

Looking Across the Atlantic

The European Union and Canada Compared

Chapter Summary

The European Union (EU) and Canada have shared similar pasts and values, but each has developed in unique ways, specifically in the structure and composition of their political systems. The similarities and differences between these models speak to their unique histories, issues, and political constitutions. Although the author illuminates the apparent similarities and shared ideological perspectives between the EU and the United States, he suggests that it is easier to draw upon Canada and the EU's similarities, specifically in the development of their national communities and their focus on fostering multi-national differences and diversities. He then follows with a discussion of several challenges facing both the EU and Canada, which he identifies as: constitutional contestations; executive-legislative relations; exit/secession; the financial crisis; and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada (CETA).

A similar challenge to both countries relates to the constitutive challenges between the main stakeholders, which are the federal and provincial governments to Canada and the multiple countries in the EU. The author suggests that it is the role that the executive officials have in dealing with and responding to all of these challenges that presents one of the major challenges. Also, a particular challenge to public administration is to whom they should be accountable: the EU's interests, the member states, or both?

In Canada, the main challenge has been developing a more harmonious relationship between the competing ideologies of nationalism and federalism. In particular, this was experienced in what the author deems an "exit/secession" strategy, which is different in Canada and in the EU. In Canada, the *Clarity Act* of 1999 established guidelines and procedures if the province of Quebec were to exit Canada. These procedures and guidelines were also seen during the 2008 financial crisis,

which reflected on the particular success of Canada's financial regulatory system in responding to this crisis, while in comparison, the EU lacked any structural arrangements that could address the lack of a fiscal union across all countries.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) highlights the apparent advantages offered by this comprehensive trade agreement between the EU and Canada (CETA). For the EU, this is the first settled comprehensive trade agreement, while for Canada it is an opportunity to develop some independence from the United States' dominance in trade relations. The chapter ultimately suggests that although there are some differences between the EU and Canada, there are also many similarities that need further research and analysis.

Annotated Weblinks

- 1) <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-4.8/FullText.html>

This site introduces the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) Implementation Act, identifying its purpose, actions, and details of implementation.

- 2) <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-clarity-act-bill-c-20/>

The Canadian Encyclopedia outlines the Clarity Act, which refers to the Quebec secession reference.

- 3) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union>

The Encyclopaedia Britannica provides an overview of the European Union, detailing some background, the origins, and the countries that are a part of the EU.