

# CanadaWatch

PRACTICAL AND AUTHORITATIVE ANALYSIS OF KEY NATIONAL ISSUES

EDITORIAL

## Multiculturalism and its feet of clay

### THE QUESTION: AM I BETTER OFF THAN MY PARENTS?

It is false to think that multiculturalism, Canada's signature program, should make us a more tolerant, open, and just society. There is always a deep and jagged fault line in nation-building policies. Some individuals get on board and catch the train. They send their children to school, become integrated into Canadian society, and feel they belong.

The operative word is "feel," because historians and demographers tell us that immigrants face huge boulders on their path when they arrive resource-poor, with few networks and little support. They are stigmatized as strangers in our midst and made to feel like outsiders because they are newly arrived. In every society the immigrant lives initially at the margin for a generation or more. A better

BY DANIEL DRACHE

Daniel Drache is the associate director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University.

measure is what happens to immigrants over a period of three generations. Children of Italian, Portuguese, Serbian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, and African families inevitably ask: am I better off than my parents?

The answer is not always upbeat. Many immigrants cannot catch the multicultural train because they don't have the skills and connections or the support from governments to take the huge step to economic and cultural security. For instance, immigrant women are often kept out of the labour market or forced to work in the most menial parts of the economy. Others are disadvantaged by

race, class, and belief. So multiculturalism's promise of a better life does not reach them in the least, for they are outside of the integration process. Many of the contributors to this issue argue passionately and with reason that multiculturalism has feet of clay. The boulders on the path seem to become larger, more exclusionary, and systemic for many new Canadians as well as for older, established communities.

### THE DARK SIDE OF DIVERSITY

Recent census data read like an indictment of Canadian multiculturalism and the practice of diversity. There is a correlation between income inequality and racial and ethnic origin. So if you are of European descent, the Canadian multiculturalism story reads like a success. If

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### ASK A POLLSTER: Is multiculturalism working as part of our value system?

## Multiculturalism ain't broke

### A LOSE-LOSE PROPOSITION?

It sometimes appears that multiculturalism has very few friends in this country. Pundits tell us that we Canadians, like citizens of other Western countries, are too "tolerant" for our own good. Multiculturalism, once seen as a fair-minded, idealistic vision that Canadians could be proud of, is now commonly blamed for a host of social ills: civic apathy, loss of identity, gender inequality, fragmentation, ghettoization, even racism and terrorism. Whereas multicultur-

BY MICHAEL ADAMS

Michael Adams is president of Environics Research Group and author of *Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism* (Viking Canada, 2007).

alism was once seen as good for immigrants and good for Canada, it is now a lose-lose proposition. Or so some commentators tell us.

When ordinary Canadians are surveyed, however, another picture emerges. Canadians do have concerns about their

country's immigration and refugee policies, and they have concerns about the social integration of newcomers. On the whole, however, Canadians remain proud of their country's diversity and of

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# Multiculturalism and its Discontents

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EDITOR

Daniel Drache  
Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies,  
York University

MANAGING EDITOR

Laura Taman

COLUMNISTS THIS ISSUE

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- Grace-Edward Galabuzi
- Jeffrey Reitz
- Raymond Breton
- Karen Dion
- Kenneth Dion
- Alan Broadbent

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CONTACT FOR INFORMATION

Canada Watch  
7th Floor, York Research Tower,  
4700 Keele St.  
Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3  
Phone (416) 736-5499  
Fax (416) 650-8069  
www.robarts.yorku.ca  
For information regarding future issues,  
contact Laura Taman, Coordinator, Robarts  
Centre. Please address comments to Seth  
Feldman, Director, Robarts Centre.

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you are from the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa and find yourself shoehorned into low-income jobs and a cycle of economic insecurity, multiculturalism is a story of failure.

The vision and the promise of multiculturalism are troubled and unfulfilled, but that is also to be expected. The tensions and discontents of modern society are not alleviated by a single program. It is naive to expect otherwise. France is not a more tolerant society because of its republican values of liberty, equality, and fraternity; American racism has not been eradicated because of the American Constitution. Powerful myths in a country's culture often perform a different function. They create the aspirational standard to protect minority rights in the integration process. No less, they reinforce the intolerant attitude of the majority that immigrants demand too much and live apart in their ethnic and religious solitudes.

## PARIZEAU'S ATTACK ON "ETHNICS"

Canadian multiculturalism has to be seen in this light. Because Canada has never had a strong "I am Canadian" culture, Canadian immigrants and newcomers have not been expected to assimilate into the culture of the majority to be Canadian. How could it be otherwise?

This pluralist conception of the national community has given the politics of citizenship a great deal of room to evolve. This has meant that at a national level Canadians and Quebecers have had to devise institutions that construct a more differentiated identity, one based on a functional belief in pluralism, tolerance, and basic fairness. It was Jacques Parizeau's attack on "ethnics" for the referendum loss that forced Quebecers to bury the old Quebec nationalism and extend the boundaries of national community to all residents. English Canada also had to confront the tsunami-like after effects.

We can see, looking in the rear-view mirror of history, that identity politics has

## The vision and the promise of multiculturalism are troubled and unfulfilled, but that is also to be expected

been an evolving process and not a one-shot deal. Control of the ethnic vote greatly helped the Liberal Party win repeated electoral majorities. Harper has tried hard to woo his "ethnics," but his rewards and incentives haven't tipped the balance in his favour. The idea of identity politics would never have captured the imagination had not new Canadians been able to participate in the political life of the country—slowly, at first, but now everywhere in the political arena, in all parties. The diversity is impressive despite the stereotype that only the Liberals have built their fortunes on ethnic party-client relationships.

So, far from being a one-track minimalist liberal creed tied to market fundamentalism, diversity and citizenship infused Canadian society with a big idea agenda that had to be managed by Ottawa, the provinces, and the cities. Immigrants have needed to be housed, helped with job searches and often job retraining, helped to master a language; and everyone has to have education provided.

This signature program has taken on significant importance since the 1980s, when European immigration virtually stopped and roughly 250,000 immigrants annually came from South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Canada became a multicultural society not through planning but for complex reasons. Diversity overwhelmed nativism, and the two founding European societies had to adjust to millions of new immigrants.

The 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Multiculturalism Act*

of 1988, and other pieces of human rights legislative activism have given Canadians a way to differentiate themselves from Americans, from the American consumer culture, and, most importantly, from American political values. This sense of separateness does not mean that Canadians and Americans are opposed at every point, but it indicates some critical fundamental differences between the two societies.

## NORTH AMERICAN DIVERSITY COMPARED

The American dream of citizenship is powerfully focused on individual rights and collective achievements. Citizenship is a right to be earned, not an entitlement. You are expected to leave behind a lot of your own culture and become an American. It is always US-centric and focused on America's awareness of its own internal cultural boundaries and its uncertainties and fears. The prototypical American frontier experience is one where the frontier by sheer power extinguishes cultural differences in the name of a new cosmopolitan future.

By contrast, Canadian multiculturalism is about collective acceptance and the importance of diversity to modern Canada. It promises citizenship to all who immigrate. You stay pretty much who you are. Expectations that you will shed your skin as the price of entry are not part of the story. The concept of "multicultural" was based on the principle that no one group takes precedence over any other—all identities are in theory equal and government at all levels welcomes and encourages active citizenship.

## NEW THREATS AND CHALLENGES

Immediately we can see why this kind of comparison is so fragile. Post 9/11, the security-obsessed Harper government, through its use of security certificates and its active role in the US rendition of Mahar Arar, has trampled the human rights of many Muslim Canadians. The debate in Toronto over Africentric

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schools at times veered dangerously off course, and the doctrine of reasonable accommodation seemed to hold very little currency. The Harper government has imposed visa restrictions on Mexicans, claiming that too many Mexicans are applying for political refugee status. In her article for this issue of *Canada Watch*, Barbara Jackman puts her finger on the central dilemma. An Ontario Court of Appeal ruled in 2003 (*R v. Brown*) that racial profiling by the police is not acceptable, but police in Canada's major cities continue to use these and other techniques. So the question that we have to ask is whether Canada, despite the dramatic impact of the global flow of immigrants, has constructed silos of exclusion and racism. Are we going backwards into the future?

It is no coincidence that Canada's great experiment with diversity occurred during two decades of economic expansion and unprecedented wealth creation. Economic research makes the fundamental point that inclusion can only be sustained when the majority does not feel threatened by newly arrived immigrant communities and the immigration process provides safe passage for new Canadians and their families. At these times, families save, buy houses, and send their children to college or university. The perennial questions asked are: Am I better off than my parents? Can I take care of them? What is my future?

## COMPLACENCY AND MELANCHOLY

In a strange way the Canadian psyche appears to be drawn to melancholy about both the successes and shortcomings of multiculturalism. In the left assessment, system and structure are blamed for racializing Canadian society. Its fiercest critics call multiculturalism a sham. In the conservative critique, it has become a source of danger and instability. The right demands that immigration stop and immigrants assimilate.

Many Canadians are shocked to learn that the northern model of Canadian

## In a strange way the Canadian psyche appears to be drawn to melancholy about both the successes and shortcomings of multiculturalism.

capitalism is distinct and that the differences between Canada and the United States have become larger in an era of free trade. So far, integration pressures have not supported any new holistic environment or given birth to a set of loyalties that transcends national, class, and ethnic divisions. What happens behind the border makes a fundamental difference to a strong social bond, vital public authority, and the dynamic practice of citizenship. These differences among Canadians and between Americans and Canadians continue to haunt and bewilder us.

Public intellectuals like Michael Adams, John Ralston Saul, and Linda McQuaig have explained the growing divergence between the United States and Canada as a result of Canadian val-

ues and institutions. Seymour Martin Lipset, the eminent American sociologist, has provided a more powerful explanation of the long-term trajectory of these two societies and the way they each chose to exploit their human and physical geography.

He notes that the United States favoured limited political interference in the conduct of social and religious affairs and privileged individual enterprise. Canada favoured large-scale bureaucratic forms of organization and widespread intervention by the state. The Confederation was collectivist in our founding moment, while the Republic was rights-based as befitted a Lockean world of property and civic virtue.

It is not unimportant to look at the origins of Canadian multiculturalism in these defining moments of political culture from the past. They are instructive about Canada's political culture. Canada has done better than the United States in reconciling the efficiency of markets with the values of social community, but this sort of generalization remains highly problematic and obscures our understanding of this transformative program. We are too self-satisfied and smug about multiculturalism's discontents. In a global age where diversity is now the rule everywhere, our myopia is indeed worrisome. 

## Ask a pollster

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the way that diversity is managed—of the approach we call multiculturalism.

Over the past four decades multiculturalism has become central to Canadians' sense of themselves and their country. In 2003, 85 percent of Canadians said that multiculturalism was important to Canadian identity.<sup>1</sup> More Canadians cite multiculturalism as central to the national identity than bilingualism or hockey. Also in 2003, four out of five Canadians (81 percent) agreed that multiculturalism has contributed positively to the national identity.

## A SOURCE OF IDENTITY AND PRIDE

Not only do Canadians feel that multiculturalism is a central part of their country's identity; it's also increasingly a source of pride. In 1985 we asked Canadians to tell us in their own words what made them proud to be Canadian. Multiculturalism was in tenth place. People were more likely to cite the beauty of the land, Canada's natural resources, and even the physical size of the country. By 2006, multiculturalism had climbed to second place. Only Canada's democracy was

more often named as a source of national pride.

Immigrants themselves are especially likely to take pride in Canada's multiculturalism and to feel that it's an important part of Canada's identity. But immigrants, still at only 19 percent of the population, are not the only Canadians who are driving this trend; native-born Canadians increasingly see their country as being defined and enriched by its diversity and by the official response to that diversity: multiculturalism.

As political philosopher Will Kymlicka puts it in the *Constitutional Forum* (13:1, 2003), Canadians aren't unique in living in a diverse society. Rather, "Canadians are distinctive in the way that they have incorporated Canada's policy of accommodating diversity into their sense of national identity."<sup>2</sup> Public opinion data certainly suggest that multiculturalism holds an ever more central position in the imagined community that is Canada.

Canadians' support for multiculturalism is strongly linked to their positive feelings about immigrants and immigration. Canadians consistently express the most positive attitudes in the world toward newcomers. In 2006, an international Ipsos MORI study found that 75 percent of Canadians believe that, overall, immigrants have a positive influence on the country. In Australia, the country with the second most positive attitudes, slightly over half (54 percent) of the people felt this way, with the United States not far behind (52 percent). In Western Europe, Germans (47 percent) were the most positive about immigrants' influence on their country, with Spain (45 percent), France (45 percent), Italy (44 percent), and Great Britain (43 percent) hovering just below.

## SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRATION

Remarkably, as immigration rates have increased, the proportion of Canadians believing there is too much immigration to this country has actually diminished. In 1977, when Canada's immigration rate was only 3.5 people per thousand population, about two-thirds of Canadians

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immigrants  
themselves.

believed the rate was too high, while about a third were satisfied. Today those proportions are roughly reversed: as of 2006, only about a third of Canadians believe there is too much immigration to this country, while about two-thirds think it's about right or too low. Recall that at present Canada has one of the highest immigration rates in the world: 6.6 per 1,000. Even given this exceptional practice, Canada achieves a level of support for immigration that many countries with lower rates of intake can only dream of.

One common anti-immigrant sentiment is the idea that immigrants come to a new country and take jobs from the native-born. Most Canadians aren't buying that old saw. As of 2008, four out of five (82 percent) believe that, overall, immigrants have a positive effect on the Canadian economy. Just one in five (20 percent) believe that immigrants take jobs away from other Canadians.

## FLAWS IN THE SYSTEM

It's true that Canadians have some concerns about the way the immigration and refugee system is administered: in 2006, only a minority (40 percent) agreed that the existing system does a good job of keeping criminals and suspected criminals out of Canada, and a slim majority (54 percent) believed that many refugee claims aren't legitimate. (Notably, suspicion of refugee claimants was highest among immigrants themselves, who may suspect that others managed to jump the

queue in which they themselves waited honestly for months or years.) But these perceived flaws in the system clearly do not undercut Canadians' belief in the overall project of accepting up to a quarter of a million newcomers to our shores every year.

Moreover, the fact that Canadians believe their own immigration system to be flawed doesn't translate into negative opinions of immigrants themselves. For example, although only a minority believe that the system is good at keeping criminals out of the country, Canadians see that as a problem with the system, not with most newcomers: only 15 percent believe that immigrants commit more crime than native-born Canadians. In fact, in the 2006 Ipsos MORI survey of eight Western countries, Canadians were the least likely to see immigrants as more prone to criminal behaviour—less likely than Americans (19 percent), Australians (22 percent), Britons (25 percent), French (26 percent), Germans (35 percent), Spaniards (40 percent), or Italians (41 percent).<sup>3</sup>

Canadians express some concern about the cultural integration of newcomers. A modest majority of Canadians agree with the statement, "Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values." This proportion has been in gentle decline since 1993, when 72 percent of Canadians agreed. By 2005, the proportion of Canadians who believed immigrants were not doing enough to fit in was down to 58 percent. In 2006, amid a flurry of news stories about "ethnic enclaves" and young Muslims allegedly plotting terrorism, this number spiked to 65 percent.

At the time, my colleagues and I were uncertain whether we were witnessing a mere fluctuation that would disappear in the next survey wave or the beginning of a sea-change in Canadian attitudes toward newcomers. But, as was the case on a number of diversity-related questions we have tracked over time, the 2006 results on this item proved to be historic outliers. By 2008, the proportion of Canadians who believed that immigrants are

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too slow to adopt “Canadian values” had ticked back to 60 percent—just a couple of points away from the number we found in 2005.

Given Canadians’ concerns about immigrants’ socio-cultural adaptation to Canadian society, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney’s recent talk about immigrant integration may prove savvy. But to position an emphasis on integration as a movement away from multiculturalism (commentators have made more of this false dichotomy than the minister himself has) makes little sense: multiculturalism has always been geared toward official language acquisition and other drivers of integration. It operates on the premise that being proud of a heritage culture and proud of being Canadian are complementary, not mutually exclusive.

## INEQUALITY AND THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF MULTICULTURALISM

In the end, it is not the name we give to our policy framework—call it multiculturalism, integration, even absorption, as the Israelis do—but the fairness of our economic landscape that will ultimately make or break Canada’s ambitious diversity project. If anything is likely to reverse the relatively positive trends I have sketched here, it will be chronically poor economic outcomes for immigrants. Recent numbers from Statistics Canada are disappointing: an immigrant who arrived in Canada in 1980 could expect to earn about 85 cents for every dollar his or her Canadian-born counterpart took home. As of 2005, the gap between recent immigrants and the Canadian-born had grown, with immigrants earning less than two-thirds of the Canadian-born average: 63 cents on the dollar. The position of highly educated immigrants relative to highly educated Canadian-born workers is even worse: a university-educated man who recently immigrated to Canada on average earns less than half (48 percent) of his Canadian-born counterpart.

Inequality is always a serious issue. But when it comes to immigrants, par-

[Multiculturalism] operates on the premise that being proud of a heritage culture and proud of being Canadian are complementary, not mutually exclusive.

ticularly racial-minority immigrants, the seriousness of the problem is compounded. It is one thing when differences in education or ingenuity yield inequality; it is quite another when economic differences are rooted in racial discrimination or the failure of employers to recognize legitimate qualifications from abroad—especially when immigrants have been admitted to Canada precisely because of those qualifications. Economic struggle compounded by a sense of betrayal is a state of affairs too many new Canadians encounter

upon their arrival in this country. Governments, NGOs, and private businesses are beginning to pay more attention to immigrants’ difficulties in the labour market, and some important new measures (such as the creation of the federal Foreign Credentials Referral Office) have been taken in the years since the disheartening data regarding bias against immigrants were gathered. Canadians new and old should be reminding their leaders of the urgency of this issue and monitoring progress closely. Open, tolerant values do not exist in a vacuum; they are fed by feelings of material security. Social harmony and economic exclusion cannot coexist for long. ❁

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, polling data are drawn from Focus Canada, Environics’ quarterly omnibus survey which polls a random sample of 2,000 Canadians.
- 2 Kymlicka, Will. “Canadian Multiculturalism in Historical and Comparative Perspective: Is Canada Unique?” *Constitutional Forum*, 13:1 (2003).
- 3 “International Social Trends Monitor.” Ipsos MORI, May 2006.

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# The Charter and the constitutionalization of difference

## "O CANADA" BACKLASH

Erik Millett was surely blindsided by the delayed reaction to a decision he made, as principal of an elementary school in New Brunswick, to discontinue the daily ritual of playing "O Canada." He chose instead to reserve the anthem for monthly school assemblies. Oddly, it took more than a year for the change in policy to be noticed but when it was, the ensuing controversy assumed national proportions. A backlash whipped across the country and the matter was taken up in the House of Commons, where Millett's treatment of "O Canada" was castigated as "political correctness run wild." Closer to home, the reaction led to criminal charges when a member of the local community confronted Millett at the school and was convicted for uttering death threats.

Millett's goal was to create an inclusive environment by accommodating parents who objected to their children's participation in a daily anthem exercise. Not only did the school board overrule him and reinstate the ritual, but the legislature expedited a bill which now makes it mandatory for New Brunswick schools to broadcast "O Canada" every day. It might be difficult to understand

BY JAMIE CAMERON

Jamie Cameron is a professor of law at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University.

why any Canadian, whether new to the country or not, could object to this modest gesture of respect for the anthem. Among those expressing a view, most were not troubled by the thought of compelling students to affirm the anthem, albeit passively. This incident shows that it is not obvious, as US author Toni Morrison claims, that "the function of freedom is to free someone else."

## BOUCHARD-TAYLOR COMMISSION

Nor was Millett's experience an isolated example. In 2007, the municipality of Hérouxville, Quebec distinguished itself by adopting a resolution which prescribed "norms de vie" for the benefit of immigrants then resident or considering a move to the community. The code specified that in Hérouxville "a woman can . . . drive a car, sign cheques, dance, decide for herself . . . have a job," and declared that "killing women in public beatings or burning them alive are not part of our standards of life." Gratuitous

and offensive, the Hérouxville initiative prompted the Charest government to establish the Bouchard-Taylor Commission on Reasonable Accommodation of Minorities.

Since then, attention has shifted to issues such as the criminalization of polygamy and the status of head coverings. Here, there has been ample discussion of whether—and how—to accommodate those who cover their heads and faces for religious reasons, when it is important to verify their identity on voting day or to assess their credibility as witnesses in court proceedings. In sports, the question is whether Muslim girls and women who observe religious or cultural standards for dress can participate in activities such as soccer and swimming.

If the customs and habits of cultural communities are less problematic when practised in private, it is another matter when cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial minorities seek accommodation or claim an exemption from laws or obligations of general application. That is when cultural diversity and the "right" to be different bump up against the belief that all Canadians are the same in the eyes of the law, and will be treated the same way by the law.

## MULTICULTURALISM AS PART OF THE CHARTER

Multiculturalism may be official government policy, but by design and deliberate inclusion it is also part of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Section 27 declares that the Charter "shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians." Thus entrenched in the Charter,

If the customs and habits of cultural communities are less problematic when practised in private, it is another matter when cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial minorities seek accommodation or claim an exemption from laws or obligations of general application.

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multiculturalism is a concept and a principle of constitutional dimensions, though not a right that is enforceable by the courts. That may explain why section 27 has played a minor role in the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Charter, and why there is little jurisprudence on multiculturalism *per se*.

That said, the Court should not hesitate to protect multicultural values and to constitutionalize the right to be different. Far from being relegated to the margins, multiculturalism and its values are vitally embedded in the Charter's key substantive guarantees. Section 15, which protects equality, prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of enumerated and analogous grounds. Elsewhere, section 2 guarantees the Charter's fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion and freedom of expression. These entitlements provide a mandate for the protection of cultural diversity, and do so without invoking multiculturalism by name.

As a result, multiculturalism need not be disparaged as a form of special treatment for those who spurn "Canadian" values. Moreover, through these and other substantive guarantees, cultural diversity can be recognized as a fundamental value and incorporated into the bedrock of the Charter. In this way, the Charter can serve as a fresh institutional venue for the pledge, taken long ago and even before Confederation, that our democratic tradition will protect its minority communities.

## THE DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

It is unfortunate that the Supreme Court of Canada does not fully grasp the dynamic link between the Charter's rights and section 27's commitment to multiculturalism. Accommodation prevailed when a Sikh boy wore a kirpan (knife) to school, as well as when Jewish residents built a succah which was in breach of condominium rules. More recently, the Court faltered when a small community of Hutterites sought exemption from Alberta's requirement of photo

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ID for drivers' licenses. There, the chief justice stated that reasonable accommodation is a human rights concept which does not apply to the Charter. In other words, she seemed to be suggesting that the duty to accommodate is statutory, rather than constitutional, in nature. That insight led her to the conclusion that the Court should defer to the legislature on the photo ID requirement. In the circumstances, a majority of the Court chose not to exempt the Hutterites, and suggested that they make alternative arrangements for transportation.

In the years since the Charter's enactment there has been lively debate about

judicial activism, judicial overreaching, and the Charter's consequences for parliamentary democracy. Sensitive to this debate, the Court has retreated in many cases and on many issues. Challenging the limits of judicial review is a valid exercise, and there undoubtedly is a time and place for deference. But whether the enforcement of rights necessarily undermines "democracy" depends on what is meant by democracy and how its values are defined. Where constitutional rights are at stake, the case for deference surely loses force when the right to be different poses little risk of harm to the majority, and individuals or communities are only "included" on condition that they abandon cultural or religious beliefs and practices.

How alike Canadians must be, and how different they can be, to have an identity and ensure its survival are time-defying issues for this "community of communities." It is accepted that there are moments when multicultural values create dilemmas and force difficult choices. But on other occasions, resistance to cultural diversity is less principled. Unless there is a compelling reason, grounded in evidence, not to accommodate or to protect a fundamental freedom, cultural diversity and the right to be different should be protected by the Charter. That is not merely what multiculturalism aspires to, but also what the Charter requires. 



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# Racial profiling and national security

## WORDS AND DEEDS

The intent behind the adoption of the federal policy of multiculturalism in 1971 included assisting cultural groups to retain and foster their own identities while encouraging their full participation in Canadian society. Over the years the concept was refocused to overtly include the promotion of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, particularly the elimination of racial discrimination. The preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians were entrenched in the Canadian Constitution when it was repatriated in 1982, at the same time that human rights were constitutionally entrenched, including the right to equality.

There undoubtedly have been advances in public awareness of the need for tolerance and respect for the diversity of Canadian society, as well as advances in the struggle against racism and other forms of discrimination, since Canada began to officially promote multiculturalism. However, in respect of the protection of Canada's national security, where discrimination and intolerance have always been particularly acute, little has changed.

## DISCRIMINATION, INTOLERANCE, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (the Service) is charged with the responsibility for identifying threats to Canada's national security. The concept is broad, not even requiring that Canada be directly threatened. In early 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Suresh v. Minister of Citizenship & Immigration* ([2002] S.C.J. No. 3), stated that "Canada's national security may be promoted by reciprocal cooperation between Canada and other states in combating international terrorism. . . . The threat need not be direct; rather it may be grounded in distant events that indirectly have a real possibility of harming Canadian security."

BY BARBARA JACKMAN

Barbara Jackman is a specialist in immigration and human rights at Barbara Jackman and Associates.

[I]n respect of the protection of Canada's national security, where discrimination and intolerance have always been particularly acute, little has changed.

In identifying security threats, the Service collects information, but unlike police forces, who collect evidence to present in court in support of a criminal prosecution, the kind of information which the Service relies upon may include that which is speculative and gives rise to no more than suspicions about a person. In identifying individuals who it believes should be investigated, the Service relies partly on information that includes "profiles."

An example of this is the profile underlying the advice that the Service provided to the government in June, 2005 about the threat from Islamic extremists. The memo was prepared ostensibly to provide the federal government with information about the threat presented by detained Islamic extremists, but actually shored up the state's case in several of the security certificate cases, which were then before the Federal Court on applications for release from detention.

The memo, dated June 24, 2005, is entitled "Islamic Extremists and Detention: How Long Does the Threat Last?"

It opens with the statement that "thousands of extremists passed through Al Qaeda or Al Qaeda-affiliated training camps in Afghanistan during the 1990's." It notes that "all attendees were indoctrinated into an extremist form of Islam that called upon adherents to kill those perceived as the enemy. This ideology was drummed into these individuals and is likely to remain with them for years." The report creates an impression that all who participated in the Afghan conflict are adherents of an Islamic extremism rooted in a religious belief which is lacking in human morality, and that these individuals will never change.

## THE CASE OF HASSAN ALMREI

One example of a case where the Service applied its profile is that of Hassan Almrei. In the early 1990s he went to Afghanistan as a teenager to participate in the conflict caused by the Soviet occupation of the country. The Service officer who testified at the hearing into whether the security certificate issued against Mr. Almrei should be upheld, concluded that he "had a profile" comparable with the profile of al Qaeda members and that there were "sufficient elements of a profile" for the Service to conclude that there were reasonable grounds to believe that he posed a threat to national security (*Almrei v. M.C.I.*, [2004] F.C.J. No. 509).

It is the same profile that resulted in the identification by the Service, and later by the RCMP, of a number of Canadians—Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El Maati, Muayyed Nureddin, and Maher Arar—as Islamic extremists. Mr. El Maati was in Afghanistan, and while the others were not, it was thought that Mr. Arar was there, that Mr. Almalki was on the border in Pakistan, and that Mr. Nureddin knew others perceived to be Islamic extremists. These Canadians were detained and tortured in Syria, as was Mr. El Maati in Egypt, because the suspicions about

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their being Islamic extremists were shared with other states.

## PROFILING AND STEREOTYPING

The profile applied by the Service is a stereotype and one which, like all stereotypes, is inaccurate. The essential premise of the profile is that all who went to Afghanistan pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden after being indoctrinated into an extremist form of Islam; and that, having adopted extremism, they would never reject it. The reality is not so simplistic. The Service profile conflates the history of jihad against Soviet control in Afghanistan with involvement in al Qaeda as though the two were one and the same thing. The Afghani jihad was an international armed conflict, within the meaning of the *Geneva Conventions* (1949) and the two *Protocols*. It was in this sense legitimate in the context of international law norms of the *Geneva Conventions Act* (RSC 1985, c. G-3).

The Service profile assumes all camps were controlled by Bin Laden, ignoring the many different leaders vying then for supremacy in the struggle for control of Afghanistan. And it assumes that all who travelled there shared a belief in a jihad directed against Western interests, without regard to principles of morality and the rule of law, when the struggle in Afghanistan was originally directed against Soviet interests, not Western ones.

The presumption that all who went to Afghanistan were extremists is not grounded in fact. Experts who testified before the Federal Court in Mr. Almrei's case, including a Yale law professor, Dr. El Fadl, explained that the struggle against the Soviets was supported by the United States and most Middle Eastern countries. Muslim youth from many different countries responded to calls from states and mosques to help the Afghans. Some states, like Saudi Arabia, offered financial assistance for youth to participate. Most who went did not receive rigorous training, but only the elementary

[R]acial profiling by the police is not acceptable, while security agency profiling is.

basic training necessary for their own safety. Dr. El Fadl indicated that many went because of the Muslim belief that one must come to the aid of a Muslim brother or sister. The prevailing mood then was that a communist state had invaded a Muslim state: Muslims equated communism with atheism, and governments such as Saudi Arabia's pressed this view. Most youth who went worked in non-combat positions, in humanitarian and educational activities. Very few became extremists—15 percent at most. Most were average, decent, moral Muslims who had strong religious beliefs. They were being fed a one-sided account, that the "bad guys" were the Soviets and the "good guys" were the Afghani people who were being dominated by the bad guys.

## THE ONTARIO COURT OF APPEAL'S RULING AGAINST RACIAL PROFILING

The distinction between the profiling engaged in by Canadian security agencies searching for threats to Canada's security and that engaged in by police forces searching for criminals, is that racial profiling by the police is not acceptable, while security agency profiling is. Several years ago, the Court of Appeal for Ontario in *R v. Brown* ((2003), 173 C.C.C. 3d 23) clearly stated that police stops based on racialized characteristics were not acceptable, even if evidence of a crime was discovered after the stop. The court took issue with police officers' basing their suspicions of wrongdoing on the basis that the person was black, coupled with other

factors such as sex (male), youth, make and condition of car (if any), location, dress, and perceived lifestyle.

## THE FEDERAL COURT'S HANDLING OF PROFILING

On the other hand, the profiling applied by the Service—which focuses on the person's being Arab and Muslim and having been involved in Afghanistan—has not been criticized by the Federal Court; rather, the profile underlies the conclusion that the non-citizen Arab/Muslims who were made subject to security certificates presented a threat to Canada's security. The court saw nothing wrong with the use of the profile, only that it might not always be accurate.

Even with the Canadians subject to torture abroad, only Mr. Arar has been officially "cleared" and, in his case, it was acknowledged that he was not in Afghanistan or close to it.

The dangers of profiling in the context of national security investigations are stark. The profile is sufficient to give rise to suspicion, which, in combination with other factors which may in and of themselves be neutral, gives Security officials sufficient basis to act. The result of acting on suspicion can be torture, as in the cases of Canadians Mr. Arar, Mr. El Maati, Mr. Almalki, and Mr. Nureddin, or lengthy detentions without trial, as in the cases of non-citizens like Mr. Almrei, Mr. Jaballah, Mr. Mahjoub, Mr. Charkoui, and Mr. Harkat. All these men are Arab and Muslim.

It is already apparent in some of these cases, and will likely be in others as time passes, that the profile of the "Islamic extremist" functioned as a substitute for actual fact and masked a failure on the part of security officials to fully investigate before acting on their suspicions. There have been two commissions of inquiry into why the Canadians were tortured abroad. Both have recognized that the labelling of the men as Islamic extremists was not grounded in anything other than suspicions. The reports of

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# Does reasonable accommodation succeed in protecting tolerance and diversity?

I would like to make four distinctions and three observations.

## DISTINCTIONS

### 1. Immigrant multiculturalism is different from indigenous multiculturalism

India is not an immigrant society, but it is a breathtakingly multicultural country. Canada's indigenous peoples contribute to its cultural pluralism, but, significantly, we do not normally think of them as part of the country's multicultural mosaic. The nature of the social and political debate is quite different according to the category in which a given group is placed. In most cases, in an immigrant society, multiculturalism is a transitional phenomenon for each incoming immigrant population, en route to either assimilation or integration (see point 3 below); the factors leading to assimilation or integration in the case of indigenous multiculturalism arise—not out of the process of immigration, obviously—but out of other social, demographic, and economic forces, such as industrialization, urbanization, or state policy.

Seeking to re-categorize an indigenous community as an immigrant community is a strategy sometimes used by dominant groups to undermine the status of the minority; hard-line Sinhalese nationalists will argue that the Tamils of Sri Lanka are not, properly understood,

BY DAVID CAMERON

David Cameron is a professor of political science at the University of Toronto.

an indigenous people, even though the Jaffna Tamils have made their home in Sri Lanka since the 14th century. They sometimes contend that the Sri Lankan Tamils have a place they can go back to—Tamil Nadu, for example, in southern India—whereas the Sinhalese have no place but their island to call home.

### 2. Rural multiculturalism is different from urban multiculturalism

The capacity of a distinct but relatively small cultural community to maintain itself over time is greatly enhanced by isolation. Even if such a community shares a common language with the majority society, it can preserve itself over generations if it is capable of living apart in a rural environment. It is much more difficult, although not impossible, to do this in the city. The incessant social transactions of urban living tend to draw young people away from their cultural roots and corrode the distinctive cultural forms that sustain the identity of the minority community. The Amish of Pennsylvania and the Mennonites of Waterloo County have been able to preserve their distinctive life and institutions for generations. What this suggests is that

the look, feel, and reality of multiculturalism in 19th-century Canada, which was then a country of farms and villages, were very different from the texture of multiculturalism in the 21st century, when 80 percent of Canada's population is urban.

### 3. Integration is different from assimilation, although not so different as one might think

Presumably, we use the term “assimilation” when we assume the receiving society is not altered by the encounter with a new incoming cultural group; “integration,” when it is believed that the receiving society itself is changed by the impact of new cultural and linguistic forces within the society.

If the receiving society is open or uncertain of itself, the process will lead ultimately to integration. This means that the receiving society, as well as the immigrating communities, will be changed in the course of the transaction.

If the receiving society is closed or ideologically or culturally monolithic, the process will lead to either assimilation or exclusion. This means that the receiving society will be relatively little altered in the transaction.

In almost all cases, by the fourth generation or so, the cultural identity distinguishing a particular group will have been largely transformed into either assimilation or integration.

### 4. Multiculturalism is different from multinationalism

Historically, multiculturalism has been a point of friction between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians. French-speaking Canadians, and, more specifically, francophone Québécois, have resisted the Anglo inclination to lump francophones in with other ethnocultural groups. This is because they see themselves—and are in fact—a self-sus-

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taining national community with a full set of institutions and autonomous practices, not a cultural/linguistic minority within a larger national community. Aboriginal people, too, given their indigeneity, fit more readily into the national than into the multicultural narrative, even though their autonomous institutional networks are far less fully articulated than those of the francophone Québécois. So Canada is not just a multicultural society, but some kind of bi-national or multi-national country. Multiculturalism exists *within* each of Canada's two major linguistic communities.

## OBSERVATIONS

### 1. The virtues of irresolution

For a country in the multicultural business, there are distinct advantages in not having a founding myth, a distinctive creed, or a cohesive national ideology. Largely, I think, because of the country's English-French reality, Canada has never really been able to give a good, coherent account of itself, of what it is and what it stands for, except in the most general terms. This has meant that there has been a kind of porousness in our national story—open or indeterminate spaces within which different lives and experience can fit. Toleration, accommodation, adaptation, adjustment—these are impulses that are shot through the Canadian fabric, and they have meant that Canada's immigration experience—which has been going on, after all, for centuries—has been more about integration than assimilation, more about the mutual give and take that changes all parties in the relationship.

### 2. Time as a resource in managing diversity

There is a natural human desire to get things clear and to resolve complex human situations one way or the other, but often this impulse is mistaken. Some things are genuinely better left unsaid and undone. People don't normally accommodate themselves to new and

Canada's immigration experience . . . has been more about integration than assimilation, more about the mutual give and take that changes all parties in the relationship.

unfamiliar situations or to new people all at once; it takes time. So it is, at least in part, with multiculturalism; each new community works its way into the national fabric over time, and the country is incrementally changed as a consequence. This process has profoundly shaped Canadian society over the generations; indeed, there are few things that have affected it more.

### 3. The "values" issue

This is a complex issue. If multiculturalism is to mean something more than folklore, then it must surely include differentiation in values. Yet if there is not a common substratum of shared principles and values, the society is surely heading for trouble. Monoculturalism in some sense needs to underlie multiculturalism. But in what sense?

First of all, one needs to recognize that the values and aspirations of an individual and of a society often evolve over time; they are not always fixed and immutable, even though it is comforting to think so. It would be difficult to argue that Canadians' understanding of homosexuality or of the proper treatment of Aboriginal people has remained unchanged over recent decades. Once one humbles oneself before the powerful transformative capacity of human society and culture, it is possible to look at multiculturalism in a somewhat different light. Instead of its seeming to challenge existing and implicitly immutable domestic values and belief systems, it can be seen to offer the possibility of dialogue and mutual learning. If we accept the hypothesis that there are things we don't know and ways of conducting the business of human life that may be as good

as—or even better than—what we are familiar with, a considerable potential for human growth is released, and the diversity of cultures and ways of life can be not just tolerated, but celebrated for what it can contribute to the common good. What do we mean when we say that Canada's immigrant experience has made the country a better place? It has to mean more than good Chinese food and reggae music; it must also mean that the country has become something good that it wouldn't have become without immigration and without the leavening impact of cultural pluralism.

Yet it would be wrong to conclude that all values are created equal in a swamp of relativism. Canadians are committed to liberal democracy, the rule of law, and the respect of persons. These are not optional values that we can take up or set aside at will; they—and other principles like them—constitute the foundation of our life together. Working creatively at the frictional interface between what is foundational and what is not is a task that confronts each succeeding generation in a multicultural society. 

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# The multicultural diversity gene: Reality or myth?

## LEGIONS OF SORROWS

“When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions.” This wisdom of Shakespeare’s, in *Hamlet*, may easily be said today of the concepts of peaceful multiculturalism and diversity around the world. Examples abound: the July 7, 2005 bombings in my childhood home town of London, England; the fires and destruction in the banlieus of Paris; the murder of Dutch Filmmaker, Theo Van Gogh, which has turned a tolerant Netherlands into a society in turmoil; the Madrid train bombings; and cartoons in Denmark that have turned that country into a meeting ground for the clash of civilizations within its boundaries and with the Muslim world at large.

But has Canada escaped from these battalions of sorrows that are afflicting peaceful multiculturalism and diversity elsewhere? Some have argued that we have escaped most of the sorrows because we are the only real global template for peaceful multiculturalism and diversity. We need to examine whether this is myth or reality.

Before September 11, 2001, the largest terrorist attack in North America had been against Canadians, in the Air India tragedy. More recently, Canadian complacency has been somewhat shaken by the arrest in Toronto of the alleged 18 jihadist terrorists who were plotting to bomb targets in Toronto and commit acts of violence elsewhere. In addition, we have seen Amed Ressayon use Canada as a base for his attempted millennium bombing of the Los Angeles airport; and a Canadian, Momin Khawaja, was convicted under the *Anti-terrorism Act* of conspiring with a British jihadist to commit very serious terrorist offences in Britain.

## A HISTORY LESSON

When Canada’s multiculturalism policy was first developed and promoted some

BY ERROL P. MENDES

Errol P. Mendes is a professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa and a Former Senior Advisor of the Privy Council of Canada.

When Canada’s multiculturalism policy was first developed and promoted some 33 years ago . . . it was a product more of political necessity and expediency than of global leadership.

33 years ago as a world-class model for the integration of ethnocultural communities into the mainstream of Canadian society, it was a product more of political necessity and expediency than of global leadership.

The origins of our multiculturalism policy were the backlash by these ethnocultural communities against the mandate and the findings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the title gave it away) in 1963, the goal of which was to provide a response to the demands of French-Canadian nationalism. The opposition to second-class citizenship and demands for equal treatment by the “third force” led to the Trudeau government’s proclaiming, on October 8, 1971, the official policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual frame-

work. There is no doubt that the growing electoral strength of the third force was a major motivator for the Trudeau government.

## ENTER THE CANADIAN STATE

However, the official goal of the new policy was to promote unity among different cultural groups while combatting discrimination against these groups and discouraging ethnocultural rivalries. The underlying philosophy of some of the promoters of the new policy was that state promotion of inclusion and recognition of the equal worth and value of each culture would lead to greater tolerance of and respect for other cultures in the growing cultural mosaic that Canada was evolving into.

What happened in 1971 was primarily the establishment of multiculturalism as an essential *ideological component* of the state. The “diversity gene” that allowed the notion of multiculturalism to be entrenched in Canadian society had a different origin. That came about by trial and much error through the relatively short history of the country. These earlier developments are what I suggest have shielded Canada, at least until now, from the worst of the sorrows of multiculturalism and diversity. But the shields are very fragile and need careful and continual reinforcing. Without the basis of the Canadian “diversity gene,” we would be more vulnerable to the battalions of sorrows that plague multiculturalism and diversity today around the world.

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND THE BNA ACT

We may locate the origins of our diversity gene in 1763, with the Royal Proclamation granting the First Nations of British North America the status of protected nations, with the right to their own form of government. This treatment was very

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different from that meted out to First Nations in the Americas by the Portuguese, the Spanish, and, later, the Americans. In Canada, the Proclamation became the basis of the legal nature of Indian title and an historical root of the treaty process.

The Proclamation described the Aboriginal nations as autonomous political units living under the Crown's protection against the "great frauds and abuses" that had been meted out to them in other parts of British North America. The Proclamation portrayed the links between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown as broadly "confederal" ones through which their diversity would be respected. Its provisions underlie the surrenders and designations of reserves for the First Nations of Canada.

This early manifestation of the constitutive fact of diversity continued with the *Quebec Act* of 1774 which, unlike the results of military conquests anywhere else in the world at that time, bestowed the most fundamental of diversity rights on the French colonists by protecting their religion and their legal systems. In part this was an acknowledgment of the inevitable failure of the British assimilationist policies directed at the French population, as set out in the Royal Proclamation. The impending American Revolution and the fear that the "Canadiens" might join the Americans in the revolt led the British government to entrench the French fact in British North America by means of the *Quebec Act*.

The *Quebec Act* was a unique recognition of diversity in the British Empire. Roman Catholics were emancipated in Quebec a full half century before Catholics in Britain. The concessions made in the *Quebec Act* persuaded the Canadiens not to join the American Revolution; had Britain not passed the *Quebec Act* it is imaginable that Canada would not exist today.

Some historiographers would argue that giving diversity rights to the First Nations and the conquered French populations was motivated by fear of

The guiding principles behind the *British North America Act* were to protect and promote regional and cultural differences while ensuring a central government strong enough to be the glue of that diversity.

new conflicts with First Nations and of conquest from the South rather than by a profound valuing of diversity. But this action nevertheless represents the origin of what I term the Canadian diversity gene.

### THE DIVERSITY GENE: CURSE OR BLESSING?

The Canadian diversity gene was further strengthened by the underlying rationale and structure of Canadian confederation as established by the Quebec resolutions in 1864 and at Charlottetown in 1867. The guiding principles behind the *British North America Act* were to protect and promote regional and cultural differences while ensuring a central government strong enough to be the glue of that diversity. The goal was to give the central government sufficient resources and powers for expanding the new state westwards and dealing with regional disparities. As a constitutional lawyer, I have long argued that diversity and indeed the protection of the distinct society in francophone Canada is written into the fundamental constitutive document of this country.

The BNA Act was based on the 72 1864 Quebec resolutions strongly influ-

enced by the francophone founding architects of Confederation. The goal of these architects of Canada, such as George-Étienne Cartier, was to ensure "la survivance" of the French population living in Quebec by maintaining their control over their language, schools, and laws. The Act enabled each province to have its own specified powers to control its own distinct societies. The provincial legislatures were given, under the BNA Act, the power to make their own laws in 15 specific subject categories, and this allowed provincial diversity to flourish, especially through the provinces' being granted, by section 92(13) of the Act, jurisdiction over all matters dealing with property and civil rights.

These provisions were designed to entrench the pre-existing diversity gene in the fundamental constitutional document of the new country. The genius of the founding architects of Canadian nationhood was to entrench asymmetry up to the limits of the politically possible, but then to permit differences to flourish under other symmetrical provisions. I suggest that this constitutional diversity gene is also the historical source of the desire for what is termed *asymmetrical federalism* by Quebec federalists today.

### INTOLERANCE AND RACISM

However, the foundational constitutive facts of diversity in Canada have been greatly undermined since 1867 by vicious and overt governmental and societal acts of racism and discrimination against Aboriginal peoples, racial minorities, and indeed women from the dominant culture. The litany of such acts fills the pages of Canadian history texts, from the abuses at Indian residential schools, to racist immigration laws, such as the Chinese head tax, to the denial of equal occupational rights and the franchise to Asian immigrants, First Nations, and women. Among other instances, in our country's history, of the diversity ideal's being shamefully neglected are the expropriations and internments of Japanese Canadians and other immigrant

communities during the Second World War, when their only sin was to have origins in an enemy country. Another instance is the denial of sanctuary to European Jewish refugees, before and during the Second World War, due to rampant anti-Semitism.

Has this tragic record of racism and xenophobia, compiled from the earliest beginnings of the Canadian state, undermined its diversity gene and thereby opened it up to the battalions of sorrows today? There is no definitive answer, but it is safe to say that the non-discriminatory immigration policy of our more recent history has reinforced the diversity gene in Canada.

### THE ETHNIC PENALTY OF NON-EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

The ethnic composition of the Canadian populace has also changed rapidly, reinforcing the diversity gene of the country. In 1957, European countries accounted for the top ten sources of immigrants, with the United Kingdom providing one-third of all immigrants. Forty years later, in 1997, non-European countries accounted for the top ten sources of immigration.

With such a dramatic increase in the diversity of immigration, the issue of the labour market's discrimination against the new immigrants would inevitably arise. To avoid the worst of these problems, immigration policy favoured the skilled workers among prospective immigrants. This class was sought after to provide the technical and other skills needed in the professions and to fill labour gaps.

The early warning sign of the deconstruction of the diversity gene in Canada is the emergence of the ethnic penalty in the labour force in Canada. Several studies of ethnic and racial discrimination in labour markets have been conducted in Canada. These studies seem to indicate that existing wage gaps between white and non-white workers cannot be accounted for by differences in education, occupation, or other demographic factors. Some ethnic communities have fared better than others. The

The genius of the founding architects of Canadian nationhood was to entrench asymmetry up to the limits of the politically possible, but then to permit differences to flourish under other symmetrical provisions.

evidence, not necessarily foolproof, may suggest that these wage gaps are the result of racial discrimination in all aspects of the labour market. These ethnic and racial penalties may be producing isolated communities that turn out to be the wellspring of the battalions of sorrows that will assail Canadian diversity in the near and distant future.

### EYES WIDE OPEN

We cannot afford to be blind to the possibility and even the probability that our immigration and settlement policies, our citizenship and cultural policies, our discriminatory labour markets, our Aboriginal policies, and our criminal justice laws and policies could well turn our diverse society into a multicultural

and racial rooming house. In this house, each stays within his or her own room, some faring better than others. Some are descending into a spiraling crisis of gangs, guns, youth murders, and vicious criminal activity. There is always the possibility that some of these will morph into highly dangerous organized criminals with the capacity to disrupt vital public transportation and other systems and ultimately even participate in terrorist activities. We need to pay much more attention to the common living spaces of shared and engaged citizenship.

The promise of substantial multiculturalism and the protection and promotion of our diversity gene should become the core of a radical national project for the 21st century. 

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these commissioners, Justice Dennis O'Connor and retired Justice Frank Iacobucci, are having an impact in the security certificate cases. There is a new process in place, with security-cleared lawyers appearing in the secret hearings to protect the interests of the Arab men. It is clear from the conduct of these cases, presently underway, that greater scrutiny is being given to the kinds of information the government relies on.

### SEPTEMBER 11 CANADA'S LITMUS TEST

September 11, 2001 was a litmus test for Canada. While the excesses of the Second World War, which saw the mass internment of the Japanese and the confiscation of their homes and properties, did not occur, what has been hap-

pening is just as egregious, although on a smaller scale. This has happened in spite of an official policy of multiculturalism and in spite of the entrenchment of equality principles and respect for other cultures into Canada's constitution. One can only hope that the work now being done, to call officials to account for stereotyping, results in mechanisms being put into place to ensure that it does not happen again. 

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# A historian's long view on multiculturalism: The limits of liberal pluralism in early Cold War Canada

Canadians are familiar with the images of multiculturalism: newspaper photos of parades with colourfully costumed performers in “ethnic dress”; the collage of diverse faces in the “Canadian family tree” adorning the covers of government publications; and the displays of ethnic and fusion dishes in magazine food features. Simultaneously, the contradictory forces of globalization, increased policing of borders against Third World migrants, and the “war on terror” have prompted certain critics to denounce humanitarian refugee programs and blame “home-grown terrorism” on multiculturalism’s supposed failure to transform newcomers into “proper” Canadians. The often polarized debates between liberal defenders of multiculturalism and its critics have obscured the position of anti-racist leftists who criticize the liberal myths of Canada as an egalitarian nation and call for a radical restructuring of a society that is a racialized vertical mosaic.

## LIBERAL PLURALISM AND THE COLD WAR AGENDA

All of this suggests the need for more careful histories of pluralism. Recently, some historians have pulled back the origins of multiculturalism and focused

BY FRANCA IACOVETTA

Franca Iacovetta is a professor in the Department of History at the University of Toronto.

on ethnic groups who, in the past, inserted themselves into and disrupted national celebrations (such as the 1927 Diamond Jubilee festivities) that were meant to narrate a simple history of a white dominion’s progress. Here, I highlight the liberal pluralism of the early post-war, Cold War era. As my book, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigration Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto, 2006) documented, the early post-1945 immigrant campaigns, aimed mostly at integrating white European newcomers, exhibited a contradictory mix: there were liberal discourses of tolerance, respect, and cultural pluralism that echoed the concept of a more inclusive Canadian citizenship embedded in the new *Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1947; but there were also intrusive tactics reflecting the rise of a “national insecurity state” fighting a domestic Cold War against the various perceived threats to mainstream society and its dominant bourgeois models. I offer a few examples of these competing dynamics.

First, federal citizenship officials portrayed themselves as enlightened liberal integrationists who, unlike earlier assimilationists, would guide, not dictate, the newcomers’ adaptation to Canadian society. Yet their writings also revealed the ideological agenda of a ruling elite that encouraged new groups to “flourish” so long as they did not threaten the authority of the dominant groups. The booklets informing immigrants about the many freedoms enjoyed under Canadian democracy also stressed its reliance on a loyal and obedient citizenry; and both ordinary Canadians and newcomers were encouraged to spy on neighbours and help quash signs of dissent. In their efforts to integrate newcomers, citizenship officials were prepared to work with ethnic Canadian organizations—save for Communist ones—on the grounds that already Canadianized groups could ease the acculturation process by providing war-weary, frightened, and even emotionally damaged newcomers with critical support. Such efforts also helped to provide a defence against the anomie or group disorder that could endanger Canada’s social fabric and/or entail huge health costs. All this activity concerning immigrants was in keeping with the state’s national security agenda to contain domestic threats and ensure a contented and conformist citizenry.

## CULTURAL PLURALISM OR CONTAINMENT?

Second, the “integrationists” sought to foster national unity by encouraging mutual understanding and exchange between old and new Canadians, but their acceptance of diversity was restricted to the comparatively safe cultural arena. In his many upbeat speeches,

[D]ebates between liberal defenders of multiculturalism and its critics have obscured the position of anti-racist leftists who criticize the liberal myths of Canada as an egalitarian nation and call for a radical restructuring of a society that is a racialized vertical mosaic.

Vladimir Kaye, chief liaison officer of the Citizenship Branch, used colourful metaphors to convey the state's role in encouraging "unity-in-diversity," comparing newcomers to the musicians of a Canadian orchestra or to the tasty ingredients of a Canadian salad. Along with liberal food writers who featured ethnic recipes (with the most pungent spices removed or diluted) and told Canadian mothers to "spice" up family meals with (just) a touch of the "exotic," Kaye praised European ethnic foods for saving Canada from standardized blandness in eating regimes. But he and other reception workers also endorsed and implemented programs that sought to "modernize" immigrant women's food customs by encouraging them to abandon the outdoor ethnic markets, with their live pigeons and Old World haggling, for modern grocery stores with their clean aisles, well-stocked shelves, cellophane-wrapped meats, and nutritious "Canadian" items (enriched bread, milk, canola oil). Aware that a sense of belonging was necessary to inculcating patriotism, citizenship officers worked with cultural groups to organize immigrant exhibits, concerts, and folk fairs that showcased the newcomers' art, handicrafts, dance, and music for Canadian audiences. As they also well understood, such strategies for celebrating individual talents or mounting cultural performances did not challenge existing power structures or mainstream society.

## **GENDER AND FAMILY IDEOLOGIES**

Third, familiar class and gender dynamics emerged as middle-class professionals encouraged newcomers to aspire to the bourgeois nuclear family model according to which breadwinner fathers, homemaker mothers, and well-adjusted children lived within "proper" single-family households and performed appropriate gender roles. The Citizenship Branch's promotional materials celebrated individual entrepreneurial, professional, or artistic achievements, while its teaching tools for women, including NFB films, featured consumer images of the

## **[C]elebrating individual talents or mounting cultural performances did not challenge existing power structures or mainstream society.**

ideal homemaker and the many modern conveniences—fridges, stoves, model kitchens—that defined the Canadian way of life. The huge gap between these images and the overcrowded (and often kitchen-less) flats or multiple-family houses in which many newcomers initially lived reflected the working-class realities of men and women who came from the Displaced Persons (DP) camps or peripheral European regions.

Fourth, the adoption of pluralist approaches did not entirely eliminate older assimilationist expectations that the newcomer undergo a profound change in cultural values and social behaviour; nor did it displace the experts' presumption that they were authorized to intervene in the lives of newcomers who seriously transgressed Canadian norms. Often ignoring the patriarchal character of Canadian families, family and child experts invoked stereotypes of domineering European fathers and submissive mothers as explanations for ill-adjusted children and delinquency. Liberal programs, such as inner-city school lunch programs or settlement house nursery schools and mothers' clubs, also sought to reduce immigrant parents' Old World influences over their children. Public health workers, introducing immigrant mothers to social services to help them deal with sick or disabled children, frequently dismissed these women's customary healing rituals as dangerously backward, and they dismissed their suspicion towards them as a manifestation of outmoded values that had to be broken down. Settlement house workers

tried to Canadianize immigrant children and youth through organized recreation programs—such as summer camps, boys' sports leagues, girls' crafts classes, and teen dances—that contained youthful energy and sexuality while simultaneously instilling principles of participatory democracy. These programs reproduced gender stereotypes and hierarchies, as in crafts and charm school for immigrant girls, and sports for boys, though some girls joined competitive sports. In an era marked by alarmist declarations of escalating immorality, including a supposed epidemic in female promiscuity, it is not surprising that such programs often involved a heightened concern about protecting the sexual virtues of immigrant girls. This societal concern with girls' vulnerability to sexual deviance also reflected racial-ethnic hierarchies that, at a time before the post-1967 immigrant waves of women of colour from the Caribbean and elsewhere, considered certain "non-preferred" newcomers—southern Europeans, such as the "well-developed" Italian girls disposed to "hanging out with boys," or Eastern European refugee victims of war-time rape, viewed as "damaged goods"—to be more susceptible to promiscuity than were Canadian girls.

## **MULTICULTURALISM FOR EUROPEANS**

The Europeans were not simply passive pawns in the processes described, however. And for all of the heavy-handedness and hypocrisy involved in these campaigns, white European newcomers were not subjected to the ruthless assimilation policies applied to Aboriginals. Many found ways to resist or, more commonly, modify external pressures to adopt Canadian ways. Many exercised some choice and agency over the pace and degree of acculturation, and this process of adaptation led to various hybrid patterns, whether in parenting styles, children's play, or family relations. In the long term, the postwar Europeans helped change Canadian society and, later, multiculturalism, even as their own

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# The evolution of multiculturalism: Achievements and setbacks of Ukrainian Canadians

Since its official implementation in 1971, multiculturalism has received both praise and criticism galore from various constituencies in Canada accordingly as it has met expectations or dashed hopes. Just as our society today differs sharply from the one that existed at the time of the policy's inception, so the policy itself has changed as well. This paper explores what multiculturalism meant to Ukrainian Canadians—as one of the established immigrant groups\* in the country—during the time of the debate and how their perception of multiculturalism developed over time. Ukrainians are generally hailed as some of the most dedicated proponents of multiculturalism in Canada. Not only were they among the most active participants in the initial discussion of the 1960s, but Prime Minister Trudeau himself visited the Ukrainian Canadian Congress only a day after announcing the official multiculturalism policy in October of 1971—considered by many a sign that the contribution of the Ukrainian-Canadian community in Canada had been acknowledged by high-level Canadian officials. Such acknowledgement was significant to Ukrainian Canadians, who felt the burden of preserving a culture that was threatened in their country of origin. Ukrainian Canadians had high hopes for the future of their community under a new multiculturalism policy that promised to help them protect their language and heritage. But did Canada's multiculturalism policy live up to this immigrant group's high expectations? Can it be declared a success or failure? Does it still hold relevance in today's society?

## THE ORIGINS: THE DEBATE AND THE ROLE OF UKRAINIAN CANADIANS

The 1960s were a decade of upheaval and change, and on a smaller scale these international developments were mir-

BY JULIA LALANDE, PhD

Julia Lalande is a research officer in the Faculty of Education at York University.

Ukrainian Canadians had high hopes for the future of their community under a new multiculturalism policy that promised to help them protect their language and heritage.

rored in public discussions within Canada as well. What had initially started as a discussion about bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada quickly turned into a debate about multiculturalism, as many of the non-Anglo, non-French Canadian groups felt that they were not fairly represented during such an important time in Canadian history. Ukrainians were among the early advocates of a policy that recognized the contributions of “the other ethnic groups” to the development of Canada. Their submissions to the B&B Commission repeatedly featured three themes: the quest for participation, recognition, and equality. Ukrainian Canadians demanded political representation for the “other ethnic groups,” not only through individual politicians, but also through umbrella organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC). They lobbied for the acknowledgement of languages other than English and French (for example, as credited subjects in schools), for an official recognition of

the contribution of “other ethnic groups” when writing and representing Canada's history, and for more representation within the media. One of the underlying arguments throughout the discussion was the Ukrainian Canadians' pioneering experience in Western Canada, which was often paralleled with that of the English and French. Other important factors were the precarious situation in the homeland, the fear of Ukraine's Russification, and the inherent urge to preserve the Ukrainian heritage abroad. This “mission” was further complicated by the fact that the community in Canada had not seen a new wave of immigrants since the early 1950s and that Ukrainian language usage and community participation were also declining within the country.

## THE MULTICULTURALISM POLICY: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

The multiculturalism policy introduced in 1971 acknowledged that Canada was a multicultural country within a bilingual framework. The government pledged to support ethnic groups—through cultural encounters and language acquisition—in overcoming cultural barriers so that they would have the opportunity to “share their cultural expressions and values with other Canadians.” Furthermore, the government promised to support research proposals, art displays, and projects that fought racism. Hence groups had the chance to preserve their heritage through government-sponsored programs, but they had to apply for grants, since funding was not guaranteed, and all efforts to mobilize community members had to come from within the group. The policy was initially very positively received, and many Ukrainian Canadian representatives had high hopes that it would (re)invigorate the community and its activities. So how can one judge the developments over the next three decades?

## ACHIEVEMENTS—1971 ONWARD

Some of the strongest gains Ukrainians in Canada made in the post-1971 period were in the area of recognition and academic profile. Due to increased funding for “ethnic” writers (many Ukrainian Canadians among them), the market saw a diversification of literature by and about Ukrainian Canadians. The 1970s and 80s also saw a surge in the numbers of (academic) conferences held by Ukrainian Canadians that dealt with multiculturalism and the preservation of heritage. These kinds of activities were made possible by the emergence of Ukrainian Canadian institutes (such as CIUS at the University of Alberta), programs, and chairs of Ukrainian Studies. Ukrainian Canadian studies blossomed during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, and certainly hit a pinnacle in 1991, when the centennial of Ukrainian settlement in Canada coincided with Ukraine’s declaration of independence. Topics that were formerly understudied—for example, the Ukrainian settlement of the prairies, Ukrainian internment during World War I, the group’s religious life—were now not only subjects of academic publications, but also part of wider curricula and course outlines. And Ukrainian Canadians achieved recognition beyond the academic sphere. For example, in 1990 Ray Hnatyshyn became the first Governor General of Canada of Ukrainian Canadian descent, and in 2009, the Canadian government initiated the *Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism*, which commemorates the “late Senator Yuzyk’s pioneering legacy in the areas of multiculturalism, diversity, and pluralism” and acknowledges that he “played a key role in the development and implementation of Canada’s multiculturalism policy.” The first recipient of the award was John Yaremko, the first Ukrainian Canadian elected to the Ontario legislature (1951), Ontario’s first Minister of Citizenship, and a prominent advocate of multiculturalism.

## SETBACKS

Although Ukrainian Canadians certainly achieved milestones in regards to recog-

[M]ulticulturalism is not a static policy, not a “one-size-fits-all” solution, but an ongoing conversation.

—*UCC Multiculturalism Committee Position Paper*

—*UCC Multiculturalism Committee Position Paper*, the umbrella organization criticized the fact that any group seeking government funding through the Multiculturalism Program had to meet one of four “program objectives”—that is, the application had to deal with a) ethno-racial minorities participating in public decision-making; b) engagement in dialogue combatting racism; c) public institutions eliminating systemic barriers; and d) programs and services responding to ethno-racial diversity. None of these objectives were in line with Ukrainian Canadian goals as expressed by the UCC, namely, the preservation of language and the fight to combat the “attrition of a distinctive culture.” In their statement, the UCC criticized the fact that the government was not meeting the “spirit and the letter of the law enshrined in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*,” particularly in regards to the preservation of heritage. In a nutshell, the community had hoped that the multiculturalism policy would be a reliable form of funding for groups like theirs—the established immigrant group having to fight not overt forms of racism, but rather the slow eradication of their language and culture. Alas, this was not to be. However, the overall decline of the community in the decades following the announcement of the multiculturalism policy was not only caused by a lack of funding. With Ukraine’s independence in 1991, one of the major “causes” or

driving forces for the community was eliminated, and the new wave of immigrants that came in the 1990s had, for the most part, no interest in joining existing community organizations. Hence, the decline in membership continued, and it is questionable whether increased government funding could have stopped this trend.

## CONCLUSION

When evaluating multiculturalism in Canada between 1971 and 2009, it becomes obvious that the policy itself and its implementation have significantly developed, responding to changes in immigration patterns in Canada. When examining the initial demands of Ukrainian Canadians involved in the multiculturalism discussion, one cannot declare the ensuing policy either a complete success or a complete failure. In regards to recognition, the multiculturalism policy certainly achieved much, particularly from a Ukrainian Canadian and a historian’s perspective. From a perspective of community funding, Ukrainian Canadians and their particular cause did not fare so well. From a historian’s perspective, the achievements in the area of recognition outweigh the setbacks in regards to community funding. The discussion during the 1960s and the subsequent official policy opened doors for ongoing discourse and developments, creating a forum for continuous dialogue, scholarly debate, and constant re-evaluation. By re-evaluating our goals, successes, and failures, we acknowledge that multiculturalism is not a static policy, not a “one-size-fits-all” solution, but an ongoing conversation. Multiculturalism also helped us to advance our notion of what it means to be an inclusive society, a society that recognizes the contribution of many groups to its past, present, and future, and that in itself can be judged as a success. 🍀

\* In this case, the term “established” refers to groups—for example, Germans or Ukrainians—that came to Canada in larger numbers as early as the 19th century.

# Ethnic identity and multiculturalism

## DEFINING THE TERM “ETHNIC”— NO EASY TASK

The concept of ethnic identity is a nebulous one in the era of multiculturalism. In the linguistic shorthand of popular parlance, people are just as likely to refer to themselves as Irish, Ukrainian, Chinese, or Tamil, as they are to call themselves Canadians, whether hyphenated or not. The Canadian government seemingly reinforced such attitudes when its multiculturalism policy was first announced. In his statement to the House of Commons on October 8, 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau expressed government support for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism when it contended that “adherence to one’s ethnic group is influenced not so much by one’s origin or mother tongue as by one’s sense of belonging to the group, and by . . . the group’s ‘collective will to exist.’”

Meanwhile, North American scholars had been busy deconstructing the notion of ethnic identity, giving academic weight to these changing perceptions: hard “objective” markers such as language, religion, common customs, and history were made to accommodate softer “subjective” factors such as feelings of belonging and the willingness to interact with the group. In other words, to be Italian, one need not speak the language, practise the religion, or know the country’s customs and history. One simply has to feel Italian and have some contact with the broader “community.”

Behind such shifts, it is important to stress, lay a significant modification in what was being described. When the term *ethnie* gained currency at the end of the 19th century, it was meant to designate large groups bound together by common cultural attributes irrespective of political boundaries. The expression “ethnic German,” for example, encompassed not only subjects of the German Empire, but German-speaking communities scattered throughout Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. Hence, the

BY ROBERTO PERIN

Roberto Perin is a professor in the School of Public and International Affairs, Glendon College, at York University.

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need was felt to establish clearly defined markers to distinguish one large group from another.

## ETHNICS AND IMMIGRANTS

However, increasingly after the Second World War, US social scientists (and by extension, Canadian ones) used the term “ethnic” to refer to immigrant groups, that is, immigrants from a particular country of origin together with their progeny. But these scholars faced a conundrum: if grandchildren no longer spoke the language and ignored the ancestral traditions of their immigrant forefathers, could they still be considered part of the “ethnic group”? The problem was resolved by bringing “subjective” factors into play. What happened in the process was that a fragment (the immigrant group) had been substituted for the whole (the *ethnie*). This shift clearly underlines the urgent need to find distinct terms to designate two quite separate realities. However, the problem is even more complex than that.

Can one, in fact, refer to a common identity over the span of generations after immigration? As we know, cultures

evolve over time and, with them, identities: the Canadians of today share a different identity than did their compatriots at the beginning of the 20th century. Similarly, time has altered the culture and identity of the newcomer’s country of origin. This is so much the case that immigrants, although expecting the familiar when they return to the land of their birth after a prolonged absence, often feel discomfort before the changes that have taken place. But these truisms mask another transformation, one that happens to specific immigrant cohorts as they reproduce themselves.

## THE IMMIGRANT: CHANGE, ADAPTATION, AND HYBRIDITY

In general, first-generation newcomers have a primary and immediate identity that is tied to their land of origin. At the same time, they interact with and are influenced by the culture of their country of adoption. Reflecting this adaptation are shifts in speech and eating patterns. In the first instance, immigrants incorporate into their everyday use of their original language expressions in English or French thought to be indispensable or compelling. In the second case, they integrate to a greater or lesser extent North American ingredients and fare into their foodways. These are just the most visible signs of changing habits and attitudes in response to the country of adoption that are subtle, hard to track, and therefore difficult to study. The first generation thus has an identity that, while rooted in the culture of origin, is nevertheless hybrid. The second generation too possesses a hybrid identity, one whose primary reference, however, is the receiving culture, although mediated by that of the country of origin.

In general, the connection with the ancestral culture is not as immediate in this generation. Nor is it sustained so much by daily interaction, which is the foundation stone of culture. By the third generation, this contact becomes even more remote. Grandchildren are very

often unable to name the town of origin of their immigrant forebears, and although they may understand words and expressions of the ancestral language, they are often incapable of speaking it with any fluency. If we factor exogamy into the equation, the question of ethnic identity becomes yet more complex for this and subsequent generations. Clearly, the ethnic identity of immigrants is very different indeed from that of their children and grandchildren.

There are of course exceptions to this model. Differing patterns of socialization can result in situations where members of the third generation retain large components of their ancestral culture. For example, frequent travel to the country of origin, schooling in that language and culture, exclusivist social ties including the selection of marriage partner, may perpetuate immigrant culture. However, as studies have shown, such phenomena concern only a small minority in the third generation. We are thus again confronted with individual choice, rather than group cohesion. Unless it is replenished by subsequent waves of immigration from the country of origin, the group is destined to die out.

### THE SINGULAR IMPORTANCE OF THE "DIASPORA" TO IDENTITY

Recently, the argument has been made that, with the stunning advances in information technology, it is now possible for "diasporas" to live in close communion with their land of birth. In addition, political devices such as dual citizenship, the overseas vote, and the diaspora's right even to be represented in the sending country's legislative bodies, further strengthen such bonds. The fact remains, however, that most people cannot inhabit two realities at once. Jobs, families, and leisure activities limit one's ability to participate fully in two cultures, when one is at a physical remove. Ultimately, this issue too is about the individual, not the group.

What do these abstract musings have to do with public policy? Multiculturalism has promoted the image of Canada as a mosaic as opposed to the US melting

[I]t is now possible for "diasporas" to live in close communion with their land of birth. . . . The fact remains, however, that most people cannot inhabit two realities at once.

pot. This representation implies that defined cultures, like the pieces of a mosaic, coexist side by side. I have argued instead that immigrant cultures are not fixed and discreet entities. Rather they tend to leach into the broader receiving culture, helping to transform it. In this context, is it appropriate to speak of cultural preservation, as ethnic activists and cultural bureaucrats have done? How can one preserve something that is always changing and adapting? As well, since the Second World War, the Canadian government has encouraged the formation of pan-Canadian ethnic umbrella organizations, which supposedly speak for the ethnic group.

The formation of these organizations creates the illusion that, to choose a random example, the Canadian Polish Congress represents the more than 800,000 Canadians who claimed Polish descent in the 2001 census. This figure encompasses six generations. At one end of the spectrum are the descendents of the first wave of immigrants who arrived around the time of Confederation. At the other are the children of the Poles who settled here in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Two-thirds of the total, over 550,000 people, claimed mixed ancestry in 2001 and are therefore the products of intermarriage. In all, only one-third had knowledge of Polish and less than half of these, 120,000 people, spoke it in the home. These figures starkly confirm the generational disparities in the understanding of ethnicity examined above. Clearly, those who speak Polish on a daily basis have a different appreciation of their ethnicity than those who speak it occasionally, if at all, or those who are of mixed ancestry. In light of this, who does the Canadian Polish Congress speak for:

800,000, 260,000, or 100,000 people? Is the expression "ethnic group" anything more than a fiction, considering there are such widely divergent experiences of ethnicity?

### A TRUER MIRROR

I am not suggesting here that multiculturalism is wrong. In fact, the policy did get some things right. The shame that immigrants once felt because of their non-British origins is now largely a thing of the past. Newcomers have also been integrated much more into the Canadian narrative, which is no longer simply the story about the "two founding peoples." Diversity has become a hallmark of Canadian identity, characterizing its political, social, cultural, and even financial institutions. Finally, multiculturalism policy not only encouraged Canadians to learn languages other than English or French, but to value bi- and multilingualism. These are hardly trivial achievements. But multiculturalism also gave rise to the tenacious image of the mosaic, the deep-seated belief in the perpetuation of ethnicity and the widespread view of umbrella organizations as spokespeople for ethnic groups.

Canadians have made diversity a defining trait of their identity. For this conviction to remain firm, it must be rooted in right thinking and an accurate perception of reality. We need to understand better the nature and basis of this diversity in order to have a clear idea of who we are and what makes us distinct. 

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# Multiculturalism, the Canadian academy, and the impossible dream of Black Canadian Studies

## A DISMAL FAILURE

Multiculturalism in Canada from a black scholarly perspective has been a dismal failure. In making such a claim I want to stress that I am particularly speaking to the humanities and the social sciences. In my view, from that vantage point, the Canadian academic scene is racist to the core. I make this claim not as a comparative claim, but as one that I believe stands the test in relation to the Canadian academic environment itself. I have been a full-time academic for 15 years working in the area of black cultural studies and over that period black Canadian studies has remained a nascent field of inquiry and the future looks much the same.

The inability to produce programs, courses, and academic positions that cast their lens on black cultures in the Canadian academic sphere is what I identify and indict as racism. This is an institutional racism that refuses to acknowledge multiple forms of black inquiry, that refuses to see how scholars who focus on black peoples can contribute and do contribute to wider networks of scholarship, and that fundamentally refuses to invest in black Canadian concerns, issues, and interests. For me it all adds up to a deep, core institutional racism that only notices black people as a problem or as a means to some other kind of end, but never for what black people interested in black people can contribute to our creation of knowledge.

Since the 1960s, Canadian universities have established African Studies programs and Caribbean Studies Programs that have acted in part as proxies for black Canadians to investigate themselves when given the opportunity. However, these half-starved African Studies and Caribbean Studies programs

BY RINALDO WALCOTT, PhD

Rinaldo Walcott is an associate professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

The inability to produce programs, courses, and academic positions that cast their lens on black cultures in the Canadian academic sphere is what I identify and indict as racism.

have not been able to sustain inquiry into black lives in Canada in any sustained manner, given their economic poverty. It is from this vantage point that multicultural efforts in Canadian universities are a massive failure. That I can think of no program at any Canadian university that is solely dedicated to the study of black life in Canada is depressingly dreadful. In fact, when black life in Canada is even given a nod it is now dressed up in immigration studies and transnational studies, but still with little interest in the actual black communities here. This signal failure of multiculturalism on our university campuses means that as our student demographics shift and change in urban centers like Toronto, our faculties and their interests remain permanently and characteristically white—there is no other way to name it.

## RECENT EFFORTS: RESEARCH CHAIRS IN BLACK STUDIES

Most recently, and largely owing to community efforts, there has been a move to name chairs of research at Canadian universities that honour black people's contributions to Canadian society. The first chair, the James Robertson Johnson Chair in Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie, has more recently been followed by the Jean Augustine Chair at York, and there are future plans for the Michaëlle Jean Chair at the University of Alberta. Those three chairs are meant to honour black Canadians who have stood out among their peers in their fields. These chairs represent a significant political statement and the manner in which each of them is treated and supported by their host institutions tells us a lot about how those institutions value Black Studies, even when the chair itself might not be solely dedicated to Black Studies (as with the Augustine Chair at York).

However, one of the central problems with some of these efforts is that they continue to act from a place that imagines black people as only recent arrivals in Canada, undermining and attempting to unwrite black people's much longer presence in both colonial Canada and post-Confederation Canada. Such approaches also seem to have no idea of how to account for the children born of the post-Second World War black migrants to this place, who can by no stretch of the imagination be merely considered Caribbean or African or immigrant, for that matter (notwithstanding notions of flexible citizenship and such). Many of these efforts only ever think about black Canadians within a logic of immigration and thus leave out a crucial aspect of Canada's long narrative of disciplining blackness in this nation. What is particularly

distressing is that across this country black people have consistently organized and contested educational practices as one way to make their citizenship felt in this land. However, those efforts are often not seen as contributing to the larger society. And in the academic realm, black people have let universities off the hook by not demanding adequate representation in them as they have in the area of public education.

## CONTINUED ABSENCE OF BLACK HISTORIES

Recently, one of Ontario's deans of education was much excited by the ways in which the recent *Roots of Violence Report*, authored by Roy McMurtry and Alvin Curling, looked into youth violence—a matter in which black and Aboriginal youth are a significant factor—and made, as they should, mental health issues a major aspect of their recommendations. What was most interesting is that the dean was interested in mental health issues almost to the exclusion of the other issues and recommendations raised by the report. This troubling highlighting of mental health by the dean at the expense of other issues—issues in which a school education ought to play a major role—was not surprising to me.

The *Roots of Violence Report* is also critical of the ways in which public school education still silences black histories, and also of the ways in which black histories remain absent from the broader Canadian national imagina-

[A] general commitment to producing campuses that reflect our demographics and the communities within which they are located, as well as a curriculum that is also representative of those communities.

tion—all issues that a faculty of education could and should lead on. But instead the dean was more interested, I suspect, in seizing on the mental health issues and the recommendation raised as a way to have access to the sizable dollars at Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The sizable grants from CIHR would make any dean swoon, given university budgets. It is in such a fashion that I make the claim above that the Canadian academy is racist and only interested in black people insofar as such an interest furthers the agendas and priorities of those who are already there.

## BACK TO THE 1960s: RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BLACK STUDIES

I believe that multiculturalism exists in a variety of forms—official multiculturalism, popular or everyday multiculturalism, and commoditized multiculturalism—and that struggles over its meaning and how it might translate into everyday life are crucial and necessary. However, if we look at how multiculturalism has played itself out in Canada's universities and in

academic culture, it appears, both as an aspiration and a policy, to have been a dismal failure.

In my view, the only way to begin to fix this failure is to return to the 1960s. By this I mean that the establishment of Black Studies programs now would do much to aid the absence of black life in our academy. As I suggested above, in the initial establishment of area studies program like Caribbean Studies and African Studies and even in newer programs like diaspora studies and transnational studies programs, black life still often goes missing.

The challenge for genuine multiculturalism on our campuses calls for administrators with vision, faculty who can see beyond reproducing themselves, and a general commitment to producing campuses that reflect our demographics and the communities within which they are located, as well as a curriculum that is also representative of those communities. Such a vision would move us closer to a practice of multiculturalism that is in line with the everyday realities of our multicultural lives in the close urban spaces we currently inhabit. 

## Ask a historian continued from page 17

customs were being modified. While differing from each other in their capacity to re-establish themselves—we should not discount significant class distinctions between them—European immigrants rebuilt meaningful lives, families, and communities that also made a mark on the Canadian landscape. Ethnic foodways helped transform the culinary landscapes of cities like Toronto and Montreal. Similarly, the

newcomers' anti-Communism helped shape a pro-capitalist democratic discourse and helped the Canadian state to meet its long-standing objective of destroying the left-wing ethnic press, though international events also mattered in this regard. A more decidedly multicultural but still largely white and still non-egalitarian society emerged out of the many interactions, conflicts, and accommodations just described. In

short, early post-war liberal pluralism contained the complex, sometimes contradictory, and racially exclusionary elements that would inform official multiculturalism of the 1970s. 

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# Multiculturalism and its (usual) discontents

## SUPPORTING THE FEDERALIST OPTION

We know that multiculturalism was promulgated to pacify the non-Anglo and non-French ethnicities who were not deemed to have been central to the establishment of the Canadian state. Of course, Prime Minister Trudeau's 1971 pronouncement of the program of official federal government multiculturalism was intended to ensure that ethnic minorities across Canada and especially in Quebec would support the federalist option in the then-looming contest with revitalized and populist/socialist Québécois nationalism. The Anglo-federal "camp" could hardly afford to have ethnic minorities siding with francophone Québécois in any potential battle over Quebec sovereignty. Indeed, the October Crisis of the previous year, which saw the Front de Libération du Québec attempt a Fanonian/Front de Libération Nationale guerilla warfare model imported from Algeria (with rhetoric from the US Black Panther Party to boot), had served notice that the Canadian state should prevent potential alliances from developing between disenfranchised Québécois and disempowered ethnic minorities and immigrants.

At the same time, the promulgation of federal official bilingualism in 1969, which had the effect of not only making French and English official languages but also of making ethnic francophones and ethnic anglophones *de facto* official majoritarian ethnicities, also meant that the less "official" linguistic and ethnic minorities had to be placated and "recognized." Also crucial to the 1971 birth of federal multiculturalism was the conflict between the federal government and Aboriginal peoples, a conflict which had assumed new life in the wake of the 1970 attempt by the Trudeau government to unilaterally assimilate First Nations peoples by depriving them of treaty rights, reserves, and their own national affiliations by rendering them "Canadians." The Aboriginal response was to

BY GEORGE ELLIOTT CLARKE

George Elliott Clarke teaches African-Canadian literature at the University of Toronto. A prize-winning poet and novelist, his latest books are *I & I*, a verse-novel, and *Blues and Bliss: The Poetry of George Elliott Clarke*, selected by Jon Paul Fiorentino, and recipient of the 2009 Eric Hoffer Book Award for Poetry.

It's worthwhile to remember that multiculturalism was a state solution to the perceived problem of "national unity," and so the program and policy were always deeply political.

reject the notion that they were "ethnicities" like other Canadians. At the same time, Québécois nationalists articulated a policy of "interculturalism," meaning, in essence, that while Quebec would respect minority ethnicities, these parties would have to accept a degree of partial assimilation, becoming Québécois. (While some commentators view "interculturalism" as coercive, it should be noted that multiculturalism operates similarly in the rest of Canada: minority cultures are "respected," but folks are also encouraged to assimilate to "Canadian" norms.)

## MULTICULTURALISM: A STATE SOLUTION

It's worthwhile to remember that multiculturalism was a state solution to the perceived problem of "national unity," and so the program and policy were always deeply political. Naturally, ethnic minority elites saw the advantages of

grabbing hold of some of their own tax dollars, now being returned to them, to build economic and political bases for themselves while also promoting their own cultures to other Canadians as well as within their own communities. This sensible development led to the rise of "song-and-dance multiculturalism," as some have decried it. It also meant that these same ethnic minority elites were able to win favours, especially from the governing federal Liberal Party, in exchange for the delivery of the "ethnocultural" communities' votes on "E-day." This politics was also sensible, for it had meant the extension to all of Canada of the same francophone ethnic (and Catholic-connected) politics that the Liberal Party had used in Quebec.

So, the history of the program/policy reminds us that multiculturalism is a pure product/project of the Canadian state, especially in its Liberal/liberal colourings. From the beginning, critics, literally left and right, have charged that it reduces Canadian unity by promoting "hyphenated Canadianism," thus reducing assimilation; that it avoids and occludes the discussion of racism; that it is bourgeois and is aimed at unifying ethnic minority bourgeoisies at the expense of the common cause of labour (however defined); and that it increases social disputes by seeking to protect and preserve minority cultures as opposed to forcing them to adopt "Canadian values" and "practices."

The criticisms are justified, and they have enjoyed elegant elaboration elsewhere. I agree with the critics—the left-leaning ones to be precise. But I also would like them to recognize the truly radical potential of multiculturalism—at least in theory—at least in Canada.

## RADICAL POTENTIAL

First, we must recognize that multiculturalism represented the first public acknowledgment by the Canadian state that ethnic Anglos and ethnic Francos were not the only Canadians. For the first

time, the federal government addressed ethnocultural minority-group Canadians as *citizens* with a direct relationship to government. Previously, the federal government had only recognized ethnocultural and racial minority groups in Canada if they constituted a “problem”—West Coast Chinese and Japanese, Prairie black settlers, Eastern and Southern European immigrants (including Jews). Thus, it was indeed a progressive step when the Canadian state began to accept these “others” as bona fide citizens (even if still “not as Canadian” as the “Founding Fathers”). Indeed, if the *Official Languages Act* finally told francophones that the federal government recognized their distinct status as citizens, multiculturalism was intended to extend the same consideration to the non-majoritarian ethnicities. In its wake, Ed Schreyer—a Ukrainian Canadian—could be appointed governor general and Bora Laskin could head the Supreme Court of Canada. Furthermore, the inner logic of multiculturalism means that marginalized citizens may now expect to share at least vicariously in power by filling “symbolic” posts such as governor general or lieutenant governor.

Second, but just as important, while some of the early federal multicultural dollars went to feel-good festivals and the like, some of the money—yes, even if only a pittance—went to fund newspapers, magazines, radio shows, TV shows, and, crucially, literary anthologies. We can date the arrival of contemporary Canadian literature as an academic and cultural fact from the discovery of Austin Clarke as a Canadian novelist (not a displaced Barbadian writer) as well as the appearance of anthologies of Jewish, Arab, Black, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and other ethnocultural minority writing, as of the mid-1970s. It is striking to note that Michael Ondaatje was first perceived as an exotic Canadian writer, but, by the later 1990s, was beginning to be relocated as an Asian-Canadian author too.

While some critics may view such anthologies and other cultural, canon-

## [M]ulticulturalism, even in its liberal, statist guise, has been a positive step forward.

building initiatives as constituting the song-and-dance multiculturalism of ethnic elites, it is still the case that these publications were progressive in establishing, usually, the Canadian-ness of a minority group, while also permitting them to access and understand and align themselves with the experiences of other minority intellectuals. That *Roman Candles*, an Italian-Canadian poetry anthology edited by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, and *Canada In Us Now*, an African-Canadian anthology edited by Herald Head, appeared so close to each other meant that it was possible for intellectuals from either group to begin to draw instructive connections between them. (Indeed, it may be the case that di Cicco

felt inspired to tackle Italian-Canadian anthologizing because of the example of Head’s African-Canadian text.)

Third, various experiences of racism and exclusion could now be compared more easily, from the Africville Relocation to the Japanese Canadian internment, from the Jewish refugee Voyage of the Damned (when Jews fleeing Nazi Germany were refused entry to Canada) to the Komagata Maru Incident as well as the Chinese Head Tax or even the Acadian Deportation. Multiculturalism helped to make it possible for marginalized-group intellectuals to network with like-minded others from outside their own cultural traditions.

### A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD

Yes, *much* more remains to be done—including dethroning the British head of state. Canada is still not yet a truly egalitarian, multiracial, and multicultural state. But multiculturalism, even in its liberal, statist guise, has been a positive step forward. It has served—and can serve—to expand the inclusive sense of the term *Canadian*. 

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# Multiculturalism in a colour-blind society and the education of Black students

## TRYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT: AN AFRICENTRIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Despite widespread opposition, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) went ahead to establish an Africentric Alternative School for elementary students, starting September 2009. The timing of the school has much to do with the recent TDSB research finding that shows a 40 percent drop-out rate among black students, most of them males. However, this high drop-out rate, and the related high failure and expulsion rates for black students, is not new. In fact, the *Every Student Survey* reports (1970–1993) of the former Toronto School Board (as well as occasional studies by other Toronto area school boards) have consistently shown that black students do less well academically than their non-black counterparts.

In the 1970s, this educational situation of black students was explained as lack of familiarity with the education system, a result of the fact that most of the students and their parents were new Caribbean immigrants to Canada. Today, the majority of the “dropping-out” students are second- and third-generation Canadians. Insofar as this generation of Canadian-born students is experiencing limited academic success in the established education system, it seems reasonable for the TDSB to try something different in an effort to address the schooling and educational situation of black students. Why then the opposition to the Africentric Alternative School?

The reaction of many Canadians to the recommendations—including the reactions of the premier of Ontario, the minister of education, school administrators, educators, and African Canadians—was disappointment with the trustees. The premier told newspaper reporters: “I don’t think that it is a good idea. I think our shared responsibility is to look for ways to bring people together. One of

BY CARL E. JAMES

Carl James is the director of the Centre for Education and Community and a professor in the Faculty of Education at York University.

[T]he establishment of a school with a program geared to meeting the educational needs and interests of a particular group of students is not without precedent.

those most powerful agents of social cohesion is publically funded education”; and he encouraged Torontonians, if “they really feel strongly about this . . . [to] speak to their duly elected representatives and tell them how strongly they are opposed to this proposal.” The opposition leader also condemned the recommendation, as did the minister of education, who said: “We don’t want to see kids separated from each other. We don’t think the board should be moving in this direction” (*Toronto Star*, “McGuinty turns up the heat on trustees,” February 1, 2008, p. A1).

Media reports and commentaries branded the program “segregationist.” According to the *Toronto Star*, “the idea smacks of segregation, which is contrary to the values of the school system and Canadian society as a whole.” The *Globe and Mail* referred to the recommendations concerning the school as being “as insulting as they are ridiculous”; and the *National Post* commented that the “con-

cept of special schools for black students is one of those terrible ideas that refuses to die” (Andrew Wallace, in *This Magazine*, 2009, p. 5).

## EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INTERESTS

But the establishment of a school with a program geared to meeting the educational needs and interests of a particular group of students is not without precedent. There are public or government-funded religious schools and same-sex schools; and the TDSB has nearly 40 alternative schools, including “specialized schools” that focus on visual and performing arts, and technology, as well as specialized programs for gifted students and high performing athletes. And there are the annual Black/African History Month “celebrations” in schools. The existence of such schools and programs indicates an awareness to me, a recognition that things such as religion, gender, sexuality, and students’ interests in arts, drama, technology, history and athletics play a role in their experiences and schooling needs, interests, aspirations, performance, and outcomes. On the basis of similar principles, therefore, the establishment of a school that is responsive to the cultural values and schooling needs of black students does not seem illogical.

So why the particular concern about the Africentric Alternative School for kindergarten to grade 5 students? Why object to a school with a program that aims, as the trustees’ motion indicates, to integrate “the histories, cultures, experiences, and contributions of people of African descent and other racialized groups into the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and social environment of the schools” (Toronto District School Board, Report, 2008)? Why is the establishment of such a school not in keeping with the aims of multiculturalism? What does it mean to “celebrate” Black/Afri-

can History if having a school that makes central the histories and experiences of Black/African peoples is considered a form of segregation?

## WORKING AGAINST THE IDEALS OF MULTICULTURALISM

The concerns seem to be premised on the notion that such a school is segregationist and hence works against the ideals of multiculturalism and multicultural education (introduced in Canadian schools in the mid-1970s), which hold schools to be culturally neutral, accommodative of cultural differences, and able to educate students in ways that affirm their “cultures.” Within this context, the failure of students is seen as more a product of their individual efforts, choices, values, and aspirations than of the system of education. That parents’ and community members’ support for the proposed school was summarily dismissed by political and educational leaders suggests that the parents’ important insights into the schooling and educational needs of black students have little or no sway in summoning recognition of the need for a particular education program for students whose needs are not being met.

To support the establishment of an Africentric school, then, would call into question the commitment of governments and educators to equal opportunity for all students. Furthermore, the failure or refusal to grant that an Africentric schooling program would serve students the same as any alternative schools or specialized program is, in part, based on individuals’ reluctance to admit that race matters in Canada and therefore plays a role in the experiences of students. Such an admission would mean acknowledging that racism operates as a barrier to students’ participation in education and to their achievements. Indeed, in response to Stephen Lewis’s report on *Race Relations in Ontario*, the *Globe and Mail* claimed in 1992 (June 11, p. A16) that “Canada is not a deeply racist society;” and again in 2007, in its editorial critical of the establishment of the Africentric Alternative School, the

The evidence suggests that multiculturalism in practice provides little support for a program of schooling and education that fosters awareness of, respect for, and accommodation of cultural differences.

*Globe* called on Canadians to reject the proposed “school by skin colour,” insisting that it would be better to focus on the “real causes” of the poor achievement of black students (November 20, p. A20).

## THE DREAM BECOMES A CONUNDRUM

The timing of the school is also significant; for it is being established in the wake of riots and bombings in Europe and when, according to Allan Gregg, “Canadians, like their brethren in Eur-

ope, Australia, and elsewhere, have their fill of multiculturalism and hyphenated citizenship” (p. 41). At the same time, while 80 percent of Canadians think that European immigrants make positive contributions to Canada, only 33 percent think the same of Caribbean immigrants’ contributions. Therefore, Gregg concludes, in his essay “Multiculturalism: A twentieth-century dream becomes a twenty-first century conundrum,” that to avoid problems, immigrants (read non-white Canadians) must “demonstrate a willingness to join mainstream society by adopting the fundamental mores and values of the prevailing culture. There must also be cross-fertilization between ethnic groups” (*The Walrus*, March 2006).

The evidence suggests that multiculturalism in practice provides little support for a program of schooling and education that fosters awareness of, respect for, and accommodation of cultural differences—particularly those with a racial component. Such support is necessary if black students are to be integrated into the schooling structure and equitably served. This non-support for an Africentric Alternative School means that Canadians do not wish to make colour visible—such a wish would be “un-Canadian.”

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# After multiculturalism: Canada and its multiversal future

## LET'S BUILD A SOCIETY ON THE COMPLEXITY OF CANADA

Despite all the criticism of multiculturalism across the decades from the left and right, “multicultural” has become the “common sense” understanding of difference in Canada. The question is, what do we do about the fact that what we call Canada is much more than simply multicultural. It is multi-racial, multi-class, multi-gendered, multi-sexual, multi-local (from rural to urban), and it is global-local (from the local and translocal to transnational). It is multi-political, multi-religious, multi-legal-status (some of us are secure in our standing, others precariously present in Canada as newcomers). It is multi-lingual, multi-professional, and multi-generational. And it is shot through with mixed/hybrid formations, from hybrid ethnicities to hybrid places such as the post-suburban.

Recognizing these multiple vectors of difference not only underscores the limits of multiculturalism as the way to frame difference in Canada, it also opens the way toward a post-multicultural framing we might label *multiversalism*. The question is, can the people living under one state, on a bounded territory with national symbols, and so on, ever be willing to recognize itself this way? It is one thing to recognize and build policies

BY ROBERT LATHAM

Robert Latham is the director of the York Centre for International and Security Studies at York University.

on the singular fact of multiple cultures, quite another to open the flood gates of difference.

## NO REASON TO FEAR DIFFERENCE

To start, viewing Canada as a multiverse does not entail displacing the primacy of the state in political life. On the contrary, in the Canadian multiverse the state's centrality is more visible as *the one* set of institutions present in every sphere of life. The nature of its presence can vary: it can be the key actor in a domain such as education and health care; or it can be one among a number of forces in many civic spaces, such as a neighbourhood or the media. The fear, therefore, that immigrants might undermine the political coherence of Canada is unfounded. Difference and multiplicity are not threats to unity. Only a challenge such as the potential secession of Quebec can bring the foundations of the Canadian state into question. Multiversal difference, rather, reinforces the political robustness of Canada because it is the Canadian state that is the common element among all the multiplicities.

Similarly, the movement of people, images, and goods in and out of Canada can reinforce the functional integrity of the state as it guards its borders, territory, and regulates movement. We can go further to say that people in movement reinforce, by their very presence and movement, the distinctiveness of the Canadian political community in local, national, and international contexts: they raise the very questions of what it is that they are part of, and on what terms.

I realize that those Canadians who reject cosmopolitanism are all too likely to be uninterested in recognizing that Canadian identity rests on anything other than their self-understanding of what it is—understood in their own national, regional, and local terms. But we already have a multiverse—whether we like it or not—in places like Hérouxville, Quebec. The question is, what are the terms of a complex co-existence that includes both cosmopolitans and non-cosmopolitans?

## THE LITMUS TEST OF INCLUSION

This becomes an especially important question when the many universes inside Canada come in contact with one another in physical and symbolic terms. The typical litmus test is when one group, established in the country for some time, finds the actions of newcomers objectionable or repugnant, leading to various forms of social conflict and fear. The recent debate in Quebec over reasonable accommodation is exactly this, a contest whose tensions have arisen out of overlapping universes. When some self-identified majority feels they are the predominant shaper of a space and place, they question why they should make exceptions for others. Why should you accommodate others when you are the chief constitutive power, with the

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main capacity to shape spaces not only based on majority numbers and precedent, but control of government and other institutions?

A multiversal frame suggests the possibility of moving beyond the reasonable accommodation concept that assumes a minority and a majority. Consider a city. We know that many streets in Canadian cities, from Vancouver to Ottawa, are marked by various religious, political, aesthetic, class, racial, and moral sensibilities (progressive or conservative) that overlap and interweave with one another on the same block, along with the regulatory elements of the state that guide the provision of sidewalks and crosswalks. Multiversalism suggests that these universes are splinted with all sorts of prismatic effects across generations, genders, classes, philosophies, and types of presence in Canada (length and nature of time in residence and legal status). That is, the spaces are experienced differently within and across identity groups.

One critical issue is the effects of what is taken by some to be “offensive visuality” (such as the miniskirt, the hijab, dark skin, or working-class attire). This often happens by chance, when, say, someone walks by, where options for structural separations, such as walls, are few. We know that these encounters typically happen in places of transit, where one’s very presence already assumes all forms of risk, from crime to accidents to visual offence. We know that the option to avoid that chance encounter, a key aspect of public space, is not available to many as they go to jobs, clinics, and schools.

Instead, a multiversal perspective suggests that when a person encounters someone, they are not confronting an ethnic or cultural bloc bursting with multicultural rights, but individuals sorting out their complex experiences of world-making, expression, difference, and their own episodes of encounter as well. While this recognition will not easily overcome non-cosmopolitan attitudes, it does underscore that the negotiation of transitory encounter is possible

Rather than treat the risks associated with multiple citizenship in the current environment as a reason to avoid it, we might consider strengthening the protections associated with having it: this is what multiversal citizenship adds.

on an individual or small group basis rather than an ethnic bloc basis.

### OUR MANY CONNECTS AND RECONNECTS

Issues of encounter and complex co-existence raise the questions of who is encountered, why are they encountered, and on what basis do those encountered have claims and rights to be of and in a particular multiverse? Lying at the heart of the backlash associated with reasonable accommodation is the simple query: why are they here in my world? But what do they or we mean by “world”? Is it a specific neighbourhood, enclave, town, province, or national territory? In national terms, there is little opportunity in contemporary modern life to live in anything other than a multiverse. Even if one lives in a small town, the overlaps are many because of travel or spillover at the edges as suburbs reach rural towns and labour needs bring in new residents.

There is, of course, no shortage of arguments in Western democracies against the most visible and charged source of multiversity, new immigrants. These arguments can be seen as a last gasp of desperation to save a set of tradi-

tions generated by various forms of nostalgia such as the nostalgia for an imagined vanishing local world of the everyday in towns and neighbourhoods. I would argue that we stop taking at face value claims such as those that arose recently in Quebec about the threat of immigrants. A more accurate way to read them is as endeavours to find a secure place in a sea of multiversity operating within, across, and beyond local, provincial, and national boundaries. These efforts at preservation can, therefore, be understood as reflecting an unintended recognition of multiversity even if it is a negative form of recognition.

### CITIZENSHIP ACROSS BOUNDARIES

If contemporary life is multiversal, then what does it mean to have an obligation to ensure fairness and justice to everyone who is part of it and to think through the terms in which those new to a country become a part of it? In many ways, each newcomer forces us to undergo a social re-calibration. We might start by repeating that multiversity is in part about the multiplicity of geographical scales from local to global that constitute, and intersect throughout, Canada. People understand and relate to Canada through a diversity of these scales. Some, at face value, are anchored mostly in the local and provincial—even so, it is likely that such locality is actually translocal, as people frequently move across the border of the United States (for vacations, shopping, or visits to relatives). Others have links to places in France, the Caribbean, South Asia, and elsewhere. They remain connected, and thought of as part of a diaspora. If, in a multiverse, an individual can have various types of ties and relations across, within, and beyond the border, and those ties can be considered good for Canada, then we should facilitate multiple forms of presence in and connection to Canada; and certainly multiple forms are already enabled, from tourist to citizen.

However, exclusive, single-nation citizenship remains the frame against

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which all other forms of status are understood as exceptions, including dual or multiple citizenship. In addition, many of these other forms have profound insecurities associated with them. Many newcomers to Canada are here under various forms of “precarious status,” whether they are or had been students, temporary workers, or refugee claimants. The implication, therefore, is that there is opportunity for stronger support for the global-local—and for the multiversal approach to status, more generally—in Canada.

I believe that a simple way to move toward this support is for Canada explicitly to treat and support what can be termed multiversal citizenship as the primary frame against which all other forms of status are understood. A multiversal citizen has citizenship in one or more territorial states and secure status in any state they are resident in. From my definition, you can see that a core dimension of multiversal citizenship is dual or multiple citizenship. Fortunately, in recent decades the Canadian government clearly has been liberal toward multiple citizenship. But this liberalism toward multiple citizenship created public controversy when Lebanese Canadians were aided in their effort to flee an Israeli invasion in 2006. Additionally, the Canadian state has strengthened the residency requirement—making the attainment of a second, Canadian, citizenship more difficult. In addition, in the post-9/11 security context many multiple citizens from the Middle East and South and Central Asia have found out that they not only may not receive protections as Canadians, but they can be treated as dangerous suspects who can be more easily deported than Canada-only citizens (they in effect become stateless if expelled from Canada).

Rather than treat the risks associated with multiple citizenship in the current environment as a reason to avoid it, we might consider strengthening the protections associated with having it: this is

what multiversal citizenship adds. Why would Canadians support this? The easiest answers are that stronger support for multiversal citizenship can enrich the Canadian multiverse by making global-local lives easier, and, second, that single citizenship, in a multiverse, is but one type of status among many, even if it is predominant on a national basis. If you think about my definition above of multiversal citizenship, single-state citizens are multiversal citizens.

## A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR NEW CITIZENSHIP

There are other notable reasons to support multiversal citizenship. One is that any single citizen, or anyone in that person’s family, is a potential multiple citizen. So, creating an environment where multiple citizenship is taken to be the norm strengthens the possibility of that option for those with single citizenship, particularly for individuals who other-

wise might fear losing their own or their children’s Canadian citizenship if they are living in the US.

Another reason is that strong support for multiple citizenship and multiversity can expand the meaning of Canada that is consistent with its historic identification as a country that originally advanced multiculturalism and has allowed high levels of immigration. Normalizing multiversal citizenship could also open the way to a more secure status for those individuals with precarious status in Canada. The idea is that everyone in Canada, regardless of their status, can be thought of as multiversal citizens—in that they already have citizenship from somewhere else and are potential citizens of Canada.

Multiversalism is consistent with the Canadian history of political and social innovation: the time for serious recognition of our Canadian global-local—not just multicultural—lives has come. 🍁

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# Multiculturalism: What are our discontents about?

## SOME KEY QUESTIONS

Reflecting on the theme of our conference, many preliminary questions arise. There are many uncertainties about the notion of multiculturalism. Where does it come from? Is it a public policy or a social reality? Is it a way of compensating for the fragmentation of society or a pluralist solution to diversity? Is it a political ploy to overcome the nationalist movement in Quebec and rally the other communities in the definition of a new Canadian nation, or is it the translation of a moral vision of a good and just society? I will try to answer some of these questions and others that follow from their formulation.

What is the nature of multiculturalism? Officially, multiculturalism in Canada had been a more or less formal policy until it was translated into a law in 1988. A declaration was presented in Parliament, in the fall of 1971, as a policy orientation, which gave birth to many programs in the following years. In 1982, the principle of multiculturalism was inscribed in article 27 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which stated that the Charter should be “interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.”

It was only in 1988 that the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was assented to by Parliament. The Canadian government recognized “the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and [became] committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.”

As we will see later, Quebec had many reservations about multiculturalism, which it viewed as a way of margin-

BY JULES DUCHASTEL

Jules Duchastel is a professor in the Department of Sociology at UQAM.

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alizing the importance of the French Canadian heritage. However, Quebec has developed a corresponding model, called interculturalism. This approach has never been formally stated in a specific policy document or translated into a law, but it has inspired many policies and state interventions. It seems that, at first glance, both multiculturalism and interculturalism are to be understood as policy orientations, more or less formalized and continuously redefined.

## A SHORT HISTORY LESSON

What is the origin of multiculturalism? There are two answers to that question, one political and one sociological. Politically, multiculturalism was a brilliant political strategy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s, in his pursuit of two ends; multiculturalism was conceived as a response to the nationalist movement in

Quebec. The *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* arrived at the paradoxical conclusion that both English and French must become the official languages of Canada, while the diversity of cultures, rather than the two founding cultures, was to be acknowledged. Bilingualism had the effect of redefining the French Canadian question. French Canadians would become a linguistic group rather than a founding people. The cultural and historical dimensions of French Canadian identity in the future would be confounded with all other identities.

The second answer is that multiculturalism was, in fact, the recognition of the social reality of the multiple ethnic communities that had progressively populated many parts of the country and wanted to be included and participate in its future. Pierre Elliott Trudeau succeeded both in transforming the classical view of the country as formed by two founding peoples and in attracting growing populations of other origins.

Sociologically, we have to recognize that multiculturalism was not a complete invention. It did correspond to some deep social transformations taking place at the time. Two main forces were pressing national societies. From the outside, the acceleration of globalization was under way, and from the inside, a diversification of the social tissue was intensifying. The process of globalization had started to raise questions about the scope of national sovereignty and the allegiance of citizenship. The fragmentation of society tended to expand with the increase in global flows—in particular, with the growing importance of immigration, the awakening of the Aboriginal political consciousness after the unsuccessful attempt to integrate their people in 1969, and the proliferation of a new generation of social movements (whether countercultural, environmentalist, or

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feminist). Especially in Canada, where the national identity had been problematic from the beginning, the influence of these factors favoured the emergence of a pluralistic model of integration.

## A FLAWED DOCTRINE?

What did official multiculturalism ignore? In the Canadian logic, the concept of multiculturalism resolved the nation question. Canadian identity would rely on the notion of diversity. However, most importantly, Quebec's national question remained unresolved throughout the period, as did the status of the Aboriginal nations.

In our book *L'identité fragmentée* (1996), on Canadian identity, Gilles Bourque and I delineated different periods in Canadian history through which the definition of national identity evolved. Up to the Second World War, the Canadian identity was dual: on one side, the British Anglo-Saxon Protestant people (or "Race," as it was termed at the time) and on the other, the French Canadian Catholic people. From the end of the war to the 1970s, the Canadian national identity developed around the idea of a social citizenship in the context of an expanding welfare state. Quebec's competing identity remained culturally defined (by language and religion) during the years of Premier Maurice Duplessis, but was transformed in the 1960s into a political and civic identity, as an alternative to the one already in place in Canada. Contrary to the Canadian identity, Quebec's version was founded on the existence of an historical and cultural nation. The opposition between the two conflicting identities was interpreted in many fashions in Quebec. Being sovereignist or federalist determined the depth of the attachment to one or the other conception of identity. Most Quebecers believed in the existence of a "nation Québécoise."

Probably because multiculturalism has transformed the notion of nation itself, it has induced a natural resistance, in Canada, towards any kind of a multiple

The capacity of our society to remain unified under a common political project is what we need to consider.

national recognition, with the exception perhaps of the inclusion of the rights to self-government for the Aboriginal peoples. The conception of an historical and cultural nation has always been problematical in Canada as a whole and has not really existed since the time of the opposition between Anglo-Saxons and French Canadians. Canada preferred, from the 1940s on, the conception of a civic nation. This is not to say that Quebec has relied solely on the cultural and historical dimensions of national identity. It has also developed a political and civic conception of the nation, but it has claimed its own linguistic, historical, and cultural background. Multiculturalism, per se, has a tendency to underestimate the historical origin of the Canadian nation. As the word suggests, multiculturalism aims at the recognition of all cultures on the same level.

We could have conceived of Canada as a multinational state (a real confederation) that did not deny the contribution of multiple cultures; but this would have been a very complicated task after the adoption of the policy of multiculturalism. The problem lies in the model of integration favoured by multiculturalism. We normally speak of integration in connection with immigrants. However, the problem of integration is a social necessity for every one. If society still has meaning as a concept, by what means do people have to identify with their country?

## THREE KINDS OF INTEGRATION

We can distinguish three models of integration. The first is assimilation, well represented by republicanism. It aims at the full integration of all individuals, not

taking into account any differences. This model corresponds to the ideal nation-state formation of the 19th century and is most appropriate for centralized countries. The model is ill-equipped, however, to address actual problems caused by the diversification of societies.

The second model is one of coexistence. It corresponds to the way some critics describe the Canadian multicultural approach: a profusion of group interests coexisting in a public space, litigating their conflicts in the courts. This second model is criticized most often for depoliticizing institutions in favour of the judicial system and as jeopardizing the definition of a common good.

A third model is more or less utopian. Rather than a mere coexistence of different interest groups, it is possible to imagine a constant interplay between groups, with each enriching its own culture in the process. A certain idea of a decentred democracy would favour a non-hierarchical system of interactions between the many ethnic, racial, cultural, or historical groups. This model fits with the ideal representation of good multiculturalism and is coherent, up to a point, with the intercultural model proposed by Quebec's government.

## QUEBEC'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

A remaining question can be formulated in the following way: is the interplay between cultures sufficient to establish a national bond between citizens? This question has been asked of the policy of interculturalism in Quebec. The model suggests that interplay between cultures should be the aim of any integration policy, but at the same time, it proclaims that there should be more than a collec-

tive interchange of cultures. Integration should be accomplished within a certain linguistic, historical, and cultural context, which is specific to the Quebec society. This aspect of interculturalism is increasingly present in multiculturalism in Canada. The once open-ended policy of diversity is more often redefined around the necessity of common Canadian values. As for the English language, it does not need any help from the Parliament to attract the majority.

### **SOME UNRESOLVED TENSIONS**

Now, if we look at the reality of multiculturalism, it becomes clear that the normative model as it is presented cannot be automatically translated into equality and non-discrimination between groups or communities. The existence of democracy and human rights has not yet resulted in the obliteration of relations of domination and power. In that sense, multiculturalism, as a reality, will lead

inevitably to discontents. We still live in a class society, with great obstacles for visible minorities and marginal groups.

The liberal view will situate the debate at the more general level of human rights and tolerance. Judiciary procedures are considered the remedy for the flaws of the system concerning inclusion and non-discrimination. However, this view does not question the type of vertical organization of society that favours elites and the dominant culture. In contrast, a post-colonial view will question the regime of inequalities at every level and propose a horizontal organization of society, which places every culture and group on the same level.

In both cases, the question of the political community, or, in other words, the question of social unity, is bypassed. The importance attached to human rights and their judicialization by liberals is diminishing the importance of collective identities and of the political will of the people as a community. The actual

movement towards a denationalization of present-day societies might lead to such a setback for representative democracy. The insistence of post-colonial critics on deconstructing the political institutionalization of society goes way beyond the liberal proponents of human rights in the abolition of any general conception of a political community.

Discontents will then vary along with the standpoints of the observer. Still, we might conclude by saying that multiculturalism or interculturalism is inevitable today. The capacity of our society to remain unified under a common political project is what we need to consider. Even if the reassertion of the importance of rights and freedoms and the recognition of the exclusion and marginalization of particular groups are important, the issues remain of defining what holds us together and of finding the best ways to favour integration of diverse individuals, of groups, and—why not—of national communities in Canada. 

## The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies Mandate

The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies supports interdisciplinary and discipline-specific research pertinent to the study of Canada and “Canada in the World.” In practice, this has meant an orientation toward broader Canadian and international scholarly and policy-making communities, inquiries into comparative perspectives on the Canadian mosaic, and assistance to York scholars in working with their counterparts in other countries.

Faculty at the Robarts Centre, including the Director, the Robarts Chair, and other Robarts researchers, regularly teach courses and contribute to curriculum development in areas pertaining to Canadian, North American, and comparative studies. The Robarts Centre also provides supervised research and writing opportunities for graduate students from a wide range of York graduate programs.

The Robarts Centre offers a strong program of high-level seminars, workshops, and conferences on major issues, focusing on Canadian perspectives on Communications, Culture, the Fine Arts, History, Political Economy, Public Policy, and International Relations. Participants include York faculty and students, Canadian and international scholars, and the larger community of Metropolitan Toronto.

Current, ongoing work at the Centre includes research initiatives on the public domains and international standards, Canadian cinema, and issues pertaining to media perspectives on Canada. The Centre acts as a research arm for the Joint Program in Communication and Culture and its work on the Canadian Internet Project. The Centre also housed the Toronto offices of the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Tom Thomson project. ■

# Is Canada's commitment to multiculturalism weakening?

## WHITHER MULTICULTURAL CANADA?

According to a 47-nation comparative survey on global trade and immigration released two years ago by the Washington-based Pew Research Center, 62 percent of Canadians believe that immigration into Canada should be restricted and better controlled. By comparison, 66 percent of Germans, 68 percent of French, 75 percent of British, 75 percent of Americans, but only 53 percent of Swedes share the same view. The survey also revealed that 71 percent of Canadians feel that their traditional way of life is getting lost (in comparison to 73 percent of Americans, 77 percent of British, 75 percent of French, 74 percent of Germans, but, again, only 49 percent of Swedes), and that 62 percent of them believe it needs to be protected against foreign influence and intrusion. On this score, only the Americans hold the same belief in similar proportion. Roughly half of the British, French, and German citizens interviewed and less than one-third of the Swedes feel that action to protect their culture is necessary. Finally, though they are known for their humility and a tendency to understate their merits, more than half the Canadians declared their culture to be superior to others (in essentially the same proportion as their American counterparts), as opposed to barely one in three British and French, two in five Germans, and one in five Swedes.

**These findings ultimately exposed Canada's multicultural narrative for what it really is: a socio-political fiction largely disconnected from the everyday lives and reality of racialized minority groups and of most immigrants who are not of European origin or descent.**

BY DANIEL SALÉE

Daniel Salée is a professor of Canadian politics and public policy in the School of Community and Public Affairs and in the Department of Political Science at Concordia University.

When it comes to dealing with ethnocultural otherness, Canada, it seems, fares hardly better than countries like France and Germany, whose reluctance to acknowledge and satisfy particularistic identity claims in the public sphere is well known; or than the United States, whose stance on immigration has toughened considerably since 9/11. The Pew Center findings present a picture of Canada which clashes with the perception Canadians have of themselves as quintessentially pluralistic, open to ethnocultural diversity and deeply respectful of public expressions of identity and normative difference. These findings likely came as no surprise, though, to scores of scholars and social critics who, over the past decade or so, have analyzed, deconstructed, and ultimately exposed Canada's multicultural narrative for what it really is: a socio-political fiction largely disconnected from the everyday lives and reality of racialized minority groups and of most immigrants who are not of European origin or descent.

### THE VISION AND THE REALITY

On the surface of things, to be sure, Canada seems eminently multicultural.

The vision of a multicultural nation entertained by the political and intellectual elite remains as clear and as strong as ever, and continues to be a central part of the Canadian state's discourse. In a way, one might even contend that Canada has moved beyond being multicultural: after nearly 40 years of multiculturalism policy, Canadian society is now more than the juxtaposition of diverse ethnocultural groups, as the first incarnation of the policy implied; it is an increasingly hybridized entity formed by the gradual interpenetration of various cultures and ways of life—a Métis nation, as John Ralston Saul has famously argued recently. Still, for all the positive image of Canada as a mature, democratic society that this ethnocultural hybridity might project, for all that it may indicate that a mentality of acceptance of otherness pervades the Canadian social imagination, it should not automatically be understood as the sign of more egalitarian dynamics of socioeconomic relations, or a sign that the social hierarchies, real and symbolic, regulating the interface between mainstream hegemonic (essentially Euro-descendant) groups and otherized, racialized ethnocultural minorities have dissolved. Those hierarchies and the social relations of power and domination that maintain them are all too real. Working generally to the benefit of Euro-descendant Canadians, they are largely responsible for the territorial dispossession and cultural disintegration of indigenous peoples (and the general disinclination to make amends for it), the abusive use of the labour of immigrants from underprivileged countries, and the systemic exclusion of racialized groups from mainstream socioeconomic networks.

Canadians may like to think of themselves as multicultural, but they are not necessarily prepared to abide by the demanding obligations of the truly pluralistic, democratic sense of community

and citizenship that ultimately come with multiculturalism. In principle, they see otherness and ethnocultural diversity as unproblematic, but, as the Pew Center survey might suggest, only so long as accompanying expressions of difference and minority identity claims can somehow be contained within mainstream normative and cultural frameworks, so long as accommodating them does not disrupt the socioeconomic advantages and the hegemonic position Euro-descendants have gained over time. The idea of multiculturalism may make Canadians feel good about themselves, but implementing the imperatives of a fully accomplished multicultural ethos is a step that most are not quite disposed to take.

### POWER AND DISTINCTION IN INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS

Norwegian anthropologist Fredrick Barth, who explored inter-ethnic and intercultural relations in a variety of social contexts over several decades, has shown how the constant movement of individuals from one side to the other of cultural borders rarely guarantees that these same borders will eventually come down. This is because the differences, distinctions, and oppositions that persist, despite continuous inter-ethnic and intercultural contacts (and despite the interdependence said to characterize the relation between the different groups), are not necessarily attributable to the absence of mobility or a lack of knowledge of the Other, but, rather, to the reproduction of processes of social exclusion and incorporation, which are anchored in history. In other words, it is in the reality of the socioeconomic relations of power and domination, shaped by the vagaries of history and preserved by institutions that reflect them, that the cause of the perennial nature of hierarchies and class differences that oppose and distinguish majorities and ethnocultural minorities can be found.

This kind of perspective is notably absent from most assessments of Canada's multiculturalism by mainstream political and intellectual elite. While they

## This denial of the pivotal role of power in the regulation of the Other is deeply anchored in the liberal social imagination of Euro-descendant majorities.

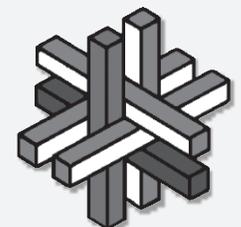
may agree that room should be made for improvement, indeed that more should be done to facilitate the socioeconomic inclusion of ethnocultural minority groups, promoters of Canadian multiculturalism rarely consider the matter outside a depoliticized vision of the social relations and dynamics of power to which most ethnocultural minority groups are subjected through their difference and otherness. They dwell instead on a reassuring but often vacuous rhetoric extolling the virtues of dialogue, solidarity, and exchange as the main panacea for a more resolutely multicultural Canada. Their conceptual universe is unwilling or incapable to appreciate how extant processes of exclusion, subalternization, and racialization operate to cast a shadow over social relations between the Euro-descendant majority and ethnocultural

minorities, and, in the end, account for the former's reluctance to embrace the latter's difference unreservedly. This denial of the pivotal role of power in the regulation of the Other is deeply anchored in the liberal social imagination of Euro-descendant majorities. It allows them to sidestep the question of their hegemony and avoid engaging in a deeper self-critical reflection on the terms and conditions of inclusion and citizenship they have imposed—are Canadians not, after all, deeply committed to equality of treatment and opportunity for all regardless of origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, or length of establishment in the community?

Canadians readily accept their constitutive ethnocultural diversity and are generally proud of it. That is a given. What is at issue is the quality of the place Euro-descendants are inclined to reserve for expressions of normative and cultural difference in the public sphere. Like most other Westerners, they have a problem with otherness when it questions their cultural foundations and challenges their assumed normative superiority. Unless they are genuinely prepared to acknowledge that their hegemonic position is directly connected to the creation and maintenance of the social processes of exclusion, subalternization, and racialization of ethnocultural minorities, and unless they are willing, as a result, to abandon that position and rethink the nature of their interaction with the Other, multiculturalism in Canada will likely continue to be a fiction. 🍁

## The Center for Research on North America at UNAM

The Center for Research on North America (CISAN) originated in November 1988 as the University Research Program on the United States; three months later the University Council approved its transformation into the Center for Research on the United States (CISEUA). The National Autonomous University of Mexico thus made scientific research in this area a priority given the pre-eminence of the United States in the world and the importance of our geographical proximity to it.



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# A tale of two apologies

In 2008, on February 13 and June 11, respectively, the prime ministers of Australia and Canada put motions of apology to the parliaments they lead. In both cases, these were apologies on behalf of nations and governments that had, over successive generations, pursued active campaigns to break up Aboriginal families and erase indigenous ethnicity. The consequences for multicultural relations in Commonwealth countries were obviously important, though their precise implications were (and remain) unclear.

The similarities between the timings of, and the offences motivating, these two apologies obscured a number of important differences in their institutional and legal ramifications. Canada's apology was preceded by the settlement of a class action brought by survivors of Indian residential schools and their families. The settlement primarily involved compensation and support for survivors, as well as the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It did not, however, include an apology, which the minority Harper government only chose to make after considerable pressure from other parties and from Aboriginal people. Australia's apology, by contrast, was explicitly framed as a symbolic action only, with no institutional follow-up, and compensation expressly ruled out.

## ABIDING PARALLELS

But the comparisons persist. During the year and more that has passed since these events, comment in both countries has generally emphasized the subsequent disappointment. The waves of national energy and resolve that these symbolic breakthroughs both occasioned have, as many predicted, given way to the old realizations that developing policy to address entrenched disadvantage is genuinely difficult, and that implementing substantial measures to redress indigenous grievances is still more difficult.

BY TOM CLARK AND RAVI DE COSTA

Dr. Tom Clark in 2009 is a visiting fellow at the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University, specializing in discourse analysis and rhetorical studies. He is a senior lecturer at Victoria University (Melbourne). Dr. Ravi de Costa is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. His 2006 book, *A Higher Authority*, is a study of indigenous transnationalism and Australia.

[W]e stand to learn a huge amount about indigenous and non-Aboriginal attitudes in Canada, Australia, and elsewhere by paying close attention to people's discourses around reconciliation.

Thus, in Australia, the so-called gap between Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders on the one hand, and non-indigenous Australians on the other, is underscored by a 17-year difference in life expectancy that many commentators take as somehow indicative of the entire situation. An ongoing military intervention in the Northern Territory, initially proposed in response to reports of endemic child sexual abuse in this area's remote communities, has made no noticeable difference to the problem it was set up to address. Cynicism quickly fills any absence of progress.

Somewhat comparably, in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that the government agreed to in the Settlement Agreement has yet to commence hearings, due partly to personal

conflicts among the initially appointed commissioners but also to the inherent difficulties of balancing the sensitivities of diverse Aboriginal constituencies. Appointing new commissioners took nearly eight months, and the TRC has yet to publish its plans for meeting its mandate. The difficulty of providing a form of justice that is recognizable both to governments and to Aboriginal communities remains immense.

## THE IMAGINATIONS THAT DRIVE THE DEBATES

Our interest in the evolution of reconciliation in these two countries comes in part from these evolving similarities. It is as though the two paths are fated to run in parallel.

In a deep sense, that "fate" must be a product of the similarities in ideology and policy that govern two economically successful colonial offshoots, in which European ethnicity remains an assumed cultural mainstream. That assumption is at odds with the multicultural realities of Canada and Australia, of course. People of indigenous and "minority" ethnicities combine to form a majority of the population in each country.

Perhaps more immediately, there are ready comparisons to be drawn between the imaginative dispositions that entered into these apologies. These dispositions show up in the wordings the apologizers and other parties to these reconciliation initiatives use—especially the stock phrasing, the clichés and platitudes that people reach for as they try to discuss the nature of the event, its significance, and mechanics.

By imaginative disposition, we mean something like Goffman's notion of "framing." How people construe the situations around them is a major determiner of their conscious and unconscious responses to those situations. Because the imaginative disposition is grounded in people's interpretation of a world-made-symbolic, it is only revealed by symbolic means: especially through

language, but also through other expressive media. This means that we stand to learn a huge amount about indigenous and non-Aboriginal attitudes in Canada, Australia, and elsewhere by paying close attention to people's discourses around reconciliation.

## A FOCUS ON THE RHETORIC

Among the most important moments in the respective national reconciliation discourses has been the two parliamentary apology "debates." This is a function of their inherent symbolic importance, but also of the extent of public attention each received. The Canadians who gathered on Parliament Hill to watch live coverage of the debate were "joined" by millions of home viewers and radio listeners around the country, although that may still represent a minority response. It is clear that many Canadians (including an unknown number of survivors of the residential schools) were unaware that the apology had been made.

In Australia, towns and cities around the country set up public screens for crowds in their dozens (at many of the remote outstations) or their tens of thousands (in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney). Again, millions of home viewers and listeners joined them by tuning in for the show. But untallied millions ignored it, too.

Coverage of the Australian debate may have drawn relatively more live viewers and listeners, but it was more heavily promoted, and set up to be less taxing on the attention span. Television and radio covered the speeches of the prime minister (Labor's Kevin Rudd) and of the then-leader of the opposition (the Liberals' Brendan Nelson), but the rest of the debate was adjourned to parliamentary committees. Representatives of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were feted visitors, but their place was in the galleries and not in the bearpit.

The live coverage in Canada was both fairer and less exciting. It sought a balance between the parliamentarians apologizing and the aggrieved parties receiving that apology. It involved the

[T]he legacy of the residential schools and the legacy of the Stolen Generations are legacies of unresolved issues, and bound to remain that way for some time.

prime minister (Conservative Stephen Harper), leaders of the three main opposition parties (the Liberals, the Bloc, and the New Democrats), and five representatives of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

## IMPORTANT RHETORICAL SIMILARITIES

We have been particularly struck by three rhetorical properties these debates share. The first is their shared aspiration to authenticity, to present a nationally important moment in a language that cuts through the inanity of regular partisan debate. In his address to the Commons, Clem Chartier, president of the Métis National Council, said: "I know deep in my heart that the party leaders and the prime minister who spoke today spoke with sincerity, not with the theatrics of the Commons. That has been set aside. I can see that. I can feel that. I know that it is deep and real." The politicians had certainly framed their speeches in language that could draw this appraisal, beginning with the unanimity of support that the government expressly requested before Harper commenced the debate.

In Australia, the aspiration to unanimity was equally in the foreground, meaning there was a deliberate avoidance of blame for living persons, a deliberate avoidance of the Labor government's crowing over the defeated Liberals (who had publicly refused to make such an apology in 1997, when they were in government, but who were now supporting the motion). Instead, both party leaders

spoke of the need, the urgency, to "go forward together." Without question, both governments have sought to draw on the political capital of their apologies in order to generate support for a renewal of, rather than a shift in, public policy as it affects indigenous interests.

That brings us to a second shared property: the political agendas that arise from the apologies in both countries are framed in more or less identical metaphors, using more or less identical phrasing. Contributors to the debates in both countries repeatedly mentioned the need to "heal," to "build a future" in which such atrocities would not be possible, and to "go forward together."

On one level, these are empty phrases: clichés and platitudes that fill in for a very loose sense of what specific policy agendas to pursue, or even what specific values should guide those policy frameworks. On another level, they reveal a shared understanding that these phrases were somehow appropriate to the moment: the language reveals just how deeply the desire for consensus was informing both the content and the styling of these speeches—exposing both the truth and the fragility of Chartier's observation. It shows us how the legacy of the residential schools and the legacy of the Stolen Generations are legacies of unresolved issues, and bound to remain that way for some time.

A third property plays off the second: that desire for consensus did not cause any vagueness in describing the wrongs of the residential schools and the Stolen Generations. Within the understandable constraints of parliamentary debate, all speakers in both countries left no doubt about the profundity of harm, about the importance of the evils they were rejecting.

## LINKING RHETORIC AND ACTION

This paradox—of a past acknowledged in explicit terms, and a future about which the parties collaborate in keeping their discourse vague—is clearly related to "the lack of real progress on the ground" in both countries. Our research

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# Diversity on the mean streets of Toronto

I want to suggest that even as diversity is becoming more normalized as a way of defining Canadian society, it is in crisis. I will draw on the experiences of the African-Canadian community to underscore the socioeconomic and discursive basis for the crisis, and its implications for regulating diversity and difference in Canada as a liberal democratic society.

## DIVERSITY: MULTICULTURALISM'S STRATEGIC COMPROMISE

Multiculturalism as an official discourse and practice regulating diversity emerged as a strategic compromise between political class and insurgent ethnocultural and racialized populations in the 1960s, based initially in Quebec. This strategic compromise paved the way for official multiculturalism to become the dominant Canadian practice for managing intercultural and interracial relations in the 1970s and 80s, so much so that it is often referred to today as “a Canadian value.” Multiculturalism would also come to serve as a powerful integration myth, maintaining both discursive and material dimensions which deployed socially constructed categories of ethnics and “visible minorities” in order to regulate the everyday lives of immigrant communities. Its emergence served the purpose of “order maintenance” in a situation where the existing Eurocentric conformity order was in crisis because its legitimating myths had lost their salience as social consent mechanisms among indigenous and settler populations. Suddenly, the insistence on “Britishness” or “Frenchness” as the passport for Canadian identity was no longer acceptable, and for many Canadian minorities, US assimilation policies seemed more humane than Canada’s obstinate clinging to Anglo-Canadian cultural values for its identity.

From the vantage point of 2009 then, there are three key reasons for the crisis of Canadian multiculturalism.

BY GRACE-EDWARD GALABUZI

Grace-Edward Galabuzi is a professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University.

Multiculturalism would also come to serve as a powerful integration myth, maintaining both discursive and material dimensions which deployed socially constructed categories of ethnics and “visible minorities” in order to regulate the everyday lives of immigrant communities.

## Racializing security

Firstly, the emergence of a national security and community safety regime informed by the notion of “Clash of Civilization,” means concern over security has increasingly taken a racial turn, manifest in the contemporary discourses and practices in response to the “war on terror” and anxieties around community safety. Such responses are also inspired by anxieties about the growing numerical significance of multiracial segments of the Canadian population. The “war on terror” has generated a range of illiberal practices, including widespread

racial profiling in domestic spheres and at border control points, which target such “misdeeds” as those comically referred to as Driving While Black (DWB), or Flying While Arab (FWA). The “war on terror” is invoked to justify security certificate detentions of Muslim men; the characterization of young Muslims as homegrown terrorists; widespread deportations of failed asylum claimants and non-documented residents; coercive community safety regimes that legitimate assaults on largely racialized low-income communities to extract supposed gang members (often leaving behind traumatized families and children); unchallenged surveillance in malls, public places, and public and private housing complexes; and zero tolerance policies in the schools. Much of this regime of illiberal practices is informed by moral panic about pathologized populations of racialized and religious minorities and is justified within a framework of liberal multiculturalism.

These racializing and criminalizing practices lead to strained interactions between racialized groups and the institutions of the Canadian state. Youths in some of the communities are subjected to routine police harassment and brutality, excessive use of techniques such as strip searches, and harsh criminal justice penalties allegedly needed for the defense of the broader Canadian community.

## Public opinion and reasonable accommodation

Secondly, according to a September 2007 Institute for Research in Public Policy survey, Canadians overwhelmingly support the notion of “limits to reasonable accommodation.” In the survey, only 18 percent agreed with the position that it is reasonable to accommodate religious and cultural minorities while 53 percent said these minorities

## Canadians overwhelmingly support the notion of “limits to reasonable accommodation.”

should adapt to Canadian culture. In Quebec, only 5.4 percent agreed with the proposition that it was reasonable to accommodate minorities while 76.9 percent said immigrants should fully adapt to Quebec culture. While two-thirds of Canadians have heard of the concept of reasonable accommodation, nine in ten Quebecers have heard of it. In Quebec, 80.7 percent were fully opposed or somewhat opposed to provision of prayer space in public space (57.6 percent fully opposed) while only 12.6 percent supported it. In Canada, 58.6 percent were fully or somewhat opposed, 38.1 percent were fully opposed, while 31.4 percent supported or somewhat supported it.

Increasingly, demands for limits to tolerance and reasonable accommodation are eclipsing minorities' cultural, religious, ethnic, and racial claims, as dominant populations charge religious and racialized minorities with intolerance of dominant practices and values. Whether framed as limits to tolerance or limits to reasonable accommodation, the acceptance of this discourse of denial has reinforced doubts about multiculturalism as the appropriate framework for managing and negotiating relations between and among diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic groups within Canada. The “necessity” of the Quebec government's Bourchard/Taylor Commission suggests a heightened attention to this crisis.

### The socioeconomic implications of social exclusion

Finally, research shows that there are significant and enduring racially defined differences in the socioeconomic experiences of groups in Canada, particularly in the urban centres. National and Census Metropolitan Area data now show that racialized people are two or three times more likely to be poor than other Canadians. The rates are even higher among recent immigrants and some select groups such as those youth, women, and seniors who are of Arab, Latin American, Somali, Haitian, Iranian, Tamil, East Indian, or Vietnamese origin.

While the Canadian low-income rate was 14.7 percent in 2001, low-income rates for racialized groups ranged from 16 percent to as high as 43 percent.

### THE RACIALIZATION OF POVERTY

One explanation for this reality is the *racialization of poverty*, a phrase that refers to the disproportionate and persistent experience of low income among racialized groups. The racialization of poverty emerges out of structural socioeconomic features that predetermine the unequal access to opportunities for generating income that racialized groups face. Current trends indicate that economic inequality between racialized immigrant groups and their Canadian-born counterparts is becoming greater and more permanent, suggesting that multicultural Canada is not the “just society” it aspires to be.

Racialized community members and Aboriginal peoples are twice as likely to be poor as other Canadians because of the intensified economic and social exploitation these communities face. Members of these communities have had to endure historical racial and gender inequalities, accentuated by the restructuring of the Canadian economy and various forms of racial profiling. The resulting experiences of exclusion have led to powerlessness, socioeconomic marginalization, and loss of voice, which have compounded these groups' inability to put issues of social inequality on the political agenda.

The experience of poverty is also evident in the breakdown in social institutions and increased service-delivery deficits, social vulnerability, insecurity, and increased health risks. The connec-

tion between the socioeconomic crisis and violence is widely documented. Studies on murder in Canada document that young offenders (and not only the perpetrators of violent crime but their victims, too) tend to be the products of single-parent families, poor parenting, poverty, and dysfunctional families. Violence in the popular culture and mainstream media are other contributing factors.

Other research suggests that community violence represents a form of nihilism that arises out of the social alienation that emerges in conditions of despair and powerlessness. Young people are more likely to be the victims of violence, and this is particularly true of racialized youth in low-income areas. These youth are also more likely to be criminalized through the targeted policing, over-policing, and racial profiling in these areas, leading to higher levels of incarceration. The prison population from major urban centres is disproportionately Aboriginal and racialized.

### TORONTO'S AFRICAN-CANADIAN COMMUNITY

It is worth considering how the African-Canadian population in Toronto has experienced Canada's iconic program. Toronto's African-Canadian community relations with the city's dominant society and institutions are often mediated through stereotypical notions of the “proclivity of its members to criminality” and their experience with the criminal justice system. Key institutions such as the mainstream media also reproduce narratives and images that reinforce historically constructed stigmas and pathologies, especially about black youth, thus helping to generate moral panic that demands securitized responses and criminalization. These developments in turn reproduce unequal access to employment, neighbourhood segregation, higher risks, diminished life chances and something less than full citizenship.

For instance, while Canada's and Toronto's murder rates were stable for

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much of the 1990s, at about 2.5 per 100,000 for Canada and 2.4 per 100,000 for Toronto, the rates among blacks in Toronto, and particularly black youths, have skyrocketed. According to academic experts, the murder rate for blacks is four times that of the general population, at 10.1 per 100,000. While the black community represents just under 10 percent of the city's population, it accounted for approximately 30 percent of the murder victims annually between 1996 and 2004. This suggests that while the rates have been stable for other segments of the population, Toronto has become "more dangerous" for blacks and black youth. Since 1998, the percentage of homicide victims under the age 25 has grown to 40 percent from 25 percent in the 1970s, and a majority of these victims have been black youth.

The official response to the spate of gun killings that have engulfed Toronto in the first decade of the 21st century has been an aggressive law and order and containment incursion into racialized low-income communities. Political leaders have caved in to every resource demand from the police, with the Toronto Police Service setting up a Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS) that operates on the principles of high visibility used in military war zone operations: large vans and scout cars patrolling continuously in the identified communities; quick reaction forces; and intelligence-gathering operations that engage community members, as a way of cultivating informers.

These aggressive and illiberal responses can be rationalized because in Canadian society, young black men have historically been constructed as aggressive, violent, and dangerous. As Carl James has remarked, "when they are chilling, they are layabouts, up to no good, and generally engaged in what society considers inappropriate behaviour." The distance from these accounts of inoffensive but "inappropriate" black youth to a perception of young black men as criminalized is almost non-existent.

**[W]e must transcend the phase in which we focus on symbolic multiculturalism and embrace a process that concretizes cultural pluralism as a horizontal reality.**

Racial profiling quickly becomes an indispensable tool of law enforcement under these circumstances, in response to moral panic about black criminality.

Young blacks have often described their encounters with police as being characterized by the officers' contempt, confrontational and harassing attitudes, mistakes about identity, and harshness. They often result in harassment, harsh penalties, brutality, and criminalization. Recall that these are young people whose access to other public spaces is always being challenged by police or, in the case of malls, security guards. The street then becomes a site for turf wars, which in most cases are resolved through police harassment and brutality. Young blacks are in this way the disproportionate targets of criminalization by security institutions. The marginalization of blacks and other racialized communi-

ties has the effect of denying them equal treatment and the right to full participation in Canadian society. It also raises questions about whether liberal democratic citizenship is not determined by race, gender, class or immigrant status, and it undermines popular claims about Canada as an equitable and multicultural society.

### STEPS AHEAD

The promise of multiculturalism remains unfulfilled. And yet it represents the vision of a society open to difference and cultural pluralism. That aspect of the discursive framework is clearly worth holding on to and building upon. However, we must transcend the phase in which we focus on symbolic multiculturalism and embrace a process that concretizes cultural pluralism as a horizontal reality. This means conceding the narratives of Canada as an English and French country which makes some space for Aboriginal people and ethnoracial cultural minorities. The project of nation building is a dynamic one that allows us to claim our history without being trapped in it. A bold multicultural future will mean that multiculturalism is not a hierarchical edifice with racialized groups at the bottom but a complex matrix of peoples old and new to the land. One that insists on justly resolving the colonial relationship between the settler population and the Aboriginal population. 

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over the coming months and years aims to map out and try to explain these discursive phenomena across the Canadian and Australian experiences, in both official reconciliation processes and conversations in the public forums outside of those processes.

The challenge in this, for social and cultural policy, is acute. Both countries have made quantum steps toward honest

and clear appraisals of the past, but conspicuously shy away from honesty and clarity about the options they face for the future. That reflects a fear of losing the consensus, to be sure, but also a fear that honest language will expose the lack of clear thinking—the absence of compelling policy. Bridging that gap will take more work than either country is ready to acknowledge. 

# Realizing the potentials—and facing the challenges—of multiculturalism in Canada\*

## A RETREAT FROM MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism has been a cornerstone of Canadian policy for almost 40 years, but internationally it remains controversial. Particularly since 9/11 and in light of European experiences where inter-ethnic conflicts resulting from immigration seem to threaten social cohesion, there has been a “retreat” from multiculturalism. Should Canada keep multiculturalism despite problems elsewhere? Or should our multiculturalism policies be changed, or perhaps even abandoned?

Debate over multiculturalism is partly a question of political principle, as discussed, for example, by Canadian philosophers Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor. But today, the debate is mostly about the impact of diversity and the conditions under which its impacts are positive and negative. Whether there is “unity in diversity,” as advocates say, or whether diversity leads to isolation, mistrust, and disunity, as critics suggest, is a question for social and psychological analysis based on the evidence.

## ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF DIVERSITY

Our analysis of the impact of diversity is based on evidence from a unique and comprehensive source, Statistics Canada’s 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey. This survey of over 40,000 Canadians represents all cultural groups across the country, both visible minorities and those of European origin, and includes recent immigrants, earlier immigrants, and the children of immigrants. We focus on the social integration of these groups as a key to social cohesion.

Four specific topics are of particular interest. First, when immigrant minorities and their children retain ethnic attachments over time, what is the impact on their social integration? Sec-

BY JEFFREY G. REITZ,  
RAYMOND BRETON, KAREN K. DION,  
KENNETH L. DION

Jeffrey G. Reitz is the R.F. Harney Professor of Ethnic, Immigration, and Pluralism Studies at the Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto. Raymond Breton is professor emeritus in sociology at the University of Toronto. Karen Dion is a professor in the area of social, personality, and abnormal psychology at the University of Toronto. The late Kenneth Dion was a professor of social psychology at the University of Toronto.

[T]oday, the debate is mostly about the impact of diversity and the conditions under which its impacts are positive and negative.

ond, how do inequality and discrimination affect the dynamics of inter-group relations for visible minorities? Third, what is the impact of the new religious diversity? And fourth, are there significant regional differences, such as between Quebec and the rest of Canada? Our conclusions, summarized below, suggest multiculturalism policy in Canada can be improved to address key challenges of diversity, while its positive potentials are kept and enhanced.

## IMPACT OF ETHNIC ATTACHMENTS

Analysis of the Ethnic Diversity Survey shows that ethnic attachments—strong ethnic identity and involvement in the ethnic community—have both positive

and negative effects on social integration, depending on different dimensions of social integration.

To see the effects of ethnic diversity on social integration, it is necessary to consider the process as it occurs over time. Recent immigrants often establish strong attachments to their ethnic community while they are only beginning to become integrated in Canada. Over time, ethnic attachments weaken, and participation in Canada strengthens. This happens to immigrants, and continues for their children. The real question is how ethnic attachment and social integration are related to each other in this process of adjustment to life in Canada. Does the maintenance of strong ethnic attachments affect the pace of social integration in Canada over time?

*Positive* effects of strong ethnic attachments are found when we look at a person’s sense of belonging in Canada, and their overall life satisfaction. These positive effects hold for recent immigrants, earlier immigrants, and for second generation youth, taking account of time in Canada. They hold for different origins: European or visible minority. Ethnic attachments also have positive effects when it comes to voting, a telling indicator of social integration.

Strong ethnic attachments are found to have negative effects on rates of citizenship acquisition for immigrants, and on their acquisition of a sense of Canadian identity. These effects are particularly strong for immigrants, less so for those born in Canada. There is also a clear negative effect of strong ethnic attachments on feelings of trust. This recalls the much discussed finding of Robert Putnam that diversity undermines social capital, which he measured in terms of trust.

So the answer to this first “multiculturalism” question is mixed; the answer depends on the dimension of integration.

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Ethnic attachments appear to enhance the quality of life for many, but they also mean weaker attachment to Canada and greater social isolation based on less trust in others. So, in this respect, the two apparently opposing views of the social impact of diversity are not really contradictory. Rather, they capture different aspects of a single reality.

## DIVERSITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION AND DISADVANTAGE

Clearly the potential for diversity to enhance cohesion depends in part on a degree of equality in inter-group relations. Visible minorities in Canada experience significant inequality and often report instances of discrimination. What role does such inequality play in the social dynamic of diversity for visible minorities?

Visible minorities have the lowest household incomes and the highest poverty rates—about double the rates for whites—but their experience definitely improves with time in Canada. The children of visible minority immigrants have high levels of education, and much improved household income levels.

On the other hand, many visible minority respondents report experiences of discrimination in Canada, and their concerns appear to intensify with greater time in Canada. For recent immigrants, 34 percent of visible minorities reported experiences of discrimination in the previous five years, compared to 19 percent for whites. Visible minorities also more often report discomfort in social situations, and even fear becoming the target of an attack. And over time, these concerns become more frequent for visible minorities, whereas among white immigrants reports of discrimination decline.

For the children of immigrants, the rate of reported experiences of discrimination among visible minorities is up to 42 percent—and over 60 percent for blacks—whereas among whites the rates decline to about 10 percent. The reasons

Ethnic attachments appear to enhance the quality of life for many, but they also mean weaker attachment to Canada and greater social isolation based on less trust in others.

for increased sensitivity to discrimination over time likely include a changing frame of reference. Whereas immigrants may compare their circumstances favorably to what they experienced in their homeland, over time their expectations increase. Their children, as Canadians, expect full equality. They may feel greater frustration if it is denied.

Partly as a result of experiences of discrimination and a sense of exclusion, visible minorities are less socially integrated into Canadian society than their white counterparts. They are clearly slower to acquire a “Canadian” identity. Most other indicators show more negative trends for racial minorities than for whites. For example, among recent immigrants racial minorities actually express a stronger sense of belonging in Canada than do whites; among the children of immigrants it is the reverse. The positive outlook of newly arrived racial-minority immigrants fades considerably with experience in Canada.

At the psychological level, for visible minorities, ethnic attachments may serve as a kind of refuge against social exclusion. The sense of threat experienced by racial minorities reinforces attachments within the ethnic community. At the same time, the ethnic community provides a kind of psychological shield against the stress of discrimina-

tory experiences, offsetting its negative impact on life satisfaction. This dynamic clearly slows the process of integration into mainstream society.

## THE NEW RELIGIOUS MINORITIES: MUSLIMS, HINDUS, SIKHS, BUDDHISTS

The debate over multiculturalism has focused increasingly on religion, as recent immigration from Asia and the Middle East has increased the numbers of Muslims, now almost 2 percent of the population in Canada. The question is whether specific Muslim values, beliefs, or practices such as those concerned with gender equality and the enforcement of religious codes, may undermine social cohesion because they clash too much with mainstream Canadian society. These issues were reflected in the Ontario debate on Sharia law in family tribunals, and in the Quebec debate over what is “reasonable accommodation,” leading to the Bouchard-Taylor commission.

In the Ethnic Diversity Survey data, the social integration of Muslims can be compared to that of other religious groups, including Christians and Jews, and other new religious groups such as Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists, who each now comprise about one percent of the population. By this comparison, Muslims do not stand out as experiencing distinctive problems of integration. In fact, for the new religious groups, problems of integration arise not from religion but from the fact that most of them are visible minorities.

Religion was related to only a few group differences in social integration. For example, Canadian identity is slower to develop for visible minorities, and this is least likely for the Hindus and Sikhs; other groups are more similar to one another—for example Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims. Regarding trust, the proportion with the lowest level of trust is found among Catholics and Muslims; among visible minorities, the level of trust is lowest among the Protestants (who are mostly blacks), the Catholics,

and the Sikhs. Rates of reported life satisfaction for visible minorities overall were lower, but Muslims are not distinctively unhappy with their lives in Canada, by this measure.

Muslims also do not stand out if we focus only on those who have the strongest religious beliefs. Greater religiosity seems to reflect greater ethnic affiliation and community involvement, and Muslims are not different from other religious groups in this regard. The conclusion underscores that fears about Muslim integration based on individual cases publicized in the media are not borne out by broad-based survey data.

### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUEBEC AND THE REST OF CANADA?**

Generally we find little difference in the social integration of minorities in Quebec as compared with the rest of Canada. However, most ethnic, racial, and religious minorities do report somewhat lower rates of discrimination in Quebec. In fact, the findings suggest that Quebec may be the most “multicultural” region in Canada.

Our analysis identifies four subgroups, based on the strength of ethnic attachments and broader social integration. Two of these represent the assimilation paradigm: an “ethnic orientation” with strong ethnic attachments and weak attachments to society, the other a “mainstream orientation” with weak ethnic attachments and strong attachments to the mainstream. In the multicultural ideal one may have both strong ethnic *and* mainstream attachments, and persons in this situation are put in the “pluralist” category. Finally, there is also the possibility that neither set of attachments is very strong, and these people are put in “marginal” category.

Most Canadians are in either the “ethnic” or the “mainstream” category. However, many persons are in the pluralist category, and it is noteworthy that this pluralist category is more prevalent in Quebec. This reflects in part the French-English duality of Quebec, leading more people to have complex and multiple identities.

## **Celebrating diversity has positive effects, but there is a need also to address inter-group isolation and inequality.**

Another observation is that the marginal category is far from insignificant. This finding points to an important issue, that for many Canadians the question of choosing between mainstream and ethnic does not reflect their experience because, for them, neither is relevant. Some may become marginal because they do not want to maintain an ethnic attachment, and yet for a variety of reasons may feel weak attachments to the rest of society.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

In sum, our conclusions are as follows. First, minority ethnic and cultural communities—reflected, for example, in the formation of residential enclaves—perform positive functions for the integration of immigrants, but also show tendencies toward isolation from mainstream society, and slower integration into the wider Canadian community.

Second, visible minorities experience less integration with time in Canada, partly because of social exclusion and their own retreating into an enclave. Visible minorities experience a sense of social exclusion which grows with the length of time spent in Canada and is more salient for the children of immigrants than for the immigrants themselves.

Third, the newer religious minorities experience less integration into Canadian society mainly because they are visible minorities, not because of their religion. Muslims do not stand out in this regard from other new religious groups such as Hindus, Sikhs, or Buddhists.

And, fourth, we find that the impact of diversity is much the same across Canada, and in particular is not less in Quebec despite the greater media attention to the issue there.

Our most general policy conclusion is that multiculturalism has strengths in Canada but also certain weaknesses. Celebrating diversity has positive effects, but there is a need also to address inter-group isolation and inequality. Multiculturalism policy should embrace a more authentic and socially active commitment to developing positive relations between groups.

### **EQUALITY, ENCOUNTERS, AND INTERCHANGE**

It is worth recalling that these issues were emphasized in Pierre Trudeau’s original speech on multicultural philosophy in 1971. Multiculturalism, he said, involved supporting minority communities. But it also required resources for integration, including equal access to full participation in Canadian society, as well as learning an official language. And he added a fourth objective: to “promote creating encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups, in the interest of national unity.”

Regarding equality, existing policy promotes the idea of racial equality, but the impact has been small. Minority groups’ concerns about inequality grow with greater experience in Canada, and equity policies evidently have been insufficient to counter this trend. Minorities with greater experience in Canada become more concerned about the issue, and as Canadian-born generations of racial minorities emerge, the issues of equality will become more significant. Inter-group exchanges could help Canadians address issues that include not only culture, but also inequalities.

Minority communities can play a positive role in the integration of immigrants and members of minorities into the larger society. They can act as a sort of “social bridge” between the two. Under certain circumstances, they may isolate some of their members from the larger society.

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# Intentionality and instruments: Making multiculturalism work

## VAGUE INTENTIONS

To paraphrase Butch Cassidy, it's not the multiculturalism that'll kill you, it's the discontents. The Canadian discourse, at least as reported in our media, has a lot of discontents, and we now have a federal government which traffics in them freely. One of them is multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is closely linked to immigration, which has been a critical building block for Canada. A lot of the discontents we have with multiculturalism are in fact discontents with immigration, and derive from the fact that we have had both a vague intention around multiculturalism and weak instruments to implement it. The multiculturalism policy itself and the Act that embeds it are more aspirational than directive, and don't offer a great deal of clarity. A clearer intent for immigration and a more effective instrument for immigration, settlement, and integration would mitigate many of the discontents around multiculturalism.

## TWO GREAT PERIODS OF IMMIGRATION

We have had two great periods of immigration, at the start of the 20th century and in the 1960s and early '70s.

Prime Minister Laurier worried that the unpopulated prairie was vulnerable to being settled and claimed by the United States, so he tasked Clifford Sifton from his cabinet to solve the problem. Sifton set about attracting cold weather farmers, targeting those in the northern US and northern Europe. He used land grants, credit, rail and storage infrastructure to facilitate marketing crops, and a variety of other incentives. In less than a decade, Canada's population increased by over 50 percent.

Prime Minister Pearson's man was Tom Kent, a policy oriented former jour-

BY ALAN BROADBENT

Alan Broadbent is chairman and CEO of Avana Capital Corporation.

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nalist who became his senior adviser and then first deputy minister of the new Department of Manpower and Immigration. In addition to being involved in most of the extraordinary policy development of Pearson's government, Kent was responsible for the development of the point system for evaluating potential immigrants. By assessing applicants in terms of the qualities that Canada wanted (education, youth, work experience), this system changed a formerly exclusive intake which had favoured British and European immigrants and had focused on keeping people out. According to an IRPP report by Genevieve Bouchard, the 1952 immigration act "allowed refusal of admission on the grounds of nationality, ethnic group, geographical area of ori-

gin, peculiar customs, habits and modes of life, unsuitability with regard to the climate, probable inability to become readily assimilated, etc." Kent's point system upped the diversity dimension dramatically, which led to the multiculturalism policy within a decade.

Both Sifton and Kent, and their prime ministers, saw immigration as a deliberate tool in nation building. In Sifton's case, he knew who he wanted and he set out to get them. He changed the immigration department by putting officials on commission, rewarding them according to how successful they were in attracting immigrants. And he launched one of the first great marketing campaigns. It was said that you could not go to any farming village or down any country lane in northern Europe without seeing a Canadian recruitment poster on a wall or post. And he knew that he had to create incentives to attract farmers and to retain them. He had to help them succeed.

In Kent's time, Canada didn't need to attract immigrants, but had to decide between the many who wanted to come. Kent linked the point system to labour market attachment, the most critical settlement success factor. Kent's system was colour-blind: you got points for six factors—for example, your education and ability to speak English or French—but it didn't matter where you came from. Since the system was implemented in 1967, there has been increased diversity in the races of immigrants. The idea was that if you selected immigrants properly, you would dramatically increase the likelihood they'd succeed.

The Sifton and Kent efforts shared intentionality and instrumentality. They had a strong intent to choose the best immigrants to meet the needs of the country in their time, and they developed the instruments to do it. In both cases

the underlying concept was building Canada by attracting new citizens—people who would settle into the economic, social, and cultural life of the country.

## THE TWO THEMES OF DISCONTENT

At most other times in Canada's history, particularly since 1900, we've had discontents that centre on two themes: they'll take our jobs and they'll worship their own god.

*They'll take our jobs* is based in the belief that the economy is relatively finite and inflexible, and with high unemployment rates among "Canadians," immigrants would just become a burden on public budgets. This fear ignores entrepreneurship, the ability to create new value and wealth. Tell an entrepreneur that you want to bring in a million immigrants, and they'll say, "Goody, more customers!" Tell a beleaguered public official, trade unionist, or policy wonk, and they'll see shortages and costs, even if they run a transit system which will get lots of new riders or a university which will get new students.

And *they'll worship their own god*, eat their own food, wear their own clothes, and otherwise engage in behaviour absolutely different from that the British brought from Britain and the French from France. It will, we are still warned, ruin everything this country was built on!

So we have discontents, and we have young people with history degrees running programs to tell us Canada is failing because we haven't memorized our prime ministers in order of appearance, or our provincial capitals from east to west. They urge us to have public education campaigns to stop the ebb of our history and our values along with it. Without it, they say, we'll wake up one day with a theocracy and dietary laws.

## ENRICHED LIVES

Not everyone has discontents about immigrants and multiculturalism, of course. A Pew Trust poll a few years back found that Canada was one of three

The way to defeat the discontents before they kill you is to be intentional and instrumental in the embrace of multiculturalism and immigration.

countries in the world where a majority of the population favoured immigration: the US was 53 percent, Australia 55 percent, and Canada a whopping 75 percent. We tend to like the idea in theory, and from what one can see of life on the streets of our cities, where most of the immigrants live, we seem to like it in practice. Most of us tend to know and work with Asians, Africans, South Asians, and people from around the planet. Most of us seem to have our lives enriched in this way.

But what about our values? Canada is a nation of laws, with one of the most dynamic legal systems in the world. Our basic values are expressed in the body of law, and they get tested every day across the country as we challenge each other and push the boundaries of the present. Through our legal system we test behaviour and thought, and through our appeals process we turn important

questions over relentlessly. And our parliaments change the law, to make sure that it expresses current consensus. We change it to allow women to vote or gays to marry. Our values are robust and secure.

The Harper government has all but abandoned immigration and multiculturalism as an instrument of nation building. It views immigrants as cogs in a machine, as their burgeoning temporary worker program shows. It is an approach that has failed everywhere else, where it has created an underclass of workers in hiding, who don't want to go back to where they came from, but cannot surface and act like citizens for fear of prosecution and removal. These days, multiculturalism seems simply a way for political parties to segment voting blocs.

## MAKING INTENTIONAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CHOICES

Nations have choices to make, and immigration can be seen as a liability or an asset. Liabilities need to be limited, to have boundaries put around them, constraints imposed, and costs tallied. But assets are invested, and given every chance to succeed, because they will pay dividends for a long time into the future. How you choose makes all the difference to how you behave, and to the sum of your discontents.

The way to defeat the discontents before they kill you is to be intentional and instrumental in the embrace of multiculturalism and immigration. More Sifton, more Kent, fewer amateur historians. 🍀

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The experience of social exclusion and discrimination can be a critical factor in generating such isolation. Also, the regular flow of new immigrants into the community and the resulting increase in the size of the community may make it possible for many individuals and families to function well within the community.

In addition to promoting equality, it would be important to foster interchanges among Canada's cultural groups in cultural, economic, and social areas

of activity. These are challenging tasks, but they are important steps to assuring all groups that they are fully Canadian, and that we can be as united as our multicultural ideals assert. 🍀

\* This paper is based on *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity* by Jeffrey G. Reitz, Raymond Breton, Karen K. Dion, and Kenneth L. Dion, with the collaboration of Rupa Banerjee and Mai Phan, published by Springer 2009.

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