

The background is a solid teal color. It is decorated with several white snowflake patterns of varying sizes and orientations. The snowflakes are stylized with six arms, each ending in a small, rounded, hook-like shape. They are scattered across the page, with some larger ones in the corners and smaller ones in the center.

THE PEP

GAZETTE

DECEMBER 2022

FOREWARD

The sun has set on the PEPS' first full year and we're very pleased to look back on all we have gotten up to. We ended the Winter semester with our second Semi-annual General Meeting and Pizza Party, our first in-person event since the Society's founding. During the Summer terms we established this very Gazette and have now published seven monthly issues. We've had seven contributors write twenty-one total articles with no signs of slowing down. During the Fall semester we had a lot of events going on. From our coffee open house to our General Meeting, and our end-of-year hangouts with members of our Society and others across campus, these last few months have been a welcome change to this time last year.

Thank you for reading what we have had to say in 2022, we hope to hear from many more people in 2023.

Scott Ripley, President of the MSVU PEPS

NO POLITICS AT THE DINNER TABLE

Natalie Locke

Whether you celebrate or not, we have all just survived the holiday season. While a time of joy and laughter, it is a time of divide. It has become trendy to share online why a family dinner has ended in argument over Christmas. Sometimes it is because grandmothers are appalled by their granddaughter's scandalous attire. More generally, it seems most people have banned the topic of politics to avoid a family feud. How can such a large and encompassing topic be prohibited? Did your mother ask how school is going? Education is political. Did your brother talk about his new job? Employment is political. Did your niece start daycare this winter? Childcare is political. The list goes on and on. Have family dinners become silent? No. "No politics at the dinner table" really means do not talk about anything "controversial" like political institutions, politicians, and beliefs that would raise grandpa's heartrate.

Sharing ideas is important. It is how we learn and expand our own thoughts and values. Listening to those we do not agree with teaches us to think critically. "Good come backs" require references, questions, and statements of fact. We must be knowledgeable in our position to defend it. The ability to critique is applicable in other areas of life, besides family dinners. It is a skill used in education and employment. At the very least, taking part in debate strengthens one's own argument. Knowing the tactics of the "other side" is key to crafting a strong and persuasive position in opposition.

Political discussion cannot function effectively in hostile environments. Be open to being wrong and consider there is yet no conclusion to your problem. Understand there is a side you have never examined before. It is okay to say, "I don't know enough about this topic to discuss it."

Do not ban politics at the table. Ban intolerance.



THE FRAYING ROPE OF FEDERALISM: HOW EAST-WEST TENSIONS STRESS CANADA'S CONSTITUTIONAL FABRIC

Scott Ripley

Recent legislation out of [Saskatchewan](#) and [Alberta](#) has contributed to a growing movement that seeks to increase provincial autonomy from the federal government. Similarly to [Quebec's Bill 96](#) last year, the measures coming out of the Prairies are causing constitutional worries. Although [Western Alienation](#) is by no means a new issue in Canada, these most recent manifestations of the concept are indicative of the gradual reduction of the ability of federal institutions to maintain national unity.

Any article discussing Western Alienation would be remiss not to provide a brief overview of the history of East-West relations in Canada. "Provincial twins" Alberta and Saskatchewan were created by respectively titled Acts in 1905 (Young & Berdahl, 2022). For the first quarter century of their provincehood, the federal government had jurisdiction over each province's natural resources, an arrangement unique to the Prairie provinces. Tariffs put in place by Ottawa to protect Central Canada's manufacturing industry did so at the expense of Western access to cheaper products from the United States. Trudeau the Elder's 1980 [National Energy Program](#) is the quintessential example of a policy seen to be exploitative of the West for the East's gain. In more recent years under Trudeau the Younger, oil pipelines and COVID restrictions have been the arenas of intergovernmental conflict.

Regardless of the immediate impact of these newly signed Acts, they represent the continuation of a pattern described by public administration scholar Donald Savoie in a 2000 paper. In it, Savoie details the evolution of the factors that have influenced how regionalism has affected economic development and federal-provincial relations. The thesis put forward is that, since the rise of neoliberal governance and globalization, economic forces no longer contribute to national unity. Savoie argues that this leaves only Canada's "national political institutions" to unify the country's regions but that they "are in a state of disrepair and are no longer in a position to promote national political integration" (p. 203). Loleen Berdahl (2021), who has studied the evolution of Western Alienation in the time since Savoie's paper, sees the continual presence of these grievances as evidence of "its structural roots within the Canadian federation" (p. 1).

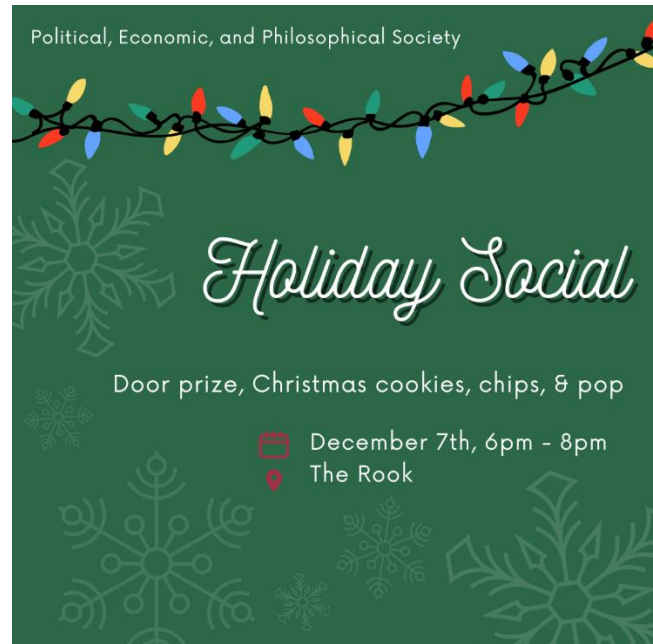
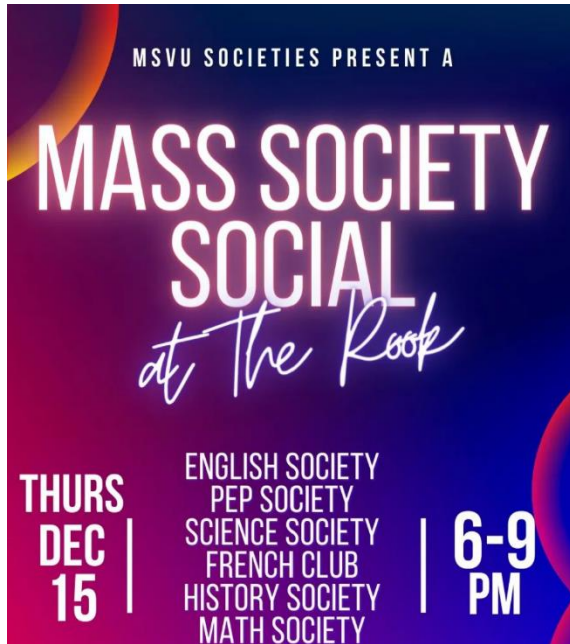
The efforts of Premiers Smith and Moe are just the most recent manifestations of this alienation; however, they are unique in the way they treat an important national political institution: the Constitution. Instead of continuing the pattern of "attempting one 'reform' after another" (Savoie, 2000, p. 216), the legislation "[tries] to redefine the Constitution on their own terms" (Young & Berdahl, 2022). Given the barrier that is the amending formula and the history of failed attempts at reforming it, it is little wonder that Alberta and Saskatchewan are choosing to take independent approaches to the Constitution. By circumventing the procedures put in place to maintain interprovincial agreement on Canada's very framework, these actions are eroding the ability of the Constitution to be a unifying force. Young and Berdahl (2022) acknowledge that this represents a challenge to Canadian federalism but note that each time the country has faced a challenge like this, the federation reshapes itself in some way. With the forces that strain its unity growing more powerful, our current federal arrangement is clearly bound to change shape, though it remains to be seen if it will stretch to adapt or if it will be torn.

References

- Berdahl, L. (2021). *The Persistence of Western Alienation*, Essay no. 9, Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy. <https://centre.irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/05/The-Persistence-of-Western-Alienation.pdf>
- Savoie, D. (2000). All Things Canadian Are Now Regional. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35(1), 203-217. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.35.1.203>
- Young, L. & Berdahl, L. (2022, December 14). *Standing up to Ottawa: Western alienation shifts into Prairie constitutional challenges*. Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2022/western-alienation-constitutional-challenges/>

DECEMBER RECAP

We had our holiday party this month and took part in a mass society social hosted by the English Society.



Red Bull donated a case of energy drinks to us!

