

(chap. 5). To that end, Bakht employs a mixed methodology, varying between a testimonial analysis, a discourse analysis and a legal analysis, and applies an intersectional feminist analytical framework. The testimonial analysis includes semi-structured interviews of niqab-wearing women conducted in Ontario and Quebec, media interviews with niqab-wearing women, editorials written by these women, and affidavits in cases involving niqab-wearing women in different national contexts (Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, France and England). The discourse analysis relies on material from 2007 to 2020, including newspaper articles, op-eds, blogs, academic articles, cases and legislation. The legal analysis is based on case law, legislation, and secondary sources from jurisdictions.

Bakht's goal with this book is to deconstruct the legal, judicial, political and social objections provided by the majority for restricting the rights and actions of niqab-wearing women. The book also seeks to analyze critically how law and politics—through their treatment of these women—can undermine the ideal of democracy, as they become tools to repress and exclude religious minorities in Canada rather than progressive tools “where the experiences and perspectives of individuals most directly affected contextualize and inform the law” (165). The book also offers a reflection on law as a discipline. It aims to critically examine how the law is biased, in the sense that it considers Christian cultural connotations neutral, while those of religious minorities—and particularly Islam—are considered “‘in your face’ visible” (6). Drawing on the Indigenous ethics of the Anishinaabe jurist John Borrows, the book also examines how love and kindness could be aspirational ideas to interpret rights in Canada and could bring transformative change.

This outstanding book, which sheds light on women about whom we speak too little, retraces, in a precise way, a Canadian history of face-covering regulation. It not only gives a voice to niqab-wearing women but also allows readers to question Canadian society. It demonstrates the manifestation of the “Muslim problem” in Western liberal states and how niqab-wearing women symbolize the limits of a nation and unleash moral panic. The book brings to light the injustices suffered by these women in gaining access to public speaking, while at the same time, certain political actors—often men—feel free to assess these women's lifestyle and clothing choices and speak in their place about their alleged oppression. At the methodological level, the book offers a rich body of data by combining the perspectives of niqab-wearing women in Canada, social representations in the Canadian public debate, a history of Canadian legal regulations about wearing the niqab, and artistic visual production around figures of niqab-wearing women. This book will be insightful and instructive for scholars in law, social sciences and philosophy, as well as for a larger public.

One critique of this book concerns the inclusion of minority voices in public spaces. If the book denounces the restricted access to public space for niqab-wearing women, it does not show how these voices—once access is granted—are received and how they can be met with skepticism. Future research could continue the reflection initiated by Bakht by analyzing how epistemic injustices against niqab-wearing women occur in public debates.

Behind Closed Doors: The Law and Politics of Cabinet Secrecy

Yan Campagnolo, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021, pp. 352

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When I was in graduate school, a nervous classmate began a presentation saying, “I'm going to begin by defining ‘definition,’” leading the instructor to comment, “It's going to be a very

complete presentation.” Likewise, *Behind Closed Doors* is a very complete treatment of the arcane but important topic of access to cabinet documents in Canada, at least at the federal level. It offers only a few brief sojourns into provincial cabinet secrecy regimes and makes reference to practices and important cases in Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Campagnolo accepts cabinet secrecy as a necessary evil underpinning good governance—indeed an indispensable element of responsible government. At the same time, “cabinet secrecy is essential [but] cannot be absolute” (11). And yet, to his dismay, Canada is not just intransigent about disclosing cabinet secrets but is notably more protective of them than the other Westminster jurisdictions he surveys, including several provinces. For Campagnolo this is unacceptable.

The book examines the law and the courts’ interpretation of the law in extensive detail, ending with recommendations for moving toward a more open regime. The analysis is well done—at least so far as a non-lawyer can determine—and for deep legal analysis is remarkably clearly written, though more than a little repetitive. However, readers of the *Journal* are unlikely to be drawn to *Behind Closed Doors*, since, the subtitle notwithstanding, it is far more about law than about politics. “Constitutional Conventions,” the first of four long substantive chapters, does deal extensively with the rationale and the politics of cabinet secrecy, and politics enters the discussion occasionally in subsequent chapters, but overall, the book is primarily concerned with case law and legal reasoning. On the political side, particularly interesting is Campagnolo’s explanation for the federal government’s unusually restrictive regime surrounding release of cabinet documents. The author asserts this regime is the result of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s unhappy experience with the McDonald Commission on Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) activities, which meant Trudeau “did not trust the courts to properly handle sensitive political secrets” (227) and imposed an all-but-total prohibition, realized through provisions in the Canada Evidence Act and the Access to Information Act.

Campagnolo is far more confident of the courts’ ability to deal with “cabinet confidences” than was Trudeau. He argues persuasively that currently, judicial review of government claims to immunity when cabinet documents are sought, especially in litigation, is woefully inadequate, extending only procedural propriety (and offering the government a do-over if found lacking), ignoring substantive issues. The nub of the problem is that the judges are usually not even permitted to review the documents in question, whereas this is common in various other Westminster systems, including some provinces. For Campagnolo, the key question is “whether the interest of justice outweighs the interest of good government” (200). He doesn’t offer a definitive answer—who could?—but he makes it clear that he believes the scales are tilted too far in the government’s direction.

A useful distinction, which the author utilizes effectively, is the difference between “core” cabinet secrets, which include views expressed by ministers in the decision-making process, and “non-core” secrets, such as background information, procedural documents, draft legislation and the like, which do not reveal ministers’ views. The rationale for tight, long-term prohibition against openness is much less compelling for non-core documents, but they are generally no more available than those containing core secrets. In part, this prohibition is a function of Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decisions that effectively blur the core/non-core distinction. Ironically, given his trust in the courts in matters of cabinet secrecy, he is sharply critical of certain SCC decisions, which he sees as just flat-out wrong and overly deferential to government.

Early on, Campagnolo notes that his book seeks to reconcile cabinet secrecy with the rule of law (17). This he does through application of a legal theory that sees the rule of law as “a culture of justification.” From this perspective, the prohibition against courts being able to review cabinet documents when government seeks immunity for them is simply unsupportable. Extended—very extended—analysis of cases and practices relating to section 39 of the Canada Evidence

Act, which authorizes the restrictive regime, is brought to bear in arguing the need for greater openness.

Behind Closed Doors makes a strong case that the prevailing protections against the release of federal cabinet documents are, even accepting the basic imperative of cabinet secrecy, unnecessarily restrictive. The author's recommendations for reform, set out in very general terms in the conclusion, are definitely worth considering. However, those interested in cabinet processes, as opposed to legal analyses of cases and wording of statutes, will want to read the book selectively.

From Left to Right: Saskatchewan's Political and Economic Transformation

Dale Eisler, Regina: University of Regina Press, 2022, pp. 392

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On October 26, 2020, the Saskatchewan Party, Saskatchewan's centre-right party, was re-elected to a fourth consecutive majority government. Parallel to this success has been the remarkable relegation of Saskatchewan's former "natural governing party," the New Democratic Party (NDP), to the political wilderness. The NDP, a party born out of "agrarian socialism," was reduced to a small urban base with no presence or prospects in rural Saskatchewan—finishing third in some ridings behind the fringe-separatist Buffalo Party. This was the first time that the NDP had not won or placed second in every provincial riding since 1938 (283). The 2020 provincial election demonstrated the entrenchment of a long and profound transformation in Saskatchewan politics—"from the birthplace of the NDP to its possible deathbed" (xv).

In *From Left to Right: Saskatchewan's Political Economic Transformation*, Dale Eisler argues that the puzzle of Saskatchewan's political transformation is "one of the most interesting and least explored questions in Canadian politics" (xv). Over the course of 20 chapters, Eisler rectifies this deficiency and provides its most comprehensive treatment to date. Eisler is a former journalist whose professional life has coincided with much of what is covered, and his account is an intimate one. He tells the story of Saskatchewan's transformation from the perspective of someone who has both lived through it and reported on it.

Eisler's analysis proceeds chronologically, with each chapter structured around a particular election or significant event. The first half of the book broadly covers Saskatchewan's era of social democracy, beginning in the heady days of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (NDP after 1961) and Tommy Douglas' progressive brand of prairie populism. Eisler charts how Saskatchewan earned the mythic reputation as the home of Canadian socialism due to its unique collectivist political culture and innovative social policies. Eisler locates the end of this era and Saskatchewan's tradition of agrarian socialism with the election of the Grant Devine Progressive Conservatives in 1982. The second half of the book traces the subsequent consolidation of Saskatchewan's political transformation up to the recent 2020 provincial and 2021 federal elections. Crucially, Eisler identifies two central and related components of this process—the NDP's estrangement from its rural roots and the continued salience of populism in Saskatchewan society.

According to Eisler, the single most important factor in Saskatchewan's transformation was a set of structural changes in Saskatchewan's agricultural economy and society in the 1970s and 1980s and the NDP's failure to reconcile itself to these changes. Eisler notes that this period brought new technology and global economic thinking, which precipitated a process of intense