped nationalism. Nationalists in both Quebec and Scotland managed to overcome the apparent paradox of liberalism committed to universal individual rights and nationalism that as a matter of course prioritizes a na-

tional group. Kennedy posits a different form of nationalism, which he terms âstate-reforming nationalism,â in which nationalist groups seek changes to the status quo in order to advance local agendas (p. 15).

The second chapter focuses on the nature of empire, state, and civil society at the turn of the twentieth century to explain the large measure of local control that existed within the British Empire. Scots benefited from the empire economically, but also through positions in imperial administration, whereas Catholic French-speaking Canadians often found themselves on the imperial periphery. Scotland remained largely free to chart its own course in local government, while diplomacy, military affairs, and economic policy remained imperial concerns. Likewise, within Canada French Catholics achieved patronage and seats in the representative assembly of Quebec. In Kennedyâs view the Union government of Canada resembled a consociational democracy, and some of these traits persisted under the new Confederation government of 1867.

Kennedy then examines the composition of both the Young Scots and Nationalistes. Both organizations focused on education and drew their membership from the young, urban, and professional classes. The Young Scots actively engaged in campaigns on behalf of the Liberal Party, which advocated for home rule, land reform, free trade, and temperance. In contrast the Nationalistes avoided a direct connection to any political party. Even so, the members often came from Liberal Party backgrounds, yet increasingly after 1908 found themselves in alliances with Conservatives in Quebec. Nationalistes supported greater local autonomy within the British Empire and greater provincial autonomy within the Canadian federation. Given its top-down organization, in Canada journalism often proved to be the prime purveyor of a liberal nationalist program.

The fourth chapter argues that a British imperial program and actions such as the Boer War, protectionist tariff policies, and the expenses of imperial defense all led to nationalist reactions in Quebec and Scotland, though the Young Scots cleaved to a more liberal critique whereas Francophones within Quebec responded in a more nationalistic fashion. As the British Empire moved away from the liberal and consociational elements that heretofore proved so appealing in Scotland and Quebec, it created nationalist reactions. The ways in which the British Empire empowered liberalism thus shift to the background as liberals turn to nationalism in response to imperial policies. Kennedy maintains that political decisions at the imperial center proved far more important than economic forces in creating these liberal nationalist movements.

Kennedy explains that nationalism in Scotland was a means by which to advance a more liberal policy agenda at the local level. Even with growing support for home rule, Scottish members of Parliament often found themselves coopted by a Liberal Party that prevented them from proactively pushing for home rule to the exclusion of other issues, which confirms Kennedyâs assertion that Scottish nationalism proved more liberal than nationalist during the period. Even so, Scotland continued to gain greater autonomy, particularly in oversight of social welfare. Decentralization in this case managed to more firmly secure Scotland within the British fold.

The author then turns to the Nationalistesâ agenda for a binational federation in Canada that would secure more local autonomy. Unlike Scotland, the linguistic and ethnic divisions within Quebec posed significant challenges to a liberal nationalist movement. Nationalistes tried to win Anglophone Canadians to their position by arguing that a binational nation would distinguish Canada clearly from the United States, while also distancing Canada from Britain. In essence the Nationalistes desired to expand the discrete civil societies of Quebec throughout Canada with French language schools in all provinces and an immigration policy that would preserve French demographic equality. Despite their efforts, however, Anglophones remained wary of the Nationalistesâ program, and Francophone influence declined as immigration altered the demographic composition of Canada. Hopes for a functioning consociational government outside of Quebec were regularly frustrated.

The final chapter explores nationalist interactions with civil society. Religion helped inform Young Scotsâ moral approach to issues, such as temperance and pacifism, in much the same manner as Catholicism did within Quebec. In Scotland, however, religious pluralism proved easier to square with liberalism when it came to state schools, legal reform, and womenâs suffrage. In Quebec more progressive Nationalistes argued for a more practical approach to education, the reform of the civil code, and womenâs suffrage; still, these remained minority views, with few Francophone nationalists willing to argue for a step as radical as removing the Catholic Churchâs role in Francophone schooling. Liberalism in Canada tended to be more focused on collective rights. Liberal Scots willingly reached out to other groups while Nationalistes appeared more interested in making argu-

ments to elites in both Francophone and Anglophone Canada. In both cases, however, nationalism was viewed as a vehicle that might serve to advance liberalism.

*Liberal Nationalisms* provides a thoughtful examination of the sociological basis for nationalism within Scotland and Quebec. The societal differences between Quebec and Scotland shaped two distinct nationalist movements within the British Empire, though both remained, at their core, liberal. Kennedyâs conclusions on the Scottish nationalist movement carry more weight given the depth of sources, whereas the interpretation of liberal nationalism in Canada remains tied to an examination of a relatively small elite, some of whom, Bourassa in particular, appear to have been less committed to liberalism than others. Liberalism has such plasticity that liberal nationalists in Quebec can take significantly less liberal positions than liberals (and some conservatives) within Scotland or England and still hold the liberal moniker. Yet this observation fits with Kennedyâs general argument that Quebecâs nationalists tended to be more nationalist than liberal. On the whole, Kennedy convincingly explores the moderate and liberal nature of nationalism within Quebec and Canada that evolved in an effort to reform the state. He has crafted a well-researched and well-argued book that, given its comparative nature, is somewhat hard to categorize. He provides a valuable contribution to the study of the sociology of nationalism and its relationship to liberalism at the turn of the twentieth century that will surely be of great use to scholars of both Canada and Scotland, as well as those examining modern empire.



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