

and the United States alike, public education has served as an important tool for promoting national symbols. When Canadians debated a new flag design in 1964, they did so with sixty years' experience of flag display in public schools; this included American-style pledges of allegiance to the Red Ensign in New Brunswick in the 1910s and to the Fleurdelisé in Quebec in the 1950s. Canadians may have disagreed about the design for a Canadian flag, but they agreed that having and displaying a flag was a normal feature of nationhood. They had public schooling to thank for this, and for a similarly unanimous acceptance of the necessity of a national anthem, a national sport, a national military (or peacekeeping force), and a national literature. Textbooks do figure in Cecilia Morgan's chapter on Laura Secord, but otherwise consideration of the role of public schools in symbol making is sparse.

As a collection, perhaps *Symbols of Canada's* greatest value is as a distillation of almost twenty years of scholarship on Canadian symbols and social memory. The list of contributors is a who's who of experts in these fields, and chapters by Michael Dawson on Mounties, Karen Dubinsky on Niagara Falls, and Steven High on Canadian English, to name a few, are concise summaries of arguments they have made more extensively elsewhere. This makes the book especially valuable as an introduction for general readers and students. I would especially recommend it as an assigned reading for Social Studies education classes to inoculate pre-service teachers against the misconception that symbols are timeless or unproblematic. Think of it as universal health care for the historically conscious; how Canadian is that, eh?

Forrest D. Pass

Library and Archives Canada

Robert Cowin

Postsecondary Education in British Columbia: Public Policy and Structural Development, 1960–2015

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018. 244 pp.

Robert Cowin's book presents a history of postsecondary education (PSE) in British Columbia beginning in 1960 and extending through to 2015. It offers an overview of the development of the whole postsecondary system across sectors in British Columbia including universities, public colleges, vocational colleges, apprenticeship training, continuing education, and private institutions. The descriptive, historical narrative of the development of BC's postsecondary system is combined with theoretical analyses of policy trends that emerged during the growth of the system. Methodologically the focus of the analysis is systemic and broadly structural. It takes up "interactions and relationships among institutions" (4) over this time period providing an analysis of the establishment and modification of postsecondary institutions. Following

Michael Skolnik,¹ the structure of postsecondary education is defined by the author as “the distribution of institutions by size, mission, type and geographic location” (4). Rationales for PSE policy decisions are identified and set against the aspirational goals of the policy choices taken.

In this study Cowin draws upon a range of qualitative and quantitative data, including scholarly literature, grey literature (reports, working papers, government documents, white papers, and evaluations), historical reports completed by the author between 2004 and 2013 for various professional audiences, as well as informal interviews conducted while the author was employed at a BC college. The author states that he “drew extensively upon practitioner and participant observation methodologies” and that his interviews “did not correspond to the academic models taught in research methodology classes” (16). Nevertheless, he eventually compiled a rich pool of data, gathered “at coffee breaks and lunch” in “bits and pieces,” that made it “difficult to reference according to traditional academic conventions” (16). He also tells us that he drew upon his own extensive experience including three decades of work within the British Columbia system “that gave me a ringside seat to some of the events” (16).

The book is divided into three sections. The first section includes chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 opens in the 1960s within the historical context of the American arms race with Russia. It offers the reader some background on the PSE system in British Columbia. Chapter 2 is entitled “Policy Rationales” and establishes the theoretical framing of the study, explaining the three analytical lenses employed to interpret the data. These three theoretical lenses are tightly and consistently utilized across chapters to systematically analyze this data. These include: a social justice lens, a human capital lens, and a marketization lens. The lenses are explicated in chapter 2 in terms of “policy rationales” (33). The second section of the book, chapters 3, 4, and 5, offers descriptive historical narratives chunked into discrete, historical time periods: 1960–1979; 1980–1999; and 2000–2015. Each of these chapters provides a brief overview of the PSE history, and then offers a more detailed description of “historical moments” analyzed through the lens of the three policy rationales.

The third section of the book is the concluding chapter which highlights themes to interpret the overarching patterns that emerged from the history of PSE in British Columbia. This final chapter offers the reader a concise, interpretive summary of the study’s data against the theoretical lenses/rationales across the three time periods, illustrating where and when each of the policy rationales proved to be an influential force at various times in the evolution of the PSE system. Not surprisingly all three rationales have taken turns, over the last 50 years, influencing policy depending on the social, political and economic context of the particular decade in question. Finally, the chapter updates the reader as to what the PSE system looked like in 2015.

Cowin argues that the sheer geographical vastness of British Columbia presented

1 Michael Skolnik, “The case for giving greater attention to structure in higher education policy-making,” in *Higher Education in Canada*, ed. C. Beach, R. Broadway, and R. McInnis (Kingston, ON: John Deutsch Institute for the Study of Economic Policy, Queen’s University, 2005), 53–76.

challenges in the development of the PSE system and led to the adoption of the American community college model with a strong transfer component to university. This was a departure from the approach in other parts of Canada and set the stage structurally and in terms of interaction between components of the system going forward. The author also reminds the reader of the powerful influence of the federal government on PSE across Canada and in British Columbia, over the years, through its enormous spending power as seen in provincial transfer payments, on PSE research and innovation, as well as on the evolution of vocational and apprenticeship education. The author tells us that the private postsecondary sector has moved from the periphery of PSE policy in BC with the strengthening of government PSE policy priorities of commercialization and entrepreneurship. Finally he suggests there is a critical need for an understanding of how British Columbia's PSE system has evolved and is still evolving. At the same time PSE decision-makers, constituents, and the public need a widely-shared vision of PSE to provide a roadmap for the future.

Cowin leaves the reader with his observations and important questions about the effect of PSE policy trends in British Columbia on structural stratification, institutional diversity, and vertical and horizontal differentiation. He aptly notes these topics inevitably include critical discussions about social mobility, access to PSE, social inequality and social stratification, the democratic purpose and function of PSE, how quality is defined, excellence and effectiveness in PSE, and the weakening egalitarian ethos in BC's public PSE system. Unfortunately, Cowin grimly reminds us that government and scholars across Canada lack "comparable, robust student data across all postsecondary institutions due to the cost of collecting them as well as to politics about disclosing potentially embarrassing information" (185) to answer the questions as to whether a hierarchal and differentiated system might be more beneficial and to whom and for what purposes.

This author is clear about the parameters of the study: this is a system-level study and not an institutional-level study. Cowin's analysis is restricted to historical developments and policies that affected the structure of the system as a whole and the interactions of the pieces of the system (sectors and institutions). Changes that happened within PSE structures and institutions are outside this purview. Legislative and governance arrangements of the PSE system that may have influenced or constrained policy choices are not part of the analysis (4). While the author considers policy rationales and aspirational goals, he makes it clear that he neither takes up nor evaluates the actual outcomes of policy decisions (166). Moreover, details on policy making, policy implementation, and policy enactment are outside of the focus of the book.

One of the strengths of this book lies in its scope. It covers a time period of almost 50 years beginning in the era of Sputnik and ending in 2015. The range of institutions considered provides a breadth to the history of postsecondary education in British Columbia and is a significant contribution to the literature. The book covers the public postsecondary sectors (universities, community colleges, and provincial institutes), the for-profit and not-for-profit, private postsecondary sectors (career colleges, faith-based institutions, Aboriginal-governed institutions, and private universities), and the quasi-education sector (the apprenticeship system). This

rich, complex story is offered in an accessible and clearly organized narrative.

Another contribution of the book lies in the explicit theoretical framing of the study. Scholarly academic audiences will appreciate the multiple theoretical lenses employed to make sense of the historical decision-making and the system level development of PSE in British Columbia. Within the three lenses, Cowin canvasses and critiques an array of theories that can be utilized to understand public policy. This expands the subsequent analysis and Cowin must be applauded for this important conceptual contribution to the PSE policy literature. While some readers may grapple with the range and complexity of the theoretical approaches reviewed, other readers may wish for a deeper analytical consideration of the data against fewer theories. Nevertheless, the author impressively balances breadth and depth across substantive content and theoretical analyses. Cowin provides a critical and informative study of public policy and structural development in British Columbia's post-secondary education system. Overall this book has much to offer a range of readers, including academics across disciplines (such as history, higher education, and public administration), policy makers, and graduate students. It is a welcome addition to the postsecondary history and policy literature.

Theresa Shanahan
York University

Claudia Mitchell and April Mandrona, eds.

Our Rural Selves: Memory and the Visual in Canadian Childhoods

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019. 296 pp.

Memories of rural childhood are very often spatialized, site-specific, or keyed to particular landscapes and places. And like all memories, they are also highly individualized, emotion-laden, and imbued with recalled sensation. These qualities all come to the fore and receive critical attention in Claudia Mitchell and April Mandrona's compelling edited collection *Our Rural Selves: Memory and the Visual in Canadian Childhoods*.

Mitchell and Mandrona have drawn together essays from a variety of disciplines and approaches in the social sciences and humanities with a shared interest in "productive remembering" (11) as it relates to the past and future of rural Canadian communities. The collection is dominated by the social science research methods of "memory-work" (Mitchell's area of expertise and the approach of several chapters), in which scholars undertake ethnographic or autoethnographic studies of "deliberate remembering" (106), "recursive remembering" (168), or "future-oriented remembering" (243) about their own rural childhoods or those of others. These chapters are supplemented by essays from the perspectives of art history, oral history, film studies, and art production. In some ways, it should not all work together, but to the editors' credit the success of the book is in its careful sequencing. The collection sweeps a