

A Sociology of Human Rights: Rights through a Social Movements Lens

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Cet article propose un cadre théorique pour développer une sociologie des droits humains en s'intéressant aux mouvements sociaux dans le but de comprendre les cultures de droits locaux. Si le droit humain est une idée qui se développe historiquement principalement à travers l'État, on remarque qu'au Canada, les avancées des droits de l'homme sont le fait de militants travaillant sur le terrain. Dans cet article, on explore aussi les écrits en sociologie au Canada. Les auteurs argumentent qu'on observe un sérieux manque d'engagement de la part des sociologues anglophones et francophones au Canada et que trop peu d'entre eux proposent de réelles études nationales. Évidemment, l'accès restreint à l'information législative représente un obstacle sérieux à la recherche académique au Canada.

This article offers a framework for developing a sociology of human rights using social movements to understand local rights cultures. The idea of human rights has historically been highly statist, but grass-roots activism has been at the heart of the most profound human rights advances in Canada. The article also raises questions about the current state of sociological writing about Canada. The author contends that there is a serious lack of engagement among English and French sociologists, and too few scholars provide genuine "national" studies. Moreover, restrictive access to information legislation represents a serious obstacle to academic research in Canada.

IN FEBRUARY 1987 A GROUP CALLING themselves the Raging Grannies joined an antiuranium rally in Victoria after the British Columbia government decided to lift its moratorium on uranium mining. Dressed in purple,

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yellow, and blue flowered hats and long white gloves and leather purses, the Grannies sang their trademark songs “Uranium Tango” and “Jealousy” to the amusement, or for the musically inclined, to the horror of the protestors. After having whipped the crowd into energetic applause the Grannies announced that they had their own briefs to present the legislature, and with stupendous aplomb they produced a laundry basket and a clothesline, which they stretched from one end of the stone steps to the other. Clothes pegs were unpacked, along with a selection of undies including long johns, boxers, and bikinis, which they clipped on the line. The crowd roared and the media dutifully covered the event (Acker and Betty 2004).

The Raging Grannies are a typical example of a social movement organization (SMO). Whereas a social movement is “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population representing preferences for changing some elements of the social structure or reward distribution, or both, of a society,” an SMO is “a complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement and attempts to implement these goals” (Zald and McCarthy 1987:20). While SMOs certainly do not constitute a movement in and of themselves, they form an important dynamic within the overall movement. SMOs mobilize the resources of a movement and are carriers of movement ideas; they are thus useful windows for studying social movements.¹ Also, unlike an *interest group*, which assumes a clear distinction between civil society and the state and focuses its efforts on promoting the interests of its members, the Grannies, which seek to promote the principles of the peace movement, challenged public-private divisions (Smith 2005a, 2005b:11).² For them, promoting social change became a way of life. Participation in the Grannies became a way for its members to find a role in a society where the elderly, particularly women, were and are expected to sit quietly on the sidelines. True, they sought to change the minds of policymakers. But most of their efforts were directed inward. Understanding the complexities of social activism is a valuable contribution that historical sociologists can make in understanding the dynamics of local, national, and international social movements. Movements are defined by the beliefs they propagate and the ability to mobilize collection action around those beliefs, but all movements are composed of the people who struggled to articulate and apply, sometimes imperfectly, those beliefs.

Social movements are a useful framework for approaching a sociology of human rights. Whereas political scientists and legal scholars, who dominate

¹ SMOs, according to Jackie Smith (2005a), are “carriers of movement ideas, cultures and skills. . . . By understanding their structures and discourses we can gain insight into broader social movement dynamics and capabilities” (p. 231–32). Suzanne Staggenborg (2007) explains that SMOs “are typically the main organizers of movement campaigns, which are important to the growth of movements and their ability to bring about change” (p. 6).

² As Miriam Smith (2005b) notes, “interest groups are often distinguished from social movements in that social movements seek to transform social and political values or seek sweeping political change, while interest groups are more narrowly focused on obtaining selective benefits from the state” (p. 11).

the field of human rights studies, often focus on international treaties and domestic law, sociologists are ideally situated to study the complicated dynamics of how rights cultures emerge and evolve in social contexts. Consider, for example, the tragic circumstances surrounding the life of Lal Jamilla Mandokhel. In March 1999 Lal Jamilla, a 16-year-old Pakistani girl, was repeatedly raped. Her uncle filed a complaint with the police. Police officers detained her attacker, but handed Lal Jamilla over to her tribe. The council of elders decided that Lal Jamilla had brought shame on the tribe, and that the only way to overcome the shame was to put her to death. She was shot dead on the orders of the council (Freeman 2002:1).

Is this violation of human rights? The answer would seem obvious, but in fact there are rigorous debates about whether human rights is a western idea, and whether or not human rights principles apply in situations such as that of Lal Jamilla (Cowan, Dembour, and Wilson 2001; Goodale 2009; Goodale and Merry 2007; Ignatieff 2001; Van Ness 1999).³ The study of human rights is the study of a particular social context. This is not an argument in favor of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is an ideology that has too often been used to accept the horrors such as that visited upon young Lal Jamilla (Burke 2010; Ignatieff 2001; Van Ness 1999). But to ignore the social context in which human rights evolve is to shield societies from the necessary application of human rights in everyday life.

This article draws on the main themes in *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937–1982* (Clément 2008a) to propose a sociology of human rights. Far too many studies on human rights are dominated by studies on politics or law (Cmiel 2004; Moyn 2010). *Canada's Rights Revolution* is a history of the human rights movement in Canada. The book is organized around four case studies of civil liberties and human rights organizations in Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. The study exemplifies the benefits of using social movements as a framework to understand human rights cultures. It shows how the idea of human rights has historically been highly statist, but that grass-roots activism has been at the heart of the most profound human rights advances in

³ Jack Donnelly (2003) characterizes the cultural relativity debate surrounding human rights as follows: "When internal and external judgments of a practice diverge, cultural relativists give priority to the internal judgments of a society. In its most extreme form, what we can call *radical cultural relativism* holds that culture is the sole source of the validity of a moral right or rule. *Radical universalism*, by contrast, would hold that culture is irrelevant to the (universal validity) of moral rights and rules" (p. 90). The debate, however, goes beyond questions surrounding cultural relativism. Michael Ignatieff (2001), for example, argues that human rights is the only truly universal idiom; even if we disagree on the nature of specific rights, different cultures can find common ground in accepting the premise of rights as a discourse for cross-cultural dialogue (and that certain rights, such as life, are truly universal). Anthropologists, such as Rachel Sieder and Jessica Witchell, argue that, in the case of prostitutes in Guatemala, rights discourse has become a powerful tool for people in poor countries lacking a strong legal rights tradition. Rights discourse allows them to make demands on the state and the society around them for equal treatment (Cowan et al. 2001). On the other hand, Heather Montgomery, an anthropologist who has studied child prostitutes in Thailand, believes that an uncritical application of rights in some cultural contexts can be disempowering, if not destructive, if the social and economic conditions that facilitate exploitation are not taken into consideration (Cowan et al. 2001).

Canada. Canada's unique rights culture is exemplified in the dynamics of the human rights movement, which peaked in the 1970s.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONTROVERSIES

Canada's Rights Revolution is a history of the 1960s and 1970s seen through the eyes of a generation of human rights activists. The book is organized around two primary objectives. First, to explore some of the most controversial human rights violations in Canadian history and, second, to document the emergence of professional SMOs in a particular moment in history.

Canada's Rights Revolution examines several famous human rights controversies including denominational education, October Crisis, civilian review of the police, national security policies, welfare policy reform, and criminalizing narcotics. Each of these controversies highlights how people struggled to apply vague human rights principles to concrete issues facing their community.

One of the controversies was attempts to censor the Vancouver-based newspaper *Georgia Straight*. The *Georgia Straight* was an alternative paper, part of the hippie youth culture challenging conformity and authority. Founded in 1967, the paper soon had a circulation of 60,000 to 70,000 (Krotter 1970:125). One of the paper's founders later admitted to not knowing "any particular reason for the founding beyond a general pervasive desire to annoy establishment institutions in general and established newspapers in particular" (Barman 1991:315). The case of the *Georgia Straight* reveals the remarkable lengths authorities have gone in the past to censor unpopular ideas. According to a 1970 Senate committee report on the mass media, "the *Straight* has been subjected to intimidation and harassment, both legal and extra-legal, that we can only describe as shocking" (Canada 1970: 128).

The first two years were a constant battle for Don McLeod, the *Straight's* publisher, to keep the paper alive: Municipalities prohibited the sale of the newspaper on their streets; McLeod and the *Straight's* vendors sold the paper openly and courted arrest. For poking fun at a judge, the *Straight* was charged with criminal libel, sparking a legal battle that lasted years. For the ribald humor of its comics pages, the *Straight* fought nine obscenity charges. For printing instructions on marijuana-growing, the *Straight* was charged with "inciting to commit an indictable offence." A sex-advice column from a hippie doctor brought four separate obscenity charges. In 1969 alone, the paper faced 22 criminal charges against its editor and employees. And in March 1968 the *Straight* was found guilty for defamatory libel when it awarded Magistrate Lawrence Eckhardt the Pontius Pilate Certificate of Justice for sending a group of hippies to jail for hanging around outside the courtroom (Watson 2006; Campbell and Pauls 1997:3).

In May 1969, McLeod was charged with obscenity under section 150 (1)(a) of the Criminal Code for pictures published in the *Straight* and two articles entitled “Penis De Milo created by Cynthia Plaster-Caster,” and “Young Man Wants to meet women 30 yrs old for Muffdiving, etc.” The original trial judge had dismissed the charges because undue exploitation of sex, which formed the basis of the Crown’s obscenity charge, was not part of the test established by the Supreme Court. He also refused to rule the pictures published in the *Straight* obscene and “dismissed the charge, having no evidence before him of what the word ‘muffdiving’ means, and declining to take judicial notice of a word that he has never heard before” (*Regina v McLeod and Georgia Straight Publishing Ltd.* 1970).

A central theme in *Canada’s Rights Revolution*, and one of the unique aspects of Canada’s rights culture that is exemplified in the history of the human rights movement, is the divisions between civil liberties and human rights organizations. The debate surrounding the rights of welfare recipients exemplifies this division. In the case of single mothers in Ontario, for instance, a particularly notorious regulation called the “man in the house rule” stated that if there was evidence that a woman receiving welfare had a male living with her, she would lose her welfare support (the same rule did not apply to men). It was a regulation deeply rooted in the breadwinner ideology, and presumed that a sexual relationship implied a financial one (a similar regulation existed in other provinces). Moreover, investigations into recipients’ daily life were remarkably intrusive. Through welfare, the state determined how people could eat, where they could live, and what they bought and from whom. Women with illegitimate children were forced to reveal the names of the fathers to allow the department to seek them out and recover costs (Canadian Civil Liberties Association [CCLA] 1975).⁴ The CCLA (1975) pointed out in 1974 that a “person accused of the most heinous crimes enjoys more discernible protection of his domestic privacy than does an innocent recipient of public welfare.” The following excerpt from one of the associations’ investigation reports reveals how far investigators would go to determine welfare fraud:

On October 11 at 10:00am a (welfare official) came to my door, showed me a card indicating that he was from the Department of Social and Family Services, and advised me that this was a routine investigation. He said that he wanted to see the apartment and then began to look around. Upon opening a closet in the living-room, he discovered some beer bottles and said “I don’t give a shit what you do with your cheque; what I want to know is whether you’re good for those kids.” Then he asked me for a picture of my husband and as I was searching for one in my purse, he went into the bedroom without asking my permission.

⁴ There were several reasons why women with an illegitimate child did not want to name the father. For instance, a woman with an illegitimate child may have re-married or moved in with another man, and would not want to involve the biological father in her life. Others feared violence or abuse because the government would attempt to recoup money from the father. In the study conducted by the CCLA, 37 women stated they were told to name the father and 32 did so (CCLA 1975).

He opened the closet in the bedroom and found therein my boyfriend . . . who had hidden there when he had heard the knock on the front door. He had hidden there in order to avoid trouble between the welfare authorities and myself. He (welfare official) said that he no longer needed a picture of my husband because he had discovered my husband in the bedroom. I advised the (welfare official) that said man in the cupboard was not my husband. The (welfare official) asked my boyfriend a number of questions relating to our relationship. The (welfare official) said that my 'sex life' was my own business and that it had nothing to do with my receiving welfare cheques. Thereupon he left my premises. On October 15, when I telephoned the welfare office to enquire whether I could attend there to collect my cheque my (regular) welfare worker . . . advised me that (the welfare official who had visited me) had informed them that because he had found a man in my apartment, I could not collect my cheque until that man attended at the office of the Special Investigation Unit and answered some questions. (Borovoy 1971)

Civil liberties organizations such as the CCLA and the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association fought to have this odious regulation removed. But neither organization dealt with the *amount* of welfare people received, only the administration welfare. In contrast, *human rights* groups such as the Ligue des droits de l'homme (Montreal) and the Newfoundland Human Rights Association fought vigorously to raise the amount of welfare. In the mid-1970s, the Toronto Social Planning Council estimated that welfare recipients barely received 60 percent of the necessary funds to maintain a basic standard of living (Clément 2008a:163). Whereas human rights groups argued that individuals had a right to economic security, and could not exercise their political and civil rights without proper resources, their civil libertarian counterparts considered these questions as matters of public policy, not rights. And these divisions were evident on numerous other issues as well, such as pornography, immigration, due process, sexual assault laws, and hate speech. The ideological divide was especially pronounced in Canada, particularly by the mid-1970s, when more than 40 "rights associations" were active across Canada (for comparative studies, see Buckley 2008; Clément 2004; Walker 1990). Local associations self-identified as either human rights or civil liberties groups, and at one point the leading national organization in Canada was called the Canadian Federation for Civil Liberties and Human Rights Associations (Clément 2008a:89–91).

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The book's second objective was to document the emergence of professional SMOs in Canada using the human rights movement as a case study. SMOs are important vehicles for promoting social change. But how did they conceive of social change? In an era made famous by activism and social ferment, what challenges faced SMOs?

The idea of human rights is highly statist, and the evolution of human rights has been intimately linked with the rise of the modern state. But

grass-roots activism, not the state, was at the heart of the most profound human rights advances in Canadian history. Still, most activists embraced a minimalist approach to human rights. Human rights activists have long recognized that economic or gender inequalities lead to rights violations. But human rights advocates too often assume that correlative duties that emerge from moral human rights claims rely on the state. This is problematic. Human rights advocacy is inherently directed toward state power; rights discourse is thus a potentially poor vehicle for limiting economic or private power. So, for instance, the rights associations examined in *Canada's Rights Revolution* did not campaign around ensuring that corporations did not deprive others, nor did they seek to challenge private forms of oppression, such as male power within the family. By locating duties only within the state, the potential for challenges to economic and private power are severely limited.⁵

It is significant that rights associations have historically embraced state-oriented strategies for social change. The four case studies shared a common approach to social change: they would identify an issue such as the conditions of inmates in a prison, and then conduct research, prepare a brief, and present it to the relevant public body. Other tactics included press releases, published research, litigation, organized public seminars, or forming coalitions to lobby the state. But an important feature of social movement activism since the 1960s has been the use of dual strategies, including alternative tactics to working through state institutions (Clément 2009; McAdam 1984; Meyer and Suzanne 2008; Shepard 2009; Staggenborg 2007). In the age of protest, social movement activists raised the specter of mass mobilization, from rallies to sit-ins, as well as alternative forms of protest including civil disobedience or forming subcultures, to promote social change. Yet it is a distinguishing feature of rights associations that, with the exception of a few rare instances, they did not favor such strategies. Rights associations shied away from grass-roots mobilization in the way tenants unions employed mass rent strikes or civil rights activists used sit-ins (Gillespie 1983).

This concern goes to the heart of the book, which was about much more than documenting a series of public human rights controversies and the dynamics of a particular movement. Ultimately the book is about asking a more fundamental question: To what degree can rights discourse promote social change? This is the basis for a sociology of human rights. Social movements reveal how social actors struggle to apply vague universal human rights principles in a local context. In the Canadian case, human rights encouraged the perception among social movement actors of social change as legal change. Individuals and groups can make rights-claims and such claims have a powerful moral force, but they have not been recognized as

⁵ The relationship between state power and social movements and human rights is more fully explored in Stammers (1995, 1999, 2009).

rights until enforced by the state. Social movements in Canada that embraced rights discourse therefore adopted conservative strategies for social change (this also applies to movements, such as the women's movement; Clément 2008b, 2010). They focused on the state and legal change, and largely eschewed grass-roots mobilization or any form of radical activism. In this way, through the study of social movements, sociologists are ideally situated to offer new insights on the study of human rights.

Canada's Rights Revolution demonstrates how nonstate actors have struggled with ideas of rights and have played a key role in pressing the state to recognize human rights claims. In emphasizing the inherent and universal nature of human rights, it is easy to forget that rights have a history. It is unfortunate that so few sociologists study the history of human rights in Canada. The Canadian Sociological Association's (CSA's) conferences, for example, often include sessions on social movements, but little or nothing on human rights as a popular idiom (the American Sociological Association, by virtue of its sheer size, has had more papers on human rights at its annual meetings, but only an average of 8–10 per year since 2004, and none on Canada).⁶ Legal scholars and political scientists have dominated the study of human rights and, as a result, these studies focus on the courts and governments. Almost as if the state alone were responsible for human rights innovations.

"Organizations and individuals," argues Didi Herman (1994), "have proceeded on the law front with the belief that law reflects societal fears and prejudices. . . . progressive law reform signals to bigots, and to those who would discriminate, that such attitudes and behaviours are no longer acceptable" (p. 4). But there is a distinction between human rights *declarations*, which are an expression of consensus within a community, and human rights *law*. These legal innovations were designed to be enforced, and to mobilize the resources of the state to actively discourage (and, if necessary, punish) discriminatory acts. Human rights legislation should not be judged solely on its potential for legitimation, but the law's capacity to fulfill a concrete mandate. Ideas of rights evolve within a particular social context. The study of human rights must begin locally. In this way sociologists, through the study of social movements, can contribute to our understanding of human rights.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

In addition to offering a methodological approach to the study of human rights, the publication of *Canada's Rights Revolution* raised serious questions about the state of the academic profession and the writing of Canadian

⁶ Visit <http://www.csa.ca>. For an archive of the American Sociological Association's annual meeting programs, visit <http://www.asanet.org>.

historical sociology. One of the concerns arising from the book is freedom of information and access to state documents.

One of the four case studies, the *Ligue des droits de l'homme*, accepted funding from the federal government for the first time in 1970 (the group was created in 1963). Federal funding was so pervasive for rights associations across Canada by the 1970s that it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the state essentially bankrolled an entire network of SMOs. In the case of groups like the *Ligue*, state funding eventually accounted for 80 percent of their budget. The advent of extensive funding from the state for social movements stimulated a fierce, and at times bitter, debate among activists. The CCLA, which was one of the few rights associations in Canada that never accepted state funding, rejected state funding on numerous grounds: the organization would be (1) perceived by the public as being biased in favor of state (especially when the group supported the state's actions); (2) unable or afraid to criticize the state; (3) fail to develop grass-roots membership or bold and imaginative leadership; (4) put aside its own priorities in favor of project-specific government grants (Clément 2005, 2008a:205–207). But a key theme in *Canada's Rights Revolution* is that state funding does not undermine activism. SMOs dependent on state funding did not hesitate to challenge the state, and even private funding could lead to constraints on social movement activism. In the case of the CCLA, its own priorities were often subsumed to the priorities of private foundations, which the group depended on for project-specific grants. Even the *Ligue des droits de l'homme*, which at one time received large grants from the United Way, found its activities constrained when the United Way insisted that the *Ligue* abandon its radical policy on the rights of prisoners in the mid-1980s (the organization had suggested that prisoners, facing intolerable conditions, had a right to escape) (on state funding, see Chaves, Stephens, and Galaskiewicz 2004; Clément 2008a:189–200; Pal 1993; Smith 1989, 1999).

Any study of state funding for social movements in Canada since the 1960s will be entirely dependent on applications under federal and provincial freedom of information laws. Amazingly, even 40 years later, innocuous material such as funding for SMOs is restricted by law. The problem in essence is that access laws do not specify what materials should be restricted, but have created a blanket prohibition that is excessively broad. Other strategies for restricting scholars' access for research purposes include excessive fees, long delays, or simply destroying archival records. Restrictions on access to information, as Larry Hannant (2009) has recently observed, is a national problem: historians seeking access to provincial or federal records face numerous "hurdles in their historical research. Among the barriers is yet more paperwork that can slow or even entirely impede historical inquiry" (p. 136; it is also an international problem as well, see Flinn and Jones 2009). The implications for scholars is profound, including discouraging graduate students from pursuing certain research projects: "Perhaps because they perceive the [Access to Information Act] process

to be onerous, experienced historians have not used it much, and do not induct graduate students into the circle of those who know its routines” (Hannant 2009:137). Moreover, the recent elimination of the long-form census, and the creation of an “opt-in” box on the census, bodes ill for future scholars. Statistics Canada’s earlier practice was to release census information after 92 years but, under the new policy, all data will be banned unless people specifically permit access by checking this option on the census form.

British Columbia is a perfect example of restrictions gone too far. The province has enacted one of the most draconian access to information regimes in the country. Three years ago the BC Archives began enforcing an obscure section of the provincial freedom of information statute that requires users to permit civil servants to “audit” (inspect) their home and offices, including their computers, to confirm their security measures. This is remarkably invasive for documents, such a public speeches from the Minister of Labour that were at one time in the public domain. A reporter covering the first audit, carried out at the University of Victoria in 2007, described the process as follows:

British Columbia researchers who want to work with “sensitive” archival records—including writers, journalists and university professors—must now agree to random security checks of personal computers, offices and even their homes by the government. What defines a sensitive document? It contains an individual’s name, address or telephone number; race, national or ethnic origin, colour or religious or political beliefs or associations; age, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status; an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned; fingerprints, blood type or inheritable characteristics; health care history including a physical or mental disability; educational, financial, criminal or employment history; anyone else’s opinions about the individual; the individual’s opinions, except if they are about someone else. Using this definition, the telephone book might qualify. A Bible with family records written on the flyleaf might. (Hume 2007)

Graduate students, who are rarely given offices, will have to make their homes available to these inspectors. It is a shocking invasion of privacy that can only act to the detriment of producing studies on social policy in British Columbia. An individual who refuses to provide the auditors with access to their home/office, or is in violation of the agreement, will have their research privileges at the BC Archives revoked. And the policy does not even pass basic due process, because only people in Vancouver or Victoria are subject to arbitrary inspections because the province will not pay the archivists to go anywhere else.

Far too many archivists are no longer scholars or researchers themselves but professional document managers who acts as gatekeepers. During the first inspection carried out under the legislation in British Columbia, the Manager for Corporation Information and Records for the Royal BC Museum and Archives insisted that access was a privilege, not a right (Hume 2007; Mitchell 2007). The Freedom of Information Act, however,

says the opposite! Even those individuals tasked with enforcing the law are unfamiliar with its provisions.

ENGLISH-FRENCH SCHOLARSHIP

The publication of *Canada's Rights Revolution* also raised questions surrounding the lack of engagement among English and French scholars in Canada.

One of the underlying themes in the book was the failure to form a truly national rights association in Canada comparable with the American Civil Liberties Union in the United States or the Ligue des droits de l'homme in France. There were many reasons for this, including ideological as well as regional divisions (Clément 2005). Another reason was the English-French divide that has been a major obstacle to national unity among many social movements in Canada. And yet, at the same time, the book challenged the assumed benefits of having a national organization in a physically immense, regionally divided, and culturally diverse country. A national-level SMO is not an inherent good.

Canada's Rights Revolution was written as a series of case studies partly in order to link the English and French experience in Canada. Far too many contemporary studies of Canada, which purport to be "national," are in fact studies of English-Canada supported with weak explanations for why the author has not incorporated the Francophone experience. In his popular book on the history of the baby boom generation in Canada, Doug Owram (1996) ignores Quebec because he insists that the Francophone experience was simply too different to incorporate into a national study. Michael Horn (1999) has written a study of academic freedom in Canada, but largely ignores developments in Quebec because, according to the author, the education system is too different and it requires a separate study. Nancy Christie (2000) does not address Quebec in her wonderful book on social policies directed at women, including mothers' allowances, because, according to her, the issue was already fully studied by others. And in 2010, Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker (2010) edited a collection of essays on "Canadian" labor law, only to finish their introduction with a quick note indicating that "there are no cases from Quebec" (p. 7).

Book prizes in Canada reflect a similar trend. Since 1983 only one French-language book has won the CSA's Porter prize. Except for Allan Greer's book on the rebellions (Greer 1993), Canada's Human Rights History (2011) is the only other winner to link the English and French experience and draw on sources in both languages. Historical sociologists looking to other disciplines will find a similarly disturbing trend. The 2010 short-list for the Canadian Historical Association's book prize does not include a single book written in French. Every book is regional or based on English-Canada. In the past 10 years almost all the books short-listed for the prize were explicitly about English-Canada or on

Quebec alone.⁷ The very few books that did claim to be “national” for either book prize did not draw on both English and French language sources, and in the case of English-language books, offered weak explanations for not including Quebec.⁸ Certainly within the literature on social movements and human rights in Canada, there are very few studies that are not limited to English or French Canada, or that draw on literature in both languages.

Can English-Canadian scholars truly claim to be offering national studies when they disregard the entire literature written in French? Surely they are ignoring an incredible amount of literature on Canada. To offer one example of this disjuncture: until 2008, there was not a single article written in English that explored the October Crisis of 1970 in depth (Canada’s Human Rights History 2011; Clément 2008c).⁹ Most scholars continue to depend on Louis Fournier’s translated book on the crisis. Fournier’s book, while it does have some merit, was written by a journalist who was himself arrested during the crisis. He wrote a book that did not include a single citation and thus not a single piece of evidence to support his conclusions (Fournier 1984). There are many articles written in French on this topic, several of which clearly show the problems with Fournier’s account, and yet English-Canadian historians continue to draw on this source extensively to comment on this topic.

Is the Francophone experience really so different that it requires separate consideration? Canadian scholars should reject such broad generalizations. *Canada’s Rights Revolution* demonstrates how the Ligue des droits de l’homme, a unilingual Francophone rights association in Montreal, engaged with the same debates as its counterparts across Canada and abroad, and regularly interacted with people outside Quebec. It was a leading member of the Canadian Federation for Civil Liberties and Human Rights Associations in Canada. Francophones were an integral and active part of the national human rights movement. The history of the human rights movement belies the presumption that Francophone and Anglophones should be studied separately, despite the prevailing trend in the literature. It is an old expression, but the term “two solitudes” seems an apt way to describe a great deal of academic writing today.

At the 2010 CSA conference in Montreal, Dr. Jean-Philippe Warren presented some disturbing statistics on the lack of engagement between Anglophone and Francophone sociologists. According to Warren, it is rare to find a professor with a Ph.D. from a Quebec university teaching in others parts of Canada (and less than 10 percent of French-speaking sociologists in Quebec were trained outside the province). There are few partnerships between Anglophone and Francophone sociologists (e.g., coauthoring papers).

⁷ Visit the page on the John Porter Tradition of Excellence book award at <http://www.csa.ca>.

⁸ Visit the page on the Sir John A. Macdonald Prize at <http://www.cha-shc.ca>.

⁹ The vast majority of the literature on the October Crisis, written in English, is either popular accounts written by journalists or novelists, or first-person accounts (including autobiographies) of people who were somehow involved in the crisis. For a comprehensive list of readings on the October Crisis, visit http://www.historyofrights.com/reading_flq.html.

Only 1 percent of English-language articles in recent years cited French publications, and only 23 percent of French language articles cited English publications. And the lack of engagement is reflected in the activities of the only national sociological association in Canada. Only twice has the CSA awarded an outstanding achievement award to a French Canadian, and the organization's 2010 executive committee is composed entirely of Anglophones (Warren 2010).

Of course, the contention here is not to disparage regional studies or studies that rely on English-language sources. But studies of social movements or human rights in Canada, or any similar national study, must engage with the literature and sources in both languages. Not only is it critical to engage with the broader academic community studying Canada, but with the advent of new technologies and demographic mobility (among other things) developments in Montreal and Trois Rivières are no longer so "different" or isolated from those in Smithers, British Columbia, or St. John's, Newfoundland.

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