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Multiculturalism @50 and the Promise of a Just Society

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INTRODUCTION

MULTICULTURALISM @ 50: CHAINS OF THE PAST AND DREAMS OF REBIRTH

WILL KYMLICKA

Will Kymlicka is the Canada Research Chair in Political Philosophy in the Philosophy Department at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada, where he has taught since 1998. His research interests focus on issues of democracy and diversity, and in particular on models of citizenship and social justice within multicultural societies. He is co-director, with Irene Bloemraad, of a new CIFAR program on Boundaries, Membership and Belonging. He is also the co-director, along with Keith Banting, of the Multiculturalism Policy Index project, which monitors the evolution of multiculturalism policies across the Western democracies. Will's most recent work in this field focuses on issues of solidarity in multicultural societies.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the adoption of official multiculturalism in Canada, but it's safe to say that most Canadians are not in a celebratory mood. After the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in May 2021, many towns and associations cancelled their "Canada Day" festivities, and Canadian flags on federal buildings were lowered to half-mast (and have remained that way), to honour and acknowledge the Indigenous victims of Canadian settler colonialism. The powerful mobilization of the Black Lives Matter movement around issues of systemic racism in Canada has reinforced the perception that this is a moment, not for celebration, but for sombre acknowledgement of our failings, and for re-evaluating our institutions, policies, and narratives, including our policies and narratives of multiculturalism.

“ The historical soil from which multi-culturalism emerged, we might say, was not propitious for a truly inclusive and emancipatory policy, and Canadians are continuing to live with the consequences.”

The papers in this issue of *Canadian Issues* provide some historical context for this moment. Several of the authors argue that the limits and shortcomings of multiculturalism are not failures of implementation or communication or funding, but rather have deeper historical roots. The conception of multiculturalism adopted in 1971 was rooted in the prevailing ideologies and power structures of the time,

and so has ended up reproducing many of these long-standing hierarchies and exclusions. The historical soil from which multiculturalism emerged, we might say, was not propitious for a truly inclusive and emancipatory policy, and Canadians are continuing to live with the consequences.

Each of the authors focuses on somewhat different aspects of this historical soil, and on different dimensions of the ideologies and power structures at play in the lead-up to the adoption of the policy. For some authors, the crucial ideology and power structure is colonialism: multiculturalism encouraged ethnic groups to align themselves with settler society (English or French), and thereby recruited them into the ongoing project of dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Foster; Blanding). For other authors, the crucial ideology and power structure is racism: ideas of multiculturalism emerged from the same toxic stew that included ideas of eugenics and racial hierarchy, consolidating a sense of white privilege amongst English, French and white ethnic groups, while relegating nonwhites to the margins (Meister, Augustine, Guo). For yet others, the crucial ideology and power structure is class: multiculturalism emerged as part of a project of building a society around middle-class traits of “ambition, dependability, self-reliance, discipline, perseverance, and self-mastery”, while relegating ‘non-productive’ immigrants (and native-born) to the margins (Elrick). Others suggest the crucial ideology and power structure is secular liberal legalism: multiculturalism has operated to consolidate the power and legitimacy of the liberal state, and hence marginalizes non-liberal religious groups

that dispute the right of the state to govern all of society (Berger). And finally, there is the long-standing critique that multiculturalism reflects and perpetuates the power imbalance between French and English, drowning the Quebecois nation in the multicultural sea of Anglophone North America (Warren).¹

These are all important insights into the roots of multiculturalism, and while the authors focus on distinct aspects, they are in many ways complementary analyses. After all, ideas of race, class and culture are all intertwined in practice, and justifications for power hierarchies often move subtly between these different registers. Each of these papers can be seen as capturing one dimension of a complicated web of ideologies and hierarchies that structure Canadian society and politics.

So, the papers in this issue help to explain why, fifty years after the adoption of multiculturalism, we remain very far from the ‘just society’ that multiculturalism seemed to promise (Ghosh). However, in solving one puzzle, these papers arguably raise another puzzle: namely, why has multiculturalism remained so popular in Canada? According to many of the analyses in this issue, multiculturalism has operated to uphold and exalt the white secular liberal English-speaking settler middle-class, and so it is perhaps not surprising that individuals in this group endorse multiculturalism. But the evidence suggests that support for multiculturalism in Canada is much wider than this. In his paper, Varun Uberoi cites some of the survey evidence that shows surprisingly high and stable support for

1 See Raymond Th  berge for an alternative interpretation of how multiculturalism relates to the French fact in Canada.

multiculturalism in the general Canadian population, including amongst minorities.

In fact, support for multiculturalism can be found in some surprising places. One particularly striking example is a recent study of attitudes towards multiculturalism amongst prisoners in provincial jails in Alberta.² This population is heavily racialized and economically disadvantaged, very distant from the white middle-class whose values and power are said to underpin multiculturalism. Yet it appears that they too have internalized the multicultural ethos. This is just one of many examples where critical social scientists in Canada have gone looking for those who are said to be excluded or banished from multiculturalism, only to discover that members of these groups often express genuine appreciation, even gratitude, for multiculturalism. While critical academic theories tell us that multiculturalism stigmatizes and disempowers certain groups, surveys and interviews with the members of these groups often suggest that they feel empowered and respected by multiculturalism.³

In my view, this is an equally important part of the 50-year history of multiculturalism in Canada, and one which requires explanation. What is it that so many Canadians – across various racial, religious and class divides – see in multiculturalism? And here the papers by Jeff Reitz, Varun Uberoi and John Berry are helpful, identifying both sociological and psychological factors at play. At a sociological level, multiculturalism can enhance “social

capital”: it helps to facilitate trust and cooperation. At a psychological level, multiculturalism may help to meet some basic human needs and motivations. It seems that for many people, multiculturalism facilitates a sense of belonging, one that operates in two directions: people feel a sense of belonging to the larger society, but also that the *society belongs to them*, and hence that they have a right to a say, a right to complain, a right to refashion society.

It is not easy to know how to reconcile this popular sentiment with more critical academic analyses which suggest that multiculturalism was never intended to give certain groups the right to remodel the house we call Canada. It seems that multiculturalism has slipped anchor from its moorings, and that many Canadians see in multiculturalism something more than, or other than, the sum of its historical sources. They see multicultural futures that are not destined to reproduce the prevailing hierarchies and ideologies of its origins fifty years ago.

“Canadians in 2021 are living through a particularly vivid moment of this “unhappy consciousness”, torn between aspirations for rebirth and the chains of the past.”

Of course, this may be naïve. And Canada will never achieve these multicultural futures unless we make

2 Tetrault, Justin EC, Sandra M. Bucerius, and Kevin D. Haggerty. "Multiculturalism under confinement: Prisoner race relations inside western Canadian prisons." *Sociology* 54.3 (2020): 534-555

3 To cite just one other example, see Iqbal, Maleeha, Laila Omar, and Neda Maghbouleh. "The Fragile Obligation: Gratitude, Discontent, and Dissent with Syrian Refugees in Canada." *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies* 8/2 (2021): 1-30.

an honest reckoning with the past. Foster captures this dynamic when he writes:

multicultural Canada began life like an orphan. It had some idea of an ancestral history that especially dominant Canadians—or some of them—wanted to retain and even preserve. Truly an unhappy consciousness, it was like the modern individual uncertain of how much this heritage was preparing it for a new life on its own, that could only occur through a mythological rebirth, or of how much of this legacy was like those chains every Scrooge individually was destined to drag into the future unless there is a fundamental and honest recounting and recanting of past deeds.

Canadians in 2021 are living through a particularly vivid moment of this “unhappy consciousness”, torn between aspirations for rebirth and the chains of the past. Several of the articles in this issue help to identify why indeed multiculturalism is so anchored to the past, but there are also glimpses of why and how multiculturalism can be part of a better future.

OVERVIEW

MIRIAM TAYLOR

Miriam Taylor is the Director of Publications and Partnerships at the Association for Canadian Studies and Metropolis Institute.

Entitled *Multiculturalism @ 50 and the Promise of a Just Society*, this special edition of Canadian Issues, explores the roots, characteristics and structural fault lines of Canadian multiculturalism and outlines the reframing required if the policy hopes to live up to its initial promise of delivering a just society. In his introduction, guest editor and eminent political philosopher Will Kymlicka reflects on the insights of contributing authors some of whom trace multiculturalism's failings back to its very foundations, but who also offer "glimpses" of why and how multiculturalism might aspire to rebirth and offer a "better future".

The issue is divided into four sections: (1) Foundations, (2) Public Consciousness, (3) Structural Fault Lines and (4) Future Imperatives.

Section (1), **Foundations**, opens with an article by Daniel Meister, who places multiculturalism in its historical context, tracing its social, political and cultural roots to a pluralism infected by racist

and settler colonialist ideologies that effectively excluded nonwhites. The decades preceding the official implementation of multiculturalism are also the focus of Lee Blanding's article, who questions whether, having failed to include the voices of key stakeholders including Indigenous peoples, the prevailing multiculturalist discourse can respond to the pressing needs of an "age of Reconciliation". In an article making a case for the complementarity of multicultural policy and official bilingualism, Commissioner of Official Languages Raymond Th  berge depicts the often-overlooked diversity within Canada's Francophone population and maintains that Canada's bilingual framework enhances rather than detracts from diversity within the country.

In (2) **Public Consciousness**, John Berry sees "widespread acceptance of diversity" as fundamental to the success of multicultural policy and describes efforts to measure this prevalent "multicultural ideology" by means of an "intercultural scale" both

in Canada and internationally. While conceding that it is no simple feat to prove the impact on national unity of fifty years of multicultural policy, Varun Uberoi argues that it has been “effective at encouraging inclusive forms of national identity”, given that a majority of Canadians identify multiculturalism as a “national symbol and an important feature of how they conceive of Canada.” Jeffrey Reitz also explores the meaning of multiculturalism for Canadians and the role it has played in building “social capital”, pointing out, however, that strong support for multiculturalism has not led to more willingness to tackle equity issues thus hampering the country’s ability to address the underlying problems created by racism and discrimination.

In (3) **Structural Fault Lines**, four authors expound on the ways in which the very structure of multiculturalist policy either violates its own principles or is ill-equipped to meet the imperatives of a diverse society that aspires to equity and solidarity. In its promotion of a multicultural citizenship that limits full membership to “individuals who display middle-class traits and/or demonstrate economic utility,” Jennifer Elrick argues that multicultural policy is possibly contravening its stated ideals and contributing to a decline in social solidarity. In his exposé of the views of an unrepentant critic of multiculturalism, Jean-Philippe Warren places sociologist Guy Rocher’s objections to multiculturalism in the tradition of those who view the policy as a betrayal of the bilingual two-pillared conception of Canadian Confederation. In “Silences of Multiculturalism”, Benjamin Berger sheds light on the failure of the liberal constitutional system to live up to its claims to autonomy and universality, showing up the law’s incapacity to act as objective arbiter on fundamental issues of religious freedom,

particularly in the case of “religious groups that diverge significantly from the metaphysical and normative mainstream.”

The final section, (4) **Future Imperatives**, looks ahead to sketch the reframing, rebuilding and reeducating required to institute a multiculturalism inclusive of all Canadians. While remaining steadfast in her commitment to a policy that she helped develop and launch, former Multiculturalism Minister, Jean Augustine, is uncompromising in her call for a “reframing of multiculturalism, within an anti-racist and anti-oppression space that intentionally seeks to dismantle the systemic harms of white privilege.” Cecil Foster also exposes the structural racism and exclusion built into the foundations of multiculturalism and calls for the courage to abandon old power structures to a well-deserved grave in favour of a “genuine multiculturalism – where power, belonging and entitlement start through individual recognition but that individuals can subsequently choose to be counted by ethnicity, racialization, gender, place of birth or any other social category that speaks to diversity and inclusiveness.” While multiculturalism originally promised a reversal of assimilationist tendencies, Ratna Ghosh argues that its static focus on heritage cultures and language has blinded it to its perpetuation of structural inequalities, a challenge whose urgency has become all the more apparent in the present context. In his article, Shibao Guo describes how the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the propagation throughout the country of an anti-Asian virus fuelled racism and hatred, exposing the need for “critical deep reflections on the rhetoric of Canadian exceptionalism” and for the establishment of a comprehensive anti-racist education program.



FOUNDATIONS

HISTORICIZING MULTICULTURALISM

DANIEL R. MEISTER

Daniel R. Meister is an independent scholar with a PhD in Canadian History. He has taught at Queen's University, held a Lillian Agnes Jones Fellowship at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, and worked as a Researcher at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. His book, *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism*, is published by McGill-Queen's University Press this fall.

What on earth is historicizing and why should multiculturalism be subjected to it? Historicize is a somewhat uncommon word that simply means to treat something as historical, to place it in its historical context. Historicizing is not synonymous with celebrating, criticizing, or even debating – and multiculturalism has already endured more than enough of all that, with no end in sight. Indeed, the study of multiculturalism in Canada is a rather curious subfield if it can even be called that. Typing “multiculturalism” into an academic search engine triggers an avalanche of results from a host of disciplines with no apparent unifying theme.

However, much of this scholarship engages with

a debate initiated by political philosophers about the place of multiculturalism in liberal political theory. These debates have been as vigorous as they have been voluminous. But it is important to note that this theorizing has all been done after the fact. Despite what some have argued, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism was not based on any pre-existing formal political theory or philosophy by that name.

Turning away from the theoretical, it becomes obvious that little of the policy's history has been traced, leaving important questions, such as why and how Canada came to have this policy, completely unanswered.¹ Although fifty years have

1 Consider, as a prime example of the paucity of literature on the subject, that one of the few works on the history of multiculturalism consistently cited by leading theorist Will Kymlicka is an unpublished thesis dating from the 1970s. Will Kymlicka, “The Canadian Model of Multiculturalism in a Comparative Perspective,” in *Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution*, ed. Stephen Tierney (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 87n23.

elapsed, we still have no clear understanding of why Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced the policy of multiculturalism in 1971. Given that reality, I can't help but argue that a bit of historicizing is in order (although I recognize it is terribly cliché for a historian, when asked to think about the future, to call for a closer examination of the past).

“The study of multiculturalism is further confused by how the term itself can be defined in many different ways. It is typically used in one of three senses: sociological, ideological, or political.”

It is well documented that, after being introduced in Canada, multiculturalism became an international phenomenon, with several nations adopting policies with that name, and others using the term to apply to various policies and practices relating to immigration and diversity more generally. In these other, predominantly European, countries there has since been a backlash against multiculturalism and repeated statements from European political leaders that the policy has “failed.”² In Canada, however, multiculturalism continues to enjoy wide support from the public and all major political parties and in fact has become integral to national identity.³ The

national importance of this public policy makes it all the more surprising that its history has not yet been adequately traced.

The study of multiculturalism is further confused by how the term itself can be defined in many different ways. It is typically used in one of three senses: sociological, ideological, or political. That is, it can refer to the fact of human diversity, the idea that multiple cultures can (and perhaps should) peacefully coexist within a single nation, or to a government policy. As sociologist Richard Day persuasively demonstrated over two decades ago, many people, including Canadian government officials, have blurred definitions, suggesting that Canada has always been both sociologically and ideologically multicultural, and therefore that the policy was a natural progression or an outgrowth of this specific history.⁴

“We should not imagine that it was inevitable for Canada to have a policy of multiculturalism, regardless of the country's sociological diversity.”

This is, of course, untrue. When thinking about multiculturalism as an ideology, it is important to heed historian and theorist Quentin Skinner's

2 See for instance Steven Vertovec and Susanna Wessendorf, eds., *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies, and Practices* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

3 According to a 2015 report by the Environics Institute, “multiculturalism continues to be seen as one of the country's most important symbols, and this view has strengthened since 2010.” Over half of Canadians identified it as an important symbol, placing it above the Queen, the RCMP, and even hockey. See their *Canadian Public Opinion About Immigration and Multiculturalism* (Spring 2015), 1 and 2.

4 Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 6.

warning that intellectual historians should not imagine that a philosophy was somehow “always immanent in history.”⁵ That is, we should not imagine that it was inevitable for Canada to have a policy of multiculturalism, regardless of the country’s sociological diversity. In other words, we should not go back through history, eagerly seeking out people and their writings which supposedly ‘anticipate’ the policy. We should instead examine the history of Canadian policies and practices relating to culture and immigration, tracing their evolution over time, and seeking to understand the social, political, and cultural conditions that made it possible – and even expedient – for such a policy to be announced.

Most existing attempts to provide a thumbnail sketch of the policy begin with Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s statement in the House of Commons in 1971, one of the few times he spoke about the policy and certainly the lengthiest. In it, he explained that it was a policy of culture, not of immigration. Though its purpose was scantily defined, the policy was intended to support and encourage cultural and ethnic groups to “share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians.”⁶ For most of Canadian history up until that point, policies and practices relating to culture and integration were rooted in the belief that peoples of non-British, non-French European descent should assimilate, that is, abandon their respective cultures and adopt Anglo-Canadian culture as their own. While Trudeau may not have presented it as such, multiculturalism was clearly a

break with these past policies and practices, which makes understanding this context crucial to any account of the policy’s history. And while Trudeau insisted that the policy of multiculturalism was not one of immigration, immigration policies dictated what cultural and ethnic groups were allowed into Canada to share their “cultural expressions and values” in the first place. Therefore, the history of multiculturalism must also be placed within the context of the history of policies and practices relating to Canadian immigration.

The groundbreaking work done by historian Howard Palmer in the 1970s and ‘80s provides a valuable overview of this historical context. In an important essay presented to the Second Canadian Conference on Multiculturalism (1976), Palmer examined what he called three Anglo-Canadian theories of assimilation. The first, Anglo-conformity, demanded immigrants adopt the behaviour and values of Anglo-Canadians and was predominant between 1867 and 1920. It then fell into disrepute and was replaced by the ‘melting pot’ theory, which emerged during the 1920s and suggested that the blending of immigrant cultures would create a new Canadian culture. Palmer argued that a “third theory of assimilation – ‘cultural pluralism’ or ‘multiculturalism’” was vying for public acceptance by the 1960s and into the 1970s. This view developed after the Second World War and recommended that some aspects of immigrants’ culture be preserved “within the context of Canadian citizenship and political and economic integration into Canadian society.” However, Palmer suggested

5 Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3–53, quote at 10.

6 House of Commons, *Debates* (8 October 1971), 8545.

that the earliest expressions of “full-blown pluralist ideas” came much earlier, in the 1930s, in the writings of John Murray Gibbon (a publicist with the Canadian Pacific Railway) and Watson Kirkconnell (a professor and translator of so-called new Canadian poetry).⁷

“these early expressions of cultural pluralism were limited by scientific racism and rooted in settler colonialism, with the result that the only cultures that these men considered worthy of retention and celebration were those of Europeans.”

In my forthcoming book, *The Racial Mosaic*, I have studied this period more closely. Taking a biographical approach, I examined the lives and thought of Gibbon and Kirkconnell, as well as one of their peers, Robert England (an administrator with the Canadian National Railways).⁸ All three of these men expressed what I have called philosophies of cultural pluralism, however, their philosophies were crafted at particular times and expressed in particular works, each of which had their own unique purposes. Many of their calls for the acceptance of non-British, non-French,

European cultures in Canada came in the context of the interwar increase in immigration and the heated debate over the suitability of these immigrants, especially Ukrainians. But their calls for acceptance were limited in important ways, shaped as they were by notions of race, racism, and eugenics. More specifically, these early expressions of cultural pluralism were limited by scientific racism and rooted in settler colonialism, with the result that the only cultures that these men considered worthy of retention and celebration were those of Europeans. All those racialized as non-white, such as people of African, Asian, and Indigenous descent, were excluded from the pluralistic Canada they imagined, which they described using various phrases and metaphors, such as tapestry, kaleidoscope, garden, and – most famously – mosaic.

It remains unclear of the degree to which official multiculturalism at the time of its announcement differed from these earlier expressions of cultural pluralism – more historical research is required.⁹ However, some parallels are immediately apparent. Although critics on both the left and the right alike have suggested that multiculturalism was introduced to somehow “manage” the increase in non-European immigration, this was clearly not the case. Rather, and as Will Kymlicka has put it, multiculturalism was not created with non-European immigrants in mind but rather was “demanded by,

7 Howard Palmer, “Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century,” in Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism, *Multiculturalism as State Policy: Conference Report* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1978), 81–118.

8 Daniel R. Meister, *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021).

9 I have done some preliminary work in this vein; see for instance Daniel R. Meister, “Chasing More Precise Details”: Canadian Multiculturalism in the 1970s,” paper presented at the “Between Postwar and Present Day” conference (May 2021). See also the work of Lee Blanding in this issue.

and designed for, European immigrant groups.”¹⁰ Further, the policy focused on the colonizers, not the colonized, responding as it did to the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, which excluded Indigenous peoples from its terms of reference (to say nothing of the subsequent, deeply assimilatory proposals of the Trudeau government’s White Paper on “Indian Policy” [1969]).¹¹

When announcing the policy of multiculturalism, Trudeau echoed the imagery and metaphors of the early pluralists, such as when he spoke of the “mosaic pattern” that made Canada a “very special place.”¹² But it would seem that some of the underlying logic, aims, and limitations of the earlier projects, not just their metaphors, influenced the subsequent policy. As we look to lay the groundwork for the next 50 years of multiculturalism in Canada, we might fruitfully begin by looking back further than the last 50 years, and reflecting on this much longer and more complicated history.

10 Kymlicka, “The Canadian Model of Multiculturalism,” 70.

11 Theorists have suggested that official multiculturalism made a turn towards anti-racism in the 1980s, but this claim has not yet been rigorously examined. Furthermore, the broader question of whether or not multiculturalism is a useful vehicle for addressing racism in the first place remains unanswered. See for instance Augie Fleras and Jean Elliott, *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002), esp. 60–70; and Charles W. Mills, “Multiculturalism as/and/or anti-racism?” in *Multiculturalism and Political Theory*, ed. Anthony Simon Laden and David Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89–114.

12 These lines are from Trudeau’s speech to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress on 9 October 1971, reproduced in *The Essential Trudeau*, ed. Rod Graham (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998), 145–6.

“A HARMONIOUS NATIONAL MOSAIC”?

THE MULTICULTURALISM DEBATE OF THE 1950S AND 1960S

LEE BLANDING

Lee Blanding is an Instructor at Columbia College in Vancouver, BC.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of Canada's multiculturalism policy, it is not surprising for us to ask: “Where did ‘multiculturalism’ come from?” What may surprise a non-specialist readership is that there has been a wealth of historical research in the last 15 years that attempts to answer that very question. A new generation of scholars has begun to both deepen our understanding of the typical ‘answers’ and create new frameworks for interpreting the rise of multiculturalism.

It is now well established in the historical literature that ideas about ‘cultural pluralism’ and ‘the mosaic’ could be found in Canada well before the

1960s.¹ Prior to World War II, some members of ethnic minority communities began to evolve an understanding of Canada that emphasized the positive value of ethnocultural diversity; they argued that Canada's identity was in the process of being built by the ‘immigrant’ communities, not just the English and French ‘founding peoples.’ They were aided in this by a handful of intellectuals, folk festival promoters, and public officials like Governor General Lord Tweedsmuir, who, in 1936, told a gathering of Ukrainian-Canadians that “You will all be better Canadians for being also good Ukrainians.”² This discourse arose at a time in which a ‘British’ identity was still central

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- 1 Peter Henshaw, “John Buchan and the British Imperial Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism,” in *Canadas of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalisms in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 191-213; Donald Ipperiel, “Britannicité et multiculturalisme canadien,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 45-46 (2012): 277-306; Daniel R. Meister, “‘Anglo-Canadian Futurities’: Watson Kirkconnell, scientific racism, and cultural pluralism in interwar Canada,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, no. 2 (2020): 234-256; Chapter 2 of Aya Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity: Japanese, Ukrainians, and Scots, 1919-1971* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012). Meister's forthcoming (2021) book promises to offer a welcome intervention and re-contextualization of this period.
 - 2 Peter Henshaw, “John Buchan and the British Imperial Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism,” 205. See also: Amy Shaw and Andrew Smith, “Lady Aberdeen and the British origins of multiculturalism in Canada,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 1-2 (2019-20): 3-22.

to English-Canadian nationalist thought, and so it was never mainstream. However, new notions of 'Canadianism' gathered steam as 'Britishness' and English-Canadian nationalism began their slow decline.³

But the vast majority of the new literature on the history of multiculturalism examines the period from the 1940s to the 1960s, when public institutions and attitudes began to slowly shift toward a more inclusive understanding of who constituted a 'Canadian.' Franca Iacovetta makes the case that 'gatekeepers' in the federal Citizenship Branch and immigrant aid societies evolved an understanding of 'cultural pluralism' during the early Cold War period that was as much steeped in anti-communism and a desire to 'integrate' ethnocultural minorities into Canadian mainstream life as it was a celebration of their cultures. Iacovetta writes: "In the push to have the newcomers conform to "Canadian ways" – which usually reflected Anglo-Canadian middle-class ideals – the accent was on everything from food customs and child-rearing methods, or marriage and family dynamics, to participatory democracy and anti-communist activism."⁴

“ There was a lively multiculturalist discourse that carried on between the early 1950s and early 1960s among a group of well-connected ethnocultural community leaders, journalists, and civil servants.”

When did Canadians first begin to use the word 'multiculturalism'? Though the word came into popular use during the hearings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1970), there was a lively multiculturalist discourse that carried on between the early 1950s and early 1960s among a group of well-connected ethnocultural community leaders, journalists, and civil servants. In a series of articles published in the *Jewish Western Bulletin*, editor A.J. Arnold made the case that a new kind of cultural 'pattern' was emerging in Canada: "The idea of a cultural mosaic or a multicultural pattern is not just a lot of fine-sounding words strung together. It is perhaps the most enlightened theory of our day in the field of inter-cultural development."⁵ Ukrainian-

3 Chris Dummitt suggests that "British Canadianism" and "inclusive civic nationalism" were viewed as compatible, at least in some intellectual circles; Chris Dummitt, "Je me souviens Too: Eugene Forsey and the Inclusiveness of the 1950s' British Canadianism," *Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (September 2019): 396. See especially: Phillip Buckner, ed. *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); José Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945–71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); C.P. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada: The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism, 1964–1968* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

4 Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 11; Jatinder Mann, "The introduction of multiculturalism in Canada and Australia, 1960s–1970s," *Nations and Nationalism* 18, no. 3 (2012): 489. See also: Lee Blanding, "Rebranding Canada: The Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1945–1974" (PhD thesis, University of Victoria, 2013); John S. Jaworsky, "A Case Study of the Canadian Federal Government's Multiculturalism Policy" (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1979); Jatinder Mann, *The Search for a New National Identity: The Rise of Multiculturalism in Canada and Australia, 1890s–1970s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016).

5 "The Governor General's medal," *Jewish Western Bulletin* 17 May 1957, 2. See also: A.J. Arnold, "What course for Jewish ideals and culture," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, 13 April 1956, 2; A.J. Arnold, "Jewish history is part of Canadian history," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, 29 June 1956, 2; A.J. Arnold, "For a wider Jewish Horizon in Canada," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, 10 October 1958, 5.

Canadian Senator William Wall told an audience in 1957 that "Canada is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural democratic state...which must be progressively blended and integrated into a harmonious national mosaic..."⁶ In February of 1962, Violet King, who was the first Black woman to practise law in Canada, referred to Canada as "a multi-cultural society" in a speech in Barrie, Ontario, and a month later the Canada Ethnic Press Federation declared: "Canada is multicultural, a unity in variety, which will enrich our distinctive Canadian identity."⁷

This multiculturalist vision of Canada would be challenged by the Pearson government's appointment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) in 1963. Formed in response to the growing neo-nationalist movement in Quebec, the Commission was asked to:

*...inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.*⁸

The reaction from the leadership of ethnic minority communities – chief among them Ukrainian-Canadians – was swift. During the Commission's preliminary hearings, many insisted that the Pearson government had fundamentally misunderstood the nature of the Canadian national project. They objected vigorously to the notions of 'two founding races', 'equal partnership', 'other ethnic groups', and 'biculturalism.' While many speakers acknowledged the important historical, sociological, and political position of French-Canadians (the 'French fact'), the idea that Canada was 'bicultural' was viewed as "...an unfit expression of the situation that exists or should exist in Canada. Multiculturalism is necessary."⁹

At its heart, this small (but vocal) movement was offering up a new story about Canada that was informed by the previous decade of discussion; the Royal Commission simply brought this narrative into the public spotlight. One of the clearest articulations of the multiculturalist position came from a spokesperson for the *Ukrainian Professional and Businessmen's Club*:

Canadian Ukrainian citizens feel that they are too a founding race [...] Our ancestors did not move into a neatly ploughed prairie but opened up the backwoods. It is largely from their efforts and the efforts

6 "Panel on Canadian heritage," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, 13 December 1957, 3. See also: "Vanier Given Scroll by Jewish Congress," *Globe and Mail*, 14 October 1959, 3.

7 "Canadians Lead 'Insulated Lives,'" *The Barrie Examiner*, 23 February 1962, 3; LAC, Canada Ethnic Press Federation fonds, MG28 V95, vol. 1, Minutes of Conventions of the CEPF, 1962-1972, Abridged Minutes of the Biennial Convention of the Canada Ethnic Press Federation held at the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg, March 30 and 31, 1962, 1.

8 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *A Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), 151.

9 "Semantic Jungles? 'Biculturalism' As Term Questioned," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 8 November 1963, 1.

*of other Canadians that the Canadian wilderness was transformed into the Canadian bread basket of the world.*¹⁰

While the RCBB acknowledged the ethnic diversity of Canada, it ultimately defended the biculturalist narrative of Canadian history and nationhood.¹¹ What the commissioners meant by 'biculturalism' was not visual art, cuisine, or dance, but the historically rooted sociological and political power of the two dominant societal cultures.¹² Though the multicultural movement kept up pressure on the Commission and the federal government throughout the 1960s, it was unable to change the biculturalist thrust of the Commission's final reports.

It was the Commission's recommendations regarding the 'other ethnic groups' that Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau responded to when he stood in the House of Commons on October 8, 1971, to proclaim his government's policy of 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.' How did his government arrive at this moment? Trudeau was well aware of the multicultural movement and the insistence by some that ethnic minority communities

needed more than recognition: they needed funding to maintain minority language schools and programs and to ensure cultural transmission to future generations. But this idea was anathema to Trudeau's understanding of Canada; his vision was of a French-English bilingual, but not binational country, coupled with individual rights and freedoms – something he called the 'Just Society'.¹³

“The result of these deliberations was a multiculturalism policy that blended the government’s desire to foster national unity, combat the idea of ‘biculturalism’ so popular among Quebecois neo-nationalists, and respond to the demands of the multicultural movement.”

At the same time, the Trudeau government was keen to provide Canadians with new national symbols “to reinforce Canadian identity and unity.”¹⁴ In April of

10 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Transcripts of Hearings*, Preliminary Hearing, Ottawa, Nov. 7-8, 1963, 219-220. University of Manitoba history professor, Paul Yuzyk, became the most vocal proponent of multiculturalism during the height of the Royal Commission's work. Yuzyk's first speech in the Senate is often incorrectly cited as the first public articulation of multiculturalism, though he was already speaking on this topic in early 1963. In March of 1963, he told the Ukrainian Business and Professional Men's Club of Toronto that "Canada is not a bicultural country but a multicultural nation." See: "Yuzyk Queries Peace Record of Pearson," *Globe and Mail*, 21 March 1963, 9.

11 The most fulsome analysis of the language used by and during the Commission is found in Eve Haque, *Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). For more on the intellectual history of the Commission, see: Valérie Lapointe-Gagnon, *Panser le Canada. Une histoire intellectuelle de la commission Laurendeau-Dunton* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 2018); Robero Perin, "Un adversaire du bilinguisme officiel à la commission Laurendeau-Dunton," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 26, no. 2 (Winter 2018): 114-127.

12 Here I am borrowing from political philosopher Will Kymlicka.

13 For more on Trudeau's lack of personal interest in multiculturalism, see: Manoly Lupul, *The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2005), 53-54.

14 LAC, Privy Council Office fonds, RG 2, vol. 6365, file 440/70, Memorandum to the Cabinet, "Citizenship Policy and Legislation," 7 April 1970, n.p.

1970, the government launched a series of consultations with stakeholders, including organizations at the forefront of the multicultural movement like the Canada Ethnic Press Federation and the Ukrainian Canadian Committee. The result of these deliberations was a multiculturalism policy that blended the government's desire to foster national unity, combat the idea of 'biculturalism' so popular among Quebecois neo-nationalists, and respond to the demands of the multicultural movement.¹⁵

The influence of this movement on the spirit, if not the substance, of the final policy can be seen in the fact that Trudeau gave a speech to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in Winnipeg a day after he announced the multiculturalism policy in the House of Commons.¹⁶ He seemed to, at least publicly, embrace the multiculturalist narrative of Canadian history:

As I flew into Winnipeg this afternoon and looked down upon the golden fields and the colorful woodlots, I wished that those early settlers could have seen the panorama of this beautiful region from the air. And as we dropped lower and I could make out the carefully tended farms, the tidy outbuildings, the network of roads, railways and power- lines which link this vast land, I wished that those earliest

*settlers could return and see how their dreams have come true a thousandfold.*¹⁷

Fifty years later, many of the dreams of the multicultural movement have also come true. Activists continued to work at the provincial level – without support from the federal government – toward the establishment of a small Ukrainian-English bilingual education program in Alberta. Arguably, the major success is that 'multiculturalism' has become more than just a policy – it is now a *civil religion* in Canada.

“Indigenous Peoples, aside from a handful of interventions, were largely absent from the multiculturalism debate of the 1960s and were initially left out of early policy discussions.”

But we do not live in the age of 'multiculturalism'; we live in the age of 'Reconciliation.' Indigenous Peoples, aside from a handful of interventions, were largely absent from the multiculturalism debate of the 1960s and were initially left out of early policy discussions.¹⁸ In 1970, they were told by the same

15 For more on these cabinet-level discussions, see Varun Uberoi, "Do Policies of Multiculturalism Change National Identities?" *Political Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2008): 404-417; Jatinder Mann, *The Search for a New National Identity: The Rise of Multiculturalism in Canada and Australia, 1890s-1970s* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 106-108.

16 Garth Stevenson, *Building Nations from Diversity: Canadian and American Experience Compared* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 220.

17 LAC, The Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau fonds, Secret Series 1968-1984, MG 26 O 11, vol. 66, file 66-3, "Prime Minister's Speeches 9/10/1971 – Ukrainian Congress, Winnipeg, drafts and memos," "Notes for remarks by the Prime Minister of Canada to the 10th Ukrainian Canadian Congress Winnipeg October 9, 1971," appended note.

18 Lee Blanding, "Rebranding Canada: The Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1945-1974," 301-302.

government that introduced 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' that they should be 'Canadians' like everyone else. It remains to be seen if a policy forged in the crucible of the Quiet Revolution can be responsive to the demands of a country that has not embraced yet a third, very compelling, narrative: Canada as a colonial state.

LET'S BE HONEST ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM AND OFFICIAL BILINGUALISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

RAYMOND THÉBERGE, COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES¹

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As the Agent of Parliament responsible for promoting and protecting the official language rights of all Canadians, including Canadians of diverse backgrounds, the Commissioner of Official Languages has long sought to understand and to better explain the relationship between multiculturalism and official bilingualism. It hasn't always been easy. Commissioner Max Yalden, writing in his 1979 annual report, called it "one of the Office's most thankless tasks... all too often we find ourselves having to walk a tightrope." At the end of his own tenure, in 2016, Commissioner Graham Fraser remarked that the question he received most often was: "How does Canada's language policy mesh with multiculturalism?"

In a nutshell, Commissioners past (and present!) have shared the view that the two policies are not only complementary, but also mutually reinforcing. "The principles of equality and justice which are the essential underpinnings of the *Official Languages Act* are in no way incompatible with encouraging respect for other languages," explained Commissioner Yalden in his 1980 report. "On the contrary, in our view, their preservation can only enrich the soil of linguistic tolerance and help to alleviate traditionally strained relations between English and French."

Let's be honest – not everybody sees it that way. Indeed, the two policies are frequently misunder-

1 I would like to acknowledge the Research Team of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for its contributions to this article.

stood, and, sometimes, deliberately misconstrued. Official bilingualism, or so it is *sometimes* said in English-speaking Canada, detracts from multiculturalism because it unfairly prioritizes French over other minority languages. Multiculturalism, or so it is sometimes said in French-speaking Canada, reduces French to a minority language among others, stripping away its equality of status alongside English.

But is that really what official bilingualism and multiculturalism set out to achieve? To act at cross-purposes?

WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT, ANYWAYS?

So, what is “multiculturalism”?

In a word it is, as outlined in the constitution, a commitment for “the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.” More specifically, the *Multiculturalism Act* “recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society,” and commits to “a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.” Notably, it calls on government to help “preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada.” In short, when it comes to supporting official languages and other languages, the policy maintains that we can walk and chew gum at the same time.

Multiculturalism helps Canadians from diverse backgrounds to feel seen – to feel appreciated and truly at home in Canada. This, in turn, encourages them to identify with the shared values that define us, including the shared value of official bilingualism. Indeed, from the outset, it was called “multiculturalism in a bilingual framework,” because the policy encourages Canadians from diverse backgrounds to engage in the broader society in one or both official languages. Canadian diversity includes, of course, First Nations, Inuit and Métis, as well as the descendants of historical immigration from France and the British Isles, but multiculturalism is not aimed at them, per se. Rather, it is aimed at other Ethno-Cultural communities including new Canadians and the descendants of previous generations of immigrants from around the world.

So, what about “official bilingualism”?

The constitution and the *Official Languages Act* recognize English and French as the official languages of Canada, with “equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada.”

“Official bilingualism recognizes that both official languages belong to all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic, cultural or linguistic background. English and French are the languages of our national conversation.”

But it's more than that. Official bilingualism recognizes that both official languages belong to *all* Canadians, regardless of their ethnic, cultural or linguistic background. English and French are the languages of our national conversation – the languages of our parliamentary democracy and of the Canadian government, of our educational institutions, justice system, and cultural spaces, the languages of the country's commerce and international relations, the ancestral languages of millions of Canadians and, for hundreds of thousands of newcomers and their children, the languages of integration. Along with Indigenous languages, they are the foundational languages of our history.

Official bilingualism also recognizes the existence of two pan-Canadian official language groups. There are two official language majorities, Francophone in Quebec, and Anglophone elsewhere in Canada. Alongside these live the official language minority communities (Anglophone in Quebec, Francophone elsewhere in Canada). Both of the two pan-Canadian groups are diverse and include hundreds of thousands of people who have neither English nor French as their mother tongue.

FRENCH-SPEAKING CANADA – MORE DIVERSE THAN YOU THINK

And there's the rub. What's often forgotten in the English-language discourse is that there is an immense diversity in French-speaking Canada, both in *and outside of* Quebec. Yes, English-speak-

ing Canada is multicultural. But French-speaking Canada, too, is multicultural. Hence, Canada is multicultural in a bilingual framework.

For its part, French-speaking Canada has a long history of diversity that is often overlooked. Many Francophones have Indigenous, Irish Catholic, Scottish or even English roots (all of which are prominently displayed in Montreal's official flag, see Figure 1). Today, some 200,000 Indigenous Canadians have French as their first official language spoken.²

FIGURE 1.



Montreal's updated flag from 2017 depicts some early examples of Canadian diversity, including Indigenous, French, English, Scottish and Irish symbols. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

In the last half-century, French-speaking Canada has become even more diverse, with immigration from across the international Francophonie; from Africa, Haiti, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Europe. Children of immigrants from around the world attend French-language schools, both in and outside of Quebec. Today, in Quebec, one

2 Referring to those with Indigenous identity. Nearly 400,000 Francophones have Indigenous ancestry. Statistics obtained from the Research Team of the Official Languages Branch, Canadian Heritage, based on data from the 2016 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada.

in ten Francophones is an immigrant. In the rest of Canada, it's even higher, where one in eight Francophones is an immigrant (in Ontario, it's nearly one in six, and in BC, one in four). Taken together, Canada is home to over 800,000 immigrants and roughly 800,000 visible minorities who have French as their first official language spoken.³

Surely, Canadian multiculturalism must include them, too, if it is to be a policy worthy the name.

PARAGONS OF DIVERSITY – OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Official language minority communities are particularly important for Canadian diversity. First, because their very existence breaks the mould of linguistic homogeneity in the regions where they live, thus sending the signal to other language groups that linguistic difference is a societal value. And second, because these communities are themselves exceptionally diverse, even more so than their respective majorities of the same language when it comes to immigration.⁴ The communities are well aware of this diversity. Quebec's Anglophone community has long identified with it. So, too, have the Francophone minorities since the late

1980s; immigration is a major priority for them today.

The point is – OK, my “hunch” is – that the counter-vailing forces of English and French can allow a space within which other languages can exist and sometimes even flourish, more so than they would in a hypothetical Canada with only one official language, and nowhere, perhaps, is this better exemplified than among the diverse official language minority communities themselves. Outside Quebec, for example, where English predominates, the children of mixed “French/non-official language” couples are twice as likely as children of mixed “English/non-official language” couples to retain the non-official language as their mother tongue (10% vs. 5%).⁵ In Montreal, where French predominates but English has an important influence, Canada has its most multilingual city, with 21% of the population speaking three or more languages.⁶ Meanwhile, across Canada, French immersion is popular with immigrant parents, and the statistics show that their children born in Canada and that children with a non-official mother tongue are just as likely to be English-French bilingual as non-immigrant youth from the majority communities, if not more so.⁷

3 *Ibid.* See also Brigitte Chavez, “Immigration and language in Canada, 2011 and 2016,” Statistics Canada, 2019

4 See Chavez, 2019.

5 In Quebec it's the other way around (7% of children from “French/non-official language” couples vs. 11% from “English/non-official language” couples). Referring to single mother tongue responses. Statistics obtained from the “Portrait of demolingistic and socio-economic data,” internal report prepared by Statistics Canada for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2019.

6 Giuseppe Valiante, Montreal is Canada's most trilingual city, StatsCan data shows, Canadian Press, 29 December 2017.

7 Camille Bains, Immigration fuelling French-immersion demand as provinces vie for teachers, Canadian Press, 11 September 2018; Martin Turcotte, Results from the 2016 Census: English–French bilingualism among Canadian children and youth, Statistics Canada, 2019.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING CANADA – UNDERSTANDABLY CONFUSED ABOUT FRANCOPHONE DIVERSITY

Anglo-Canadians can perhaps be forgiven for forgetting that French Canada, too, is diverse. Multiculturalism has been important to Anglo-Canadian identity for a long time, and English-speaking Canada has always been heterogeneous. There were, of course, English, Scottish and Irish, Catholics and Protestants, to be sure, but also, even at the time of Confederation, notable Indigenous, German, Black, Jewish and Asian populations as well. Add to this the waves of Scandinavian, Slavic, Italian and other European immigration before and after the world wars, along with more recent south and east Asian, Caribbean, and African immigration.

This was why many Anglophones, while supportive of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission's call for "two official languages" in the 1960s, found it difficult to identify with the Commission's notion of "two official cultures." They were perhaps 'OK' with French Canada defining itself as one of two culturally contiguous blocks at the time, but less so for themselves. "Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" was far more relatable for English-speaking Canada, as it is today in any event for an increasingly diverse French-speaking Canada.

What really hasn't helped Anglophones to understand Francophones' diversity, however, has been some of the louder contributions to the French-language discourse that have mischaracterized multiculturalism as a policy that deliberately discourages integration. At times there appears to be an attempt to discredit the very term and to replace it with something else, because, well, if

English-speaking Canada likes it, then it must be bad! This can leave some Anglophones with the erroneous impression that Francophones do not value diversity.

CAN WE PLEASE DROP THE DISINGENUOUS, ZERO-SUM "WHATABOUTISMS" ALREADY?

But if the word "multiculturalism" is sometimes suspect among some Francophones, it is perhaps understandable given that some of the louder contributions to the English-language discourse have mischaracterized Francophones as one ethnic minority among others. All too often, we hear the assertion that rolling back French-language rights will somehow bestow greater privileges upon other languages. As if anti-bilingualism advocates had any intention! (See Figure 2.) Indeed, targeting Canada's largest linguistic minority (by far the largest in Canada as a whole and in Canada outside Quebec, by the way) should come as little reassurance

FIGURE 2.



Illustration: "Language rights as a zero-sum game."
Source: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2021.

to other minorities aspiring to advance their rights. Something tells me that if we had only one official language, we wouldn't be hearing quite as much about the need to promote others.

Disingenuous 'whataboutisms' are nothing new when it comes to undermining minority language rights. "You see, we have a very cosmopolitan population in this province," wrote one observer protesting bilingualism, "who greatly outnumber either French or French-Canadian settlers and their descendants, people who contend with perfect justification ... [that their] languages are just as much entitled to a place... as is French." Government communications, he continued, should nevertheless be "entirely in English, as it is obviously impossible to print every language spoken."⁸ This statement was made nearly a century ago. But when it comes to 21st century social media, such comments are a dime a dozen.

THE LAST WORD

But that's just my take on it all.

Ultimately, it will be up to Canadians to determine how, or whether, official bilingualism and multiculturalism can work together. So, what do we think? In a 2016 public opinion survey, more than eight out of ten respondents agreed that "having two official languages has made Canada a more welcoming place for immigrants from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds."⁹ Will such positive attitudes

“ More than eight out of ten respondents agreed that ‘having two official languages has made Canada a more welcoming place for immigrants from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.’”

persist through 2021 and beyond? Much depends on our efforts to defend and to explain the two policies to Canadians.

Canada is not a zero-sum game. Our country can – indeed it *must* – find ways to ensure that all Canadians can feel seen, heard, respected and at home in our shared political community, whether they are Francophone or Anglophone, Indigenous or Ethno-Cultural, or somewhere in between. Official bilingualism and multiculturalism cannot provide all the answers, but, along with reconciliation, they are an integral part of what makes Canada possible.

8 Letter, A.M. Murray to Pierre Veniot, 8 March 1930, Veniot Fonds, Public Archives of New Brunswick.

9 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, [What Canadians think about bilingualism and the Official Languages Act](#), 2016.



PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS



MULTICULTURAL IDEOLOGY

JOHN W. BERRY

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian 'policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' was announced in the House of Commons in 1971. The goal of this policy was to improve the mutual understanding and acceptance of peoples of all cultural backgrounds within a larger shared civic framework.

Since then, multiculturalism has acquired many meanings and can be described at many levels. At the most basic level, it refers to demography; the presence of peoples of many cultural origins living within a society. This degree of cultural diversity can be described by indicators of national or ethnic origin using census or survey information, such as the Ethnic Fractionalization Index (Alesina, et al. 2003; Drazanova, 2019). This index is based on the proportion of foreign-born, and diversity of origin of immigrants in a country.

Second, it refers to the ways that governments or other public institutions seek to manage this diversity through various policies and programmes. This can be assessed by the examination of these public responses to the presence of diversity, such as the Multiculturalism Policy Index (Banting & Kymlicka, 2020).

The third aspect is at the level of the individual, where peoples' attitudes

toward both the extant diversity and the policies toward it can be assessed. This allows us to know the publics' evaluations of these first two levels of multiculturalism. This level has been called *multicultural ideology*. This psychological approach supplements the two approaches from the social sciences noted above (Berry, 2013).

These three facets are interrelated: if cultural divers-

“The success of any multicultural policy depends on widespread acceptance of the value of diversity in a society, or the multicultural ideology that prevails in a population.”

ity is not present in a society, there is no need for a public policy to deal with it, and no need to be concerned with what people think about it (Berry, 1984). The success of any multicultural policy depends on widespread acceptance of the value of diversity in a society, or the multicultural ideology that prevails in a population.

This concept of multicultural ideology was introduced by Berry, Kalin and Taylor (1977) in the

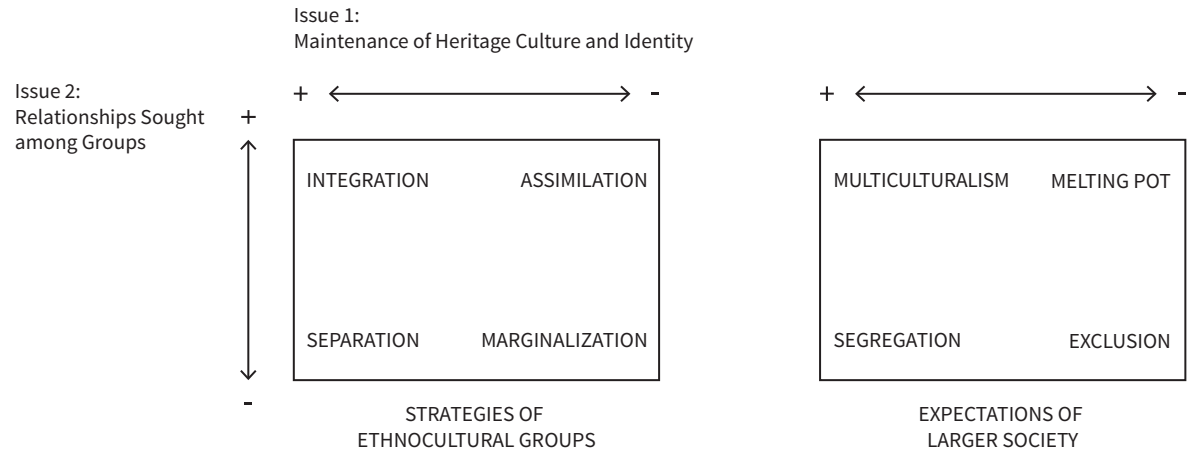
first national study of multiculturalism. It was an attempt to assess Canadians’ attitudes towards the two underlying values that were advocated in the 1971 policy. Multiculturalism is a public good (I) in a society that has many cultural groups that transmit their cultures and persist over generations, and (II) for groups and individuals who socially interact and share their cultures with each other.

INTERCULTURAL STRATEGIES

These two values were incorporated into an intercultural framework that seeks to illustrate the various options that are available to both public institutions a and individuals (see Figure 1).

This framework presents two intercultural spaces, one for the ethnocultural groups (on the left) and the other for the larger society (on the right). Within

FIGURE 1. VARIATIONS IN INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS IN ETHNOCULTURAL GROUPS AND IN THE LARGER SOCIETY (FROM BERRY, 1997)



these two spaces, the framework provides concepts that lie at the intersection of these two issues. These concepts identify the relative preference for the two basic principles of multiculturalism: cultural maintenance, and contact and participation (I) maintaining heritage culture and identity at the top; and (II) a relative preference for having contact with and participating in the larger society down the side.

These two issues can be responded to as attitudinal dimensions, ranging from generally positive or negative orientations to these issues. Different terms may be used to refer to the orientations of non-dominant ethnocultural groups and the larger society. Among non-dominant ethnocultural groups, when they do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the *Assimilation* strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the *Separation* alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, Integration is the option. In this case, there is some degree of cultural *integrity* maintained, while at the same time seeking, as a member of a cultural group, to participate as an *integral* part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then *marginalisation* is defined.

The views and expectations of members of the larger society require some different terms. From the point of view of the larger society, Assimilation when sought by the dominant group is termed

the *Melting Pot*. When Separation is forced by the dominant group, it is called *Segregation*. *Marginalization*, when imposed by the dominant group is termed *Exclusion*. Finally, when diversity maintenance and equitable participation are widely accepted features of the society as a whole, integration is called *Multiculturalism*.

“Historically, Canada pursued a policy of Assimilation (as well as Segregation) for Indigenous Peoples, and Assimilation for those of French background, and for immigrants and for members of ethnocultural groups.”

These various concepts are not in discrete boxes, but are presented to show prototypical locations in the two intercultural spaces. For example, when the two issues are both valued, but the second dimension (contact and participation) is emphasized more than cultural maintenance, especially when the dominant group has more power, then the concept of *interculturalism* may be seen as intermediate between integration and assimilation. The two circles are also interrelated, with the strategies of one being influenced by those of the other (Bourhis et al., 1997).

Using these concepts and terms, we can note that historically, Canada pursued a policy of Assimilation (as well as Segregation) for Indigenous Peoples, and Assimilation for those of French background, and for immigrants and for members of ethnocultural groups. The questioning of this assimilationist goal for Canada was raised early on by John

Buchan (author and Governor General of Canada from 1935 to 1940). Buchan (1937) argued that immigrant groups “should retain their individuality and each make its contribution to the national character...each could learn from the other, and ... while they cherish their own special loyalties and traditions, they cherish not less that new loyalty and tradition which springs from their union.” Somewhat later, in a position paper presented to an international conference on the integration of post-war migrants (Borrie, 1954) which considered the appropriate approach to immigrant integration, the official position paper of the Canadian delegation stated that Canadian society should be “...built on the ideas of individual worth and cultural differences. The pressure of one dominant group to assimilate, that is to absorb others, is therefore impractical as a general theory” (quoted in Borrie, 1954, p. 51).

“Australia and Canada are usually the most supportive of multiculturalism as defined by these two dimensions, with Greece and Austria being least supportive.”

MULTICULTURAL IDEOLOGY SCALE

To assess this multicultural ideology, a scale was developed that incorporates these two values (Berry et al., 1977). Since then, the scale has been modified and used by others in over 20 countries, with findings that show large variations across societies (e.g., Berry, 2017). Australia and Canada are usually the most supportive of multiculturalism as defined

by these two dimensions, with Greece and Austria being least supportive.

The scale is currently being revised with the addition of some new issues, especially on the acceptance of social equity and the belief in essential boundaries between groups. This research is being carried out in Canada, Germany, Luxembourg and the UK. The goal is to produce a way of measuring peoples' degree of acceptance of multiculturalism as an approach to deal with the presence of cultural diversity in their societies.

If this goal is achieved, then we will have a way of understanding this third facet of multiculturalism that will be as useful as the currently available indices of actual diversity and the policies toward it. Knowledge about this psychological dimension to multiculturalism can be an important addition to the work being done in the other social sciences.

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CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY – A 50-YEAR RELATIONSHIP

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As the Canadian policy of multiculturalism has existed for 50 years, many might ask, 'what has it achieved?' I argue that it is likely to have been effective at encouraging national identity, but why is this an achievement? To understand why, we need to know what national identity is, why governments should encourage it and why doing so is difficult; thus, I begin by briefly explaining these points. I then discuss the Canadian policy of multiculturalism, why it is likely to have been effective at encouraging national identity, and what the implications of this are.

I-NATIONAL IDENTITY

We think and talk about national identity in two related ways. First, we refer to a person's national

identity.¹ This denotes part of what they are, just as their sexual or religious identity does; thus, a person with a Canadian identity might also say that they are Canadian. In doing so, they are saying that they are part of a political community that influences what they are as, for example, its legal and political institutions regulate their behaviour and influence their ideas of what is acceptable and normal. But a person may neglect their national identity altogether until they work abroad and realize, for example, how Canadian they are; or they may think they have more than one national identity and feel both Quebecois and Canadian, as Quebec also socializes them using its own legal, political and educational institutions.

Second, we refer to a political community's identity

1 V. Uberoi, 'National Identity-A Multiculturalist Approach', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 21:1, 2018.

and to Canada's identity. This denotes what a political community is and thus the features that we use to think of its individual members as a group, such as the territory they share, a religion or tendencies in thought and behaviour that are common among them, traditions of thought that they use to regulate their collective affairs, and so on. Such features are part of vague but recognizable conceptions of a political community's identity that intellectuals clarify, and school syllabi promote. People also develop such conceptions over time and these in turn affect their national identity. Thus, a racial minority in the 1980s Britain may have thought of Britain as a place that excludes people like them, and not felt British. The two ways in which we think and talk about national identity are thus related. But why should governments encourage either of them?

Some say national identity aids the redistribution of wealth, but, as many now admit, the evidence to support this empirical claim is inconclusive;² rather, note the following two reasons. First, citizens of a political community must exhibit unity, which is usually only the ability to assume they are a unit or a group when conceptualizing collective goals and collective challenges. In difficult times, such as war, citizens may need not only to assume that they are a group, but to explicitly think of themselves as one, and be loyal to one another. Hence, as with unity among family members or friends, unity among citizens often becomes more visible with

need. And those who, for example, 'feel American' often think of themselves as a group just like those who share a religious identity, and are 'Muslim', or a sexual identity, and are 'gay' do. They also often feel proud of one another's achievements as they assume that they are a group.

Equally, if people's conceptions of their political community include cultural minorities as normal and equal members of it, these conceptions help a culturally diverse citizenry to visualize themselves as a group. But those with such inclusive conceptions are also less likely to exclude and discriminate against minorities as minority cultural differences are not seen as something to fear or to avoid. National identity thus (I) *helps* to foster the unity that political life requires and, if inclusive, (II) can discourage an all-too-common fear of cultural differences among citizens. But there nonetheless remain the following obvious problems.

“If people’s conceptions of their political community include cultural minorities as normal and equal members of it, these conceptions help a culturally diverse citizenry to visualize themselves as a group.”

2 Will Kymlicka and David Miller offer the most compelling arguments about national identity and redistribution, yet even they accept the evidence is inconclusive. See W. Kymlicka, 'Solidarity in diverse societies: Beyond neoliberal multiculturalism and welfare chauvinism', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 3:17, 2015, pp. 8-9; D. Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst*, Harvard University Press, 2016, p. 28; D. Miller and S. Ali, 'Testing the national identity argument', *European Political Science Review*, 6:02, 2014, p. 254. See also K. Banting et al., 'Beyond National Identity: Liberal Nationalism, Shared Membership and Solidarity', in G. Gustavsson and D. Miller, *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics*, Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 218.

People's conceptions of their political community often focus solely on a dominant majority who, for example, might seem more 'truly British'. This makes minorities seem like outsiders, thus exacerbating their exclusion and making them potentially unwilling to be part of a group that mistreats them. Thus, we saw how minorities don't necessarily feel part of their political community, but also saw how some can neglect their national identity altogether.

No government can compel its citizens to feel Canadian, or to have an inclusive conception of their political community without unacceptable levels of coercion, and perhaps not even then. But it can encourage both practices despite the following sorts of difficulties: a government may have few powers to encourage, for example, British identity in Scotland and risks antagonising those who feel more Scottish than British. It must also decide which inclusive conceptions of the political community will resonate with its citizens and how to promote them while assuaging majorities who are no longer the sole focus of such conceptions. It must also decide how the education system will be used to encourage national identity without indoctrinating children and while teaching them to think critically.³ These sorts of issues are difficult and the Canadian policy of multiculturalism addressed some of them.

II-THE CANADIAN POLICY OF MULTICULTURALISM

This policy was justified to Cabinet in 1971 as serving a number of Citizenship Objectives, one of which was developing 'Canadian identity'.⁴ It was intended to promote a multicultural conception of Canada; thus, in Cabinet, ministers noted 'the importance ... of the policy as a new concept of the presentation of Canadianism'.⁵ Cultural agencies were subsequently funded to promote a multicultural conception of Canada. 'Intercultural exchanges' and funding minority civil society cultural groups were part of the policy and implicitly conveyed such a conception, as they suggest that Canada is culturally diverse. This conception of Canada was promoted to stimulate people's Canadian identities, and designers of the policy discussed creating a 'meaningful Canadian consciousness' and considered people becoming conscious of how they were a part of Canada.⁶ This continued in the 1988 Multiculturalism Act that enshrined the policy in law.

Clause 31b of this Act calls multiculturalism a 'fundamental characteristic' of Canada, and cabinet documents show how it was intended, *inter alia*, 'to convey a strong sense of legitimacy to those individuals and communities who feel and/or understand that either their culture or their race has limited their role and acceptance in Canadian

3 I address some of these questions in V. Uberoi, 'National Identity – A Multiculturalist Approach'. But see D. Miller's seminal *On Nationality*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

4 V. Uberoi, 'Do Policies of Multiculturalism Change National Identities', *Political Quarterly*, 79:3, 2008, p. 411.

5 V. Uberoi, 'Multiculturalism and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms', *Political Studies*, 57:4, 2009, p. 809.

6 V. Uberoi, 'Multiculturalism and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms', p. 808; L. Blanding, 'Rebranding Canada: The Origins of the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1945-74', PhD Thesis, University of Victoria, 2013, pp. 238, 257.

“Inclusion in the ‘institutional life of the nation’ was thought to strengthen the ‘sense’ among minorities of ‘being integral’ to the ‘Canadian nation’ while exclusion from these institutions was thought to do the opposite.”

society’.⁷ The policy in the Act also helps to ensure that all Canadians, including minorities, can gain employment in federal departments and agencies so as to aid not only employment equity, but ‘nation-building’. This is because inclusion in the ‘institutional life of the nation’ was thought to strengthen the ‘sense’ among minorities of ‘being integral’ to the ‘Canadian nation’ while exclusion from these institutions was thought to do the opposite.⁸ Those drafting the Act thought that federal institutions are part of how Canada is often understood by Canadians, and minorities were more likely to feel part of how Canada is often understood if these institutions included them.⁹ The policy of multiculturalism that still exists in the Act

was designed to promote a conception of Canada and to stimulate people’s national identities, but has it been effective in doing so?

The efficacy of this policy, like many others, is difficult to prove definitively. But it would be counter-intuitive to claim that the federal government and cultural agencies promoting such a conception of Canada for 50 years has had no effect. The likely nature of this effect can be discerned after we note that despite the absence of relevant survey data for the 1950s and 1960s, historical evidence indicates that in this period a multicultural conception of Canada was popular only among some minority civil society groups.¹⁰ Today surveys have repeatedly shown for some time that multiculturalism is a national symbol for a majority of Canadians and an important feature of how they conceive of Canada.¹¹ This conception of Canada is held widely but not universally: 30% may oppose it. Nor is it deeply held by all its advocates as it does not alter some of their views about certain groups, such as Muslims, and many such advocates still believe that immigrants should ‘blend in’.¹² Yet if conceptions of the country that excluded minorities were more

7 V. Uberoi, ‘Legislating Multiculturalism and Nationhood’, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 49:2, 2016 p. 277.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 V. Uberoi, ‘Multiculturalism and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms’, p. 808; L. Blanding, ‘Rebranding Canada’, pp. 107, 162.

11 See W. Kymlicka’s excellent ‘The Precarious Resilience on Multiculturalism in Canada’, *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 51:1, 2021, p. 124 as he notes the following survey data: Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2015, ‘Canadian Public Opinion about Immigration and Multiculturalism’, [Environics Institute – Focus Canada Spring 2015 Survey on Immigration-Multiculturalism – FINAL REPORT – June 30-2015](#), p. 2; Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2018, ‘Canada’s World Survey 2018 Final Report’, April 2018, pp. 31, 38. For older evidence from the International Social Survey Programme see V. Uberoi, ‘Do Policies of Multiculturalism Change National Identities’, footnote 30, p. 416.

12 See Kymlicka ‘The Precarious Resilience on Multiculturalism in Canada’, p. 125; R. Besco and E. Tolley, ‘Does Everyone Cheer? The Politics of Immigration and Multiculturalism in Canada’, *Federalism and the Welfare State in a Multicultural World*, in E. Goodyear-Grant et al., McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019, p. 303; Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, ‘The Foundations, Limits, and Consequences of Immigration Exceptionalism in Canada’, *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 51:1, 2021, p. 13.

widespread, such beliefs and discrimination would presumably be too. Thus, this widely yet not always deeply held inclusive conception of Canada still seems 'consequential'.¹³ Furthermore, the multiculturalism policy is likely to have been effective in helping to generate this widely held conception over 50 years in something like the following way.

“Today surveys have repeatedly shown for some time that multiculturalism is a national symbol for a majority of Canadians and an important feature of how they conceive of Canada.”

Any conception of Canada that this policy promoted would seem artificial if inconsistent with popular understandings of Canada's history, people's recurring experiences and other features of Canada, such as high levels of immigration. But people ignore such features when they cling to older conceptions of their country, or to conceptions of it that focus on other features, as occurs in other culturally diverse countries.¹⁴ Yet when governments promote a multicultural conception of the country for 50 years, this conception becomes difficult to ignore and encourages people to take account of it. Canadian history and experiences, increasing immigration and so

on, do not inevitably lead people to acquire a multicultural conception of Canada, but they make the multicultural conceptions of Canada that successive governments promote seem plausible; thus, many Canadians, we saw, now accept them. In this way, the policy of multiculturalism is likely to have been effective at encouraging national identity.

Crude claims about this policy undermining national identity therefore seem mistaken,¹⁵ as it is instead likely to have been effective at encouraging such identity. But what about subtler and more general claims in which policies of multiculturalism are said to uphold minority rights but should be accompanied by nation-building policies that foster unity and a national culture?¹⁶ This claim assumes that, unlike nation-building policies, policies of multiculturalism are divisive; yet the Canadian policy of multiculturalism seemed to foster unity by encouraging national identity. It also assumes that policies of multiculturalism focus on minorities. However the Canadian policy of multiculturalism fostered national identity for all citizens. Knowing what the Canadian policy of multiculturalism is likely to have achieved disturbs our assumptions about such policies and their differences from nation-building policies, especially once we note how a policy of multiculturalism promoted national identity in Australia too.¹⁷

13 Kymlicka 'The Precarious Resilience on Multiculturalism in Canada', p. 125.

14 P. Norris and R. Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 182, 200.

15 Scholars who make this claim are discussed in K. McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 131.

16 K. Banting and W. Kymlicka, 'Do Policies of Multiculturalism Erode the Welfare State? In *Cultural Diversity Versus Economic Solidarity*, ed. P. Van Parijs, Doebek, University Press, 2004, pp. 251-252; D. Miller, 'Immigrants, Nations and Citizenship', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 16:4, 2012, p. 380.

17 G. Levey, *Political Theory and Australian Multiculturalism*, Berghahn Books, 2008, pp. 266-267.

Recall also that after 50 years, a multicultural conception of Canada is widely but not deeply held by all its advocates, while others reject it. Those who operate this policy of multiculturalism thus still have work to do to encourage a widely held, inclusive conception of Canada to become more universally and deeply held by all Canadians. Equally, those outside Canada who want inclusive conceptions of their own country to become widespread¹⁸ should note how long this can take, and how it is aided by a policy of multiculturalism. Such policies may seem inconceivable elsewhere, but Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka have shown how the measures of such a policy have increased in different countries despite criticism of them.¹⁹ Such policies continue to proliferate, and the Canadian policy of multiculturalism suggests they can endure and be effective at encouraging inclusive forms of national identity.

18 V. Uberoi and T. Modood, 'Inclusive Britishness- A Multiculturalist Advance', *Political Studies*, 61:1, 2013.

19 Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, 'Is There Really a Retreat From Multiculturalism Policies? New Evidence from the Multiculturalism Policy Index', *Comparative European Politics*, 11:5, 2013.

POPULAR MULTICULTURALISM AS SOCIAL CAPITAL: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

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The impact of multiculturalism in Canada stems from the policy itself, as implemented by governments, and popular support for multiculturalism as understood by the Canadian public. Popular multiculturalism embodies certain ideals for a culturally diverse society to which its adherents are committed, the source of much of the impact of multiculturalism in Canada. Popular multiculturalism is a form of social capital, in a broad sense of that term. It constitutes a resource enabling society to achieve its collective goals of enhancing relations among cultural groups (Reitz 2014). The uses of this resource, of course, depends entirely on what Canadians believe multiculturalism is all about, and this meaning has changed over time. Understanding popular multiculturalism as social capital

is essential to assessing multiculturalism's impact – past, present, and future.

Describing the popular meaning of multiculturalism requires attention to certain aspects. One is the cultural groups on which it focuses. Canadian multiculturalism policy has always emphasized immigrant groups, but the popular understanding of multiculturalism may draw inferences about its broader application to French or English linguistic communities, Indigenous peoples, or specific immigrant groups. A second aspect concerns which multicultural ideals are emphasized – cultural development, equity and equal treatment, or immigration. And a third concerns the personal imperative attached to such support, whether it includes

support for specific multiculturalism programs only or policies across departments or levels of government, and the personal commitments to multicultural ideals it may engender. Data on all these aspects are limited, so the following discussion is often speculative.

POPULAR RESPONSES TO ETHNIC CULTURE EMPHASIS (1971-1985)

Multiculturalism policy initially emphasized support for immigrant minority cultures. Multiculturalism was launched in the wake of Quebec's "Quiet Revolution," and while support for French language was being strengthened, immigrant minorities, mostly from Europe, were offered support to maintain their cultures, including languages, something many had requested.

The popular reaction outside immigrant minorities? A national survey at the time showed most people were unaware of the term "multiculturalism," but when the question was posed, they were mildly favourable. They tended to agree with the value of minority cultures both to the groups in question and society as whole. In other words, they supported the cultural emphasis in multiculturalism, despite unfamiliarity with the term. However, this support was limited. While most were fine with activities such as ethnic festivals, they did not want ethnic cultures represented in mainstream institutions such as schools, and they did not want tax money spent. There was also a linguistic divide, with francophone Canadians less favourable, seeing support for immigrant cultures as weakening their own cultural position in Canada, and preferring *interculturalisme* allowing the Quebec government to prioritize French culture.

“While most were fine with activities such as ethnic festivals, they did not want ethnic cultures represented in mainstream institutions such as schools, and they did not want tax money spent.”

Social capital created by support of the emerging multicultural policy was limited to endorsement of cultural maintenance, with no broader implications or commitments, personal or otherwise. In this context, multiculturalism policy remained low-key, and public funding did not survive many rounds of budget cuts. In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was drafted to include a clause (Section 27) on preserving "multicultural heritage," following the policy emphasis on culture. The charter was supported broadly, except in Québec.

POPULAR RESPONSES TO EQUITY EMPHASIS (1985-1995)

The initial multicultural policy mentioned but did not emphasize equality; that changed in the 1980s. Racially restrictive immigration regulations had been replaced in the 1960s with selection based on employment qualifications, opening opportunities for immigrants from all areas of the world, thus creating greater Canadian diversity in culture, race, and religion. Issues of discrimination and inequality quickly emerged, and the famous parliamentary report *Equality Now!* focused on people described by the newly coined term, "visible minorities."

A flurry of policy changes ensued. A 1983 Royal Commission on Equality in Employment recommended policies to increase equity for women, native people, disabled persons, and visible minorities. Based on the Commission's report, the 1985 *Employment Equity Act* established a proactive process for removing barriers to equal employment opportunity among federally regulated employers for all four designated groups. The 1988 *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* emphasized equity, promising not only to "recognize and promote" cultural issues, but also "to promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins" in society. The *Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act* was passed in 1991, and the multiculturalism program itself added an anti-racism component.

The popularity of linking multiculturalism to equity issues was not at all clear. European-origin immigrant minorities, the initial focus of multiculturalism policy, were more concerned with culture than equity. A 1972 survey showed only Italians and Portuguese gave equity as much support as cultural issues. And while the mainstream population's sympathy with European minorities continued, a 1991 survey in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver showed relatively less acceptance of others, a finding suggestive of racism.

For some, resistance to a stronger link between multiculturalism and equity reflected the idea that openness to cultural diversity is sufficient in itself to assure equal opportunity. In fact, the Multiculturalism Minister used this argument to support a key feature of the *Employment Equity Act* which weakened the Abella commission's recommendations. Abella recommended equity law be enforced

in a process independent of political influence. In Parliament, the Minister referred to the "goodwill inherent in Canadian society," saying a "persuasive" approach was a better way to deal with employer discrimination than the "coercive approach" used elsewhere. Abella also argued – without success – that enforcement should emphasize specific minorities most affected, such as Blacks, not the broader "visible minority" category, the preferred reference for popular Canadian thinking about discrimination. Tellingly, in Ontario, broad employment equity legislation introduced by an NDP government in 1993 prompted a powerful public backlash, leading to its swift repeal by the Conservatives in 1995. Since then, equity issues across Canada have focused on the relatively limited issue of immigrant skill utilization, which affects economic contribution to the economy, while disregarding the economic costs of discrimination to immigrants themselves.

“Emphasis on equity may have made multiculturalism policy politically vulnerable.”

Emphasis on equity may have made multiculturalism policy politically vulnerable. In the wake of controversy over Canadian novelist Neil Bissoondath's 1994 book *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, which blamed multiculturalism for limiting his career by stereotyping him in ethnic terms, the federal government seriously considered abandoning multiculturalism altogether.

POPULAR RESPONSE TO EXPANSIONIST IMMIGRATION EMPHASIS (1995-2021)

In the mid-1990s, immigration policy entered an era of expansion. Numbers of immigrants admitted annually jumped from an average of 140,000 during 1971-1990 to nearly 250,000 during 1991-2019, an increase of 75%. Surprising to many, the popularity of immigration also increased. Polling data showed continued support for immigration, and acceptance of refugees increased. Efforts by some politicians to exploit public opposition to immigration failed. The current government plans further increases to immigration. Canadian popular support stands in marked contrast to surging anti-immigrant sentiment in other countries, including the US, the UK, and France.

What accounts for this “Canadian exceptionalism”? Some credit multiculturalism, saying this Canadian ideal has promoted immigration and bolstered Canadian openness to diversity. Certainly, multiculturalism is a salient feature of Canadian identity, and the link between multiculturalism and immigration remains strong in the public mind.

Two important caveats apply here. First, while support for immigration is strong, with roots in popular multiculturalism, it does not follow that greater strength of Canadian support for immigration is necessarily explained by any greater openness to diversity. Attitudes to immigration in a country are strongly related to the specific immigrants it receives. And unlike elsewhere, Canada’s immigrants normally arrive with an invitation from government in hand. Immigrant selection emphasizes education and other assets to ensure employability and economic contribution. Accordingly,

more than others, Canadians view immigration as an economic benefit (Reitz 2012).

Canada’s geography and history also play a role. Canada does not have a border with poorer countries, and as a former colony itself, Canada does not have obligations to former colonial territories. The harsh response to the arrival on Vancouver Island of a few hundred undocumented “boat people” of Chinese origin suggests Canadians would not welcome a massive flow of undocumented immigrants such as the US has experienced at its Mexican border.

Canadians’ openness to diversity compared to other countries is best measured using survey data avoiding terms with country-specific meanings, like “multiculturalism” and “immigration”. Suddenly, Canada does not look so exceptional. International surveys show Canadians and Americans are equally likely to express support for ethnic groups to maintain their customs rather than blend into society (only a minority favoured this option in either country). They were equally likely to agree that distinct minority communities can become full members of the national society. Evidently, multicultural values are not restricted to countries with an official multicultural policy or countries where immigration is popular.

The second caveat: support for Canada’s immigration and its policy of multiculturalism does not mean its earlier reluctance to address disadvantage has been overcome. Public support for multiculturalism may have increased, but persuasive and well-publicized evidence from a 2011 study by economist Phil Oreopoulos showing continued anti-Asian racism in hiring processes by employers

prompted no increased public appetite to address it. Moreover, economic disparities of immigrants of specific origins are as great in Canada as in comparable immigration countries. Studies of Black immigrants in the US and Canada show about equal disadvantage, relative to qualifications. The same is true for Chinese, South Asian, and other minorities.

My own recently published research shows that even in societies as different in their approaches to immigration as France and Canada, after taking account of personal characteristics of immigrants, such as their race, religion and level of education, and the respective labour market and social welfare regimes, comparable groups of immigrants as frequently report discrimination, and show comparable degrees of social well-being and employment success relative to qualifications (Reitz et al. 2017; Reitz et al. forthcoming).

The social capital represented in strong support for multiculturalism during a period of expanding immigration gives politicians considerable flexibility in immigration and refugee policy, very different from the US and Europe. This does not mean that Canadians are less likely to discriminate against minorities, or more likely to favour anti-discrimination policies.

CONCLUSION

While social capital arising from support for multiculturalism in Canada has increased, its content has emphasized support for cultural diversity and expansive immigration, not equity. Will this change? There has been a surge in attention to anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in Canada, reinforced by media storms on two major stories:

the resonance in Canada of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, and the disturbing revelations about the abuse of Indigenous children forced to attend residential schools. A recent national survey on race relations (Environics Institute, 2019) identified Blacks and Indigenous peoples as by far the most affected by racism and discrimination.

“Multiculturalism has not provided the social capital useful as a political resource to address discrimination and disadvantage in general, and has not emphasized any obligations to groups experiencing the most virulent racism, Indigenous peoples and Blacks.”

Such evidence of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism has punctured Canadian pride in celebrating diversity. But does the social capital inherent in the support for multiculturalism encourage greater public interest in *actually addressing* this racism? I think not. Multiculturalism has not provided the social capital useful as a political resource to address discrimination and disadvantage in general, and has not emphasized any obligations to groups experiencing the most virulent racism, Indigenous peoples and Blacks. Even today, while acknowledging problems facing Blacks and Indigenous peoples, most Canadians describe race relations and the treatment of racial minorities as positive overall. If this does not change, multiculturalism risks becoming irrelevant to addressing anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in Canada.

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STRUCTURAL FAULT LINES



THE MIDDLE-CLASS CHARACTER OF CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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The “Canadian model” of large-scale immigration and official multiculturalism is highly regarded by international organizations like the OECD and national governments looking to manage demographic and economic growth in the 21st century. Canada’s 1971 multiculturalism policy and, later, the 1985 Multiculturalism Act aimed to facilitate the economic integration of immigrants from diverse national and ethnic origins into federal government departments. It also served the broader symbolic function of re-envisioning Canadian national identity as ethnically inclusive, which is seen as important for empowering immigrants to participate fully in social and political institutions (see, e.g., Bloemraad 2006). This combination of economic, political and cultural integration is encompassed in Kymlicka’s (1995) notion of multiculturalism as “multicultural citizenship.” By removing symbolic barriers that might otherwise prevent individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds

from claiming full membership in the national community, multicultural citizenship facilitates their ability to exercise the economic, social, and political rights attached to that status.

“While ethnically and culturally inclusive, a multicultural citizenship that reserves full membership for individuals who display middle-class traits and/or demonstrate economic utility in a globalized economy can have negative societal consequences.”

This article reflects on the legacy of multicultural citizenship in light of evolving insights into the quality of membership it envisions and its poten-

tial for inclusion and exclusion. It focuses specifically on challenges posed by the rise of what scholars have called “neoliberal multiculturalism” and “middle-class multiculturalism.” While there are subtle differences between these two contemporary iterations of multiculturalism, they both point to increasing socio-economic selectivity in who is considered a full member of the Canadian national collective. While ethnically and culturally inclusive, a multicultural citizenship that reserves full membership for individuals who display middle-class traits and/or demonstrate economic utility in a globalized economy can have negative societal consequences. It has the potential to erode socio-economic solidarity and public support for immigrants who tend to be defined in terms of their lack of economic utility, like family immigrants and refugees.

THE PROMISE OF MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship denotes the relationship between an individual and a state in terms of legal status, rights, political participation, and belonging (Bloemraad et al. 2008). These elements of citizenship are interrelated. In the modern era, citizenship is conferred by nation states while belonging, or perceived membership in the nation represented by the state, can affect the ability of individuals to exercise their rights and participate in a range of institutions. This is because “nations” are often envisioned as relatively homogenous communities that share traits such as ethnic origins, language, religion, and history. The promise of “multicultural citizenship” lies in its redefinition of the “nation” as ethnically, linguistically and religiously inclusive, and the knock-on effect of greater access to rights and participation for all. Moreover, Kymlicka

(2017) argues, it furthers a core aim of citizenship as envisioned by theorist T.H. Marshall: the promise of “socio-economic solidarity.” This refers to citizenship serving as a tool for redressing market-generated inequalities, by ensuring that individuals of both low and high socio-economic status have the legal and symbolic means to participate fully in society.

“In addition to economic utility, that is, an individual’s concrete value in the labour market, I argue that belonging in Canada’s multicultural community is also contingent on displaying middle-class traits.”

MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP AS “NEOLIBERAL” OR “MIDDLE-CLASS”

Recent insights into the quality of multicultural citizenship and a social, political, and cultural project could have implications for assessing that concept’s potential for creating a national community that is more inclusive of diversity, especially if diversity refers to socio-economic differences, not just ethnic or cultural ones. These insights characterize contemporary Canadian multiculturalism as “neoliberal” or “middle-class” multiculturalism.

“Neoliberal multiculturalism” reframes the social value of ethnic diversity in terms of its economic utility (Kymlicka 2017; Winter 2014). In other words, diverse ethnic origins are considered valuable insofar as they give workers assets for competing in the globalized world, like linguistic or

cultural competencies for engaging in transnational economic cooperation and intercultural communication. As a result, recognition of full membership in the multicultural national community is reserved for individuals whose education, training, occupation, language and cultural capital make them economically relevant in a national and global context.

The concept of “middle-class multiculturalism” offers a complementary, though slightly different, diagnosis of how ethnic diversity is valued (Elrick 2020; in press). In addition to economic utility, that is, an individual’s concrete value in the labour market, I argue that belonging in Canada’s multicultural community is also contingent on displaying middle-class traits. These traits are framed in socio-economic terms (e.g., wealth, occupational prestige); cultural terms (e.g., education, manners); and moral terms. While the range of moral distinctions denoting the middle class varies over time and across national contexts, Lamont (1992, 34-5) identifies a relatively stable range of applicable ones, including ambition, dependability, self-reliance, discipline, perseverance, and self-mastery. I, furthermore, argue that both economic utility and middle-class socio-economic status are important selection criteria that became institutionalized in the 1967 Immigration Regulations that universalized skilled worker and family immigration. For the high-level immigration bureaucrats who developed this policy, this focus on middle-class traits for selecting individuals from diverse origins emerged as a solution for making large-scale, multicultural immigration a socially and politically viable prospect. In their words, this solution would “enable Canada to give a striking example to the world and to adopt a position of leadership at this difficult

time when racial problems are so pressing” (quoted in Elrick 2020, 14).

THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SELECTIVITY FOR MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

“The concepts of ‘neoliberal’ and ‘middle-class’ multiculturalism both point to the intertwining of race and social class in the Canadian state’s efforts to manage immigrant diversity.”

The concepts of “neoliberal” and “middle-class” multiculturalism both point to the intertwining of race and social class in the Canadian state’s efforts to manage immigrant diversity. When the OECD (2019, 13) lauds Canada’s economic immigration program as a “role model for successful migration management,” it is likely pointing to the benefits of such an intertwining. However, there are also downsides that have potentially large implications for social stratification, to which I now turn.

EROSION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The symbolic socio-economic selectivity of Canada’s immigration program, and the demographic multiculturalism it produced, can conceivably shape ideas of who is or is not admissible to Canada as an immigrant or refugee in the eyes of the general public. As Blinder (2015) argues in reference to the United Kingdom, members of the general public formulate opinions on immigration policy based on “imagined immigration,” that is,

the picture people have in the heads of who immigrants are. Insofar as public opinion influences immigration policymaking, public perceptions of who immigrants are can affect the kinds of immigrants a government admits.

There is reason to believe that, thanks to the admissions policies put in place in the 1960s, the Canadian public has become accustomed to associating “good” multiculturalism with “middle-class multiculturalism.” In his analysis of how immigration policy is depicted in Canadian media, Bauder (2011) shows that the immigration and settlement of highly skilled and affluent foreigners is generally taken for granted. Public opinion surveys, like the one conducted by Environics (2019), consistently reveal that Canadians’ positive overall attitude towards immigration rests, in part, on the widely held belief that immigrants are good for the Canadian economy.

If support for immigration among the Canadian general public presumes middle-class socio-economic status and economic utility, it seems logical that immigrant types not associated with these qualities in the public imagination could be vulnerable to losing support. Entry categories that are formally “noneconomic”, (e.g., for family members, recognized refugees, and asylum applicants) select individuals for admission to Canada based on their presumed *lack* of economic utility and high socio-economic status. If public opinion supports restrictions for family immigrants, the rights of Canadian citizens and permanent residents to family life, including to have an extended immigrant family, will be further curtailed. If it supports further restrictions on refugee and asylum-seeker admissions, a large proportion of which are from

the Global South, the few remaining pathways for mobility across international borders as a means of escaping economic, political and environmental hardship will be increasing blocked and vast global inequalities exacerbated.

EROSION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SOLIDARITY

Turning from immigration to Canadian society in general, both “neoliberal” and “middle-class” multiculturalism may be fostering a decline in social solidarity (Kymlicka 2017; Elrick in press). This results from social closure along status lines, reserving notions of full membership in the Canadian nation for members of the economically useful middle class. Recent developments under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau suggest how deeply “middle class” has become internalized as a marker of Canadian national identity. In December 2019, the new post of Minister of Middle-Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance was created. That year, a Liberal Party document promised to build “a strong middle class,” help “working Canadians get ahead,” support entrepreneurs’ efforts to “succeed and grow,” and to make “life more affordable for middle-class Canadians,” all without actually defining “middle class” (Liberal Party of Canada 2019, 6, 11, 19, 7). By excluding more economically and socially vulnerable groups in Canadian society (e.g.,

“Turning from immigration to Canadian society in general, both “neoliberal” and “middle-class” multiculturalism may be fostering a decline in social solidarity.”

the working class or many First Nations communities) from the middle-class national community, the socioeconomic solidarity promised by citizenship is reserved for the already advantaged.

CONCLUSION

As Canada's multiculturalism policy marks its 50th anniversary, a broad range of scholarship has emerged to explore its nature, benefits, and downsides. This article has focused on multiculturalism, not in the form of the 1971 policy, but as a demographic description and ethos that became anchored in Canadian immigration policy in the 1960s and thereby changed collective notions of who belongs to the Canadian nation. Moreover, it has highlighted the socio-economic selectivity of this ethos and its potentially detrimental effects on social equality, cohesion, and solidarity, both within and across Canada's borders. Governments and international organizations that see the "Canadian model" of mass immigration and ("middle-class") multiculturalism as a panacea for managing the social, political, and cultural challenges posed by immigration management would do well to note the under-recognized forms of exclusion that it can perpetuate.

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GUY ROCHER, UNREPENTANT CRITIC OF CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

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Guy Rocher is one of Canada's greatest sociologists. A member of the Parent Commission that inspired educational reform in Quebec, a former vice-chair of the Canada Council for the Arts and a Companion of the Order of Canada, he has worked all his life for the democratization of public institutions and social justice. Yet he was one of the first academics to propose a critique of Canadian multiculturalism. In 1972, Rocher judged this concept to be "ambiguous, erroneous and dangerous in its more or less long-term consequences¹." Nothing less.

Rocher's opposition to multiculturalism policy seems all the more surprising given that he is one of those who have worked hardest, since the 1950s, to recognize the diversity of Quebec society. He

has always believed that Quebec should be open to international influences and view the diversity of its cultures as an asset. Indeed, he often evokes these views in the face of the criticism on the part of colleagues who are quick to equate his critique of multiculturalism with an unforgivable withdrawal into oneself.

Rocher readily admits that Quebecers are not free of xenophobia. But, for him, the problem raised by multicultural policy is not primarily a matter of personal opinion. We can agree that Indigenous peoples, for example, who are reluctant to accept the Canadian government's multicultural policy are not, on this account, more racist than other citizens.²

1 The text was reprinted in Guy Rocher, « *Les ambiguïtés d'un Canada bilingue et multiculturel* [1972] », in *Le Québec en mutation*, Montréal, Les Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 1973.

2 Haresamudram Srikanth, "Multiculturalism and the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 47, No. 23, 9 June 2012, pp. 17-21.

“ In Rocher’s case, his criticism of multiculturalism stems from a reading of the power relationships within the federation.”

In Rocher’s case, his criticism of multiculturalism stems from a reading of the power relationships within the federation. He criticizes this policy on several counts: for drowning the Quebec nation in a pan-Canadian identity, for stooping to a socio-psychological vision of integration, for contributing to the assimilation of Francophones and for promoting the Balkanization of the country. This text presents a summary of these four criticisms.

DROWNING THE QUEBEC FISH IN CANADIAN WATERS *AD MARE USQUE AD MARE*

Rocher argues that multiculturalism runs counter to the bicultural and binational nature of Canadian society, as it was enshrined, in his view, starting in 1867. Like many people of his generation, he sees Canada as a country composed of two “societies”, two “communities” or two dominant “cultures”, English and French, both of which constitute the “foundations” of the country. He thus echoes the deliberations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (also known as the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission), which, while taking into account the contribution of all ethnic

groups “to the cultural enrichment of Canada,” was charged, at the time of its creation, with “recommending measures to be taken to ensure that the Canadian Confederation would develop according to the principle of equality between the two peoples who founded it.”

“ Although Rocher began to include Indigenous peoples in his analysis in the 1990s, he generally embraces the myth of the pact between two founding peoples.”

Although Rocher began to include Indigenous peoples in his analysis in the 1990s, he generally embraces the myth of the pact between two founding peoples, a political construction that has been used since the late 19th century to justify certain constitutional concessions³. It seems to him that this conception of a two-nation country best reflects Canada’s history, as the earliest historical roots of multiculturalism cannot compete with the thousand-year-old ancestry of cultural communities in China or Russia. He certainly does not believe, as Trudeau stated in his declaration to the House of Commons establishing multiculturalism as official government policy, “that cultural pluralism is the essence of Canadian identity⁴.”

Rocher believes that the vision of a multicultural country was accepted by English Canadians

3 Stéphane Paquin, *L’invention d’un mythe. Le pacte entre deux peuples fondateurs*, Montréal, VLB éditeur, 1999.

4 Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, Declaration in the House of Commons, 8 October 1971.

because, by 1971, there was no such thing as an “Anglo-Saxon” community⁵ from the time of the Second World War on. The former colonial elite, now in the minority, was quick to embrace multiculturalism because it offered a “divide and rule” strategy not unlike the one it had followed as a “mercenary” in the service of the British Empire, allowing it to continue to hold the top spot in the “vertical mosaic” without having to be challenged in its privileges⁶. At the time of its adoption, multiculturalism was for Rocher, in other words, perfectly suited to the historical aims of big business that shaped the country.

AGAINST A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL VISION

Rocher adheres to the historical and sociological perspective of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission. He starts from the observation that the two communities, English and French, were at the origin of Canada and endowed the country with social and political structures specific to this union, including the federal system (forgetting in passing to recall that the federal system has been adopted in many other countries without national duality, including the United States). He also acknowledges that immigrants eventually integrate into one or the other of the two linguistic communities, from both the language and cultural points of view. He

readily agrees with André Laurendeau and Davidson Dunton who believed, as he does, that in order to avoid a major political crisis, it is necessary to place “the two pillars of the Canadian nation based on English-speaking culture and French-speaking culture on an equal footing,” by recognizing, “duality as the fundamental reality of Canada”⁷.

According to Rocher, in turning its back on this appeal, the government of Pierre-Elliott Trudeau chose to view the problem of Canadian unity from a psycho-sociological perspective. Trudeau asserts that “[o]ne of the fundamental needs of humanity is a sense of belonging” and that ethnic groups fulfill such a need. “Ethnic pluralism can help us defeat or avoid the homogenization and depersonalization of mass society.”⁸ In addition to combating contemporary anomie, “ethnic pluralism” is useful for the consolidation of Canadian unity, according to Trudeau. He elaborates:

*“The more secure we feel in a given social context, the freer we are to explore our identity beyond that context. Ethnic groups give people a sense of belonging that better equips them to deal with the rest of society than they could as isolated individuals. Loyalty to one’s own culture does not necessarily, and normally does not, diminish one’s even greater loyalty to community and country.”*⁹

5 George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, 40th Anniversary Edition, Montréal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005.

6 John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965.

7 André Laurendeau et Davidson Dunton, “Rapport préliminaire de la Commission royale d’enquête sur le bilinguisme et biculturalisme”, Ottawa, Imprimeur de la Reine, 1965, p. 95.

8 Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, Declaration in the House of Commons, 8 October 1971.

9 Ibid.

“He is quick to observe how groups that are true to their own culture are celebrated by Trudeau only when it leads them to cultivate an even greater attachment to Canada, and chastised when it leads them to claim special collective rights.”

For Rocher, this may be true from a psychosocial perspective, but it is highly questionable when transposed onto the level of political power relations. He is quick to observe how groups that are true to their own culture are celebrated by Trudeau only when it leads them to cultivate an even greater attachment to Canada, and chastised when it leads them to claim special collective rights. How many English Canadians, he inquires, consider Quebecers who play folklore to be attractive, while viewing as racist those who advocate for the Parti Québécois?

There is only one group in Canada that constitutes a majority in one province (which excludes the territories) and a minority in the country: the francophones of Quebec. It is this group, therefore, that is most vehemently denounced by other Canadians, especially since there is a strong English-speaking minority within the province's borders. Rocher sees the constitutional debate as an illustration of Pierre Elliott Trudeau's folkloristic conception of multiculturalism: Trudeau has never accepted the granting of special status to Quebec, being prepared to

welcome “loyalty to one's own culture” only insofar as it does not, as the quotation above says, diminish but rather increases “the even greater loyalty to... the country”.

AN ASSIMILATION MACHINE

Rocher disassociates himself from his colleagues who present multiculturalism as “the ultimate in recognition and respect for diversity”.¹⁰ Behind their pious speeches, he believes he detects a darker vision. In reality, he writes, “multiculturalism is a facade, a window, a screen behind which an efficient assimilation of all diversities is exercised in the great English-speaking whole that is Canada.”¹¹ For Rocher, pretending that Canada is not a country where the English language reigns and English-speaking culture dominates is an illusion. There are parallels to be drawn between the 1969 White Paper (which sought to make First Nations people Canadian citizens like everyone else) and the multiculturalism of 1971.

“There are concrete reasons why the vast majority of immigrants who arrive in Canada are eager to learn English and choose to gravitate towards the Anglo-Canadian world, even in Quebec.”

By claiming that the interactions between the various cultural groups in Canada are built on free

10 Guy Rocher, “Du pluralisme à l'égalitarisme. Le multiculturalisme canadien feint de respecter la multiculturalité ethnique”, *Le Devoir*, 18 décembre 1997, p. A-7.

11 Ibid.

mutual enrichment, Rocher believes that the reality of power relations in the country is being masked. Multiculturalism pretends that the Ukrainian or Vietnamese immigrant who settles in Alberta has a free choice to learn French or English. There are concrete reasons why the vast majority of immigrants who arrive in Canada are eager to learn English and choose to gravitate towards the Anglo-Canadian world, even in Quebec.

To further counter the nationalist fervour in Quebec, Pierre-Elliott Trudeau wanted to distinguish between language and culture: he therefore put forward a policy in favour of bilingualism that was separate from that in favour of multiculturalism. For Rocher, the two cannot so easily be separated. In his October 1971 statement, Trudeau promised to provide non-official language textbooks to ethnic groups who requested them, because, he argued, "the acquisition of the language of one's ancestors is an important part of the development of a cultural identity." Not only was Trudeau announcing measures for the maintenance of non-official languages that he had never agreed to for the maintenance of French in Quebec, but he also recognized in such a statement the connection between language and culture, after having denied this same link when it came to the bilingualism and biculturalism of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission.

For Rocher, there may be bilingual individuals, but there is no bilingual culture in Canada. In fact, few Canadians are bilingual. Without sociological roots, the government's bilingualism seems artifi-

cial, abstract, disembodied. As a result, Canadians' support for bilingual programs is likely to decline as the proportion of Francophones in the various regions of Canada decreases. Rocher fears that the official status of French will one day be treated as a relic of another age and that we will wonder why, if the country is not culturally bilingual, we should care about French in provinces where it is the seventh language spoken in the home.

BALKANIZATION

Rocher's fourth major reservation about multiculturalism is that it cannot be the foundation of a nation. Rocher rejects a multiculturalism that not only "does not suit the situation of Quebec", insofar as this model "does not take into account the centuries-old dynamics in place", but also "leads to the multiplication of real socio-ethnic ghettos."¹²

“According to him, multiculturalism would result in an explosion of interest groups and pressure groups that would all strive to claim specific rights and programs for each segment of the population.”

According to him, multiculturalism would result in an explosion of interest groups and pressure groups that would all strive to claim specific rights

12 Gérard Bouchard, François Rocher et Guy Rocher, *Les francophones québécois: un essai qui fait le pari d'une francophonie moderne*, La Presse, 7 novembre 1991, B.3. Gérard Bouchard, François Rocher et Guy Rocher, *Les francophones québécois*, Montréal, Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, 1991.

and programs for each segment of the population. "The democracy of the majority is gradually being replaced by a democracy of minorities, most certainly a democracy of interest groups and pressure groups. This is the most fundamental fragmentation of contemporary society."¹³ Encouraging the multiplication of ethnic groups will lead to the fracturing of the "central cultural core" of the Canadian nation. Rocher's image is that of a nebula without a "centre" or "common denominator", and therefore without direction. He doubts that a nation can develop in a vigorous and healthy way under such conditions.¹⁴ It is, moreover, interesting to note that Rocher turns to the independentist option around 1972 among other things to escape the social and cultural atomization to which, according to him, the Trudeauist ideology must necessarily lead.

Not without paradox, Rocher imagines that national unity would be better served across Canada by a policy that emphasizes the central role of two "core" communities and invites other ethnic groups to join in. In short, national and cultural duality would be more socially cohesive than multiculturalism for Canada. On the other hand, in Quebec itself, the "national home" of French-speaking Canadians, Rocher argues that the state must implement a policy of "cultural convergence. This Quebec policy of integration would recognize the multi-ethnic character of Quebec society, while making French the "normal" language of public activities and articulating itself around a "principal component"

inherited from the French colonization of the 17th and 18th centuries. This idea was reflected in the Quebec Cultural Development Policy of the first René Lévesque government in 1977.

To ward off the charge of ethnicism, the Francophone culture that serves as the focus of this convergence is, in Rocher's mind, stripped of genealogical, historical and religious references: it is restricted to the ability to communicate in French, adherence to the fundamental values of Quebec society (democracy, tolerance, equality), a basic knowledge of Quebec's realities and institutions, respect for certain symbols of public life (national holiday and flag), the appreciation of the many non-French contributions to the formation of Quebec culture since the 17th century (Indigenous peoples, Anglophones, etc.). In short, Rocher makes the case, as he writes with Gérard Bouchard and François Rocher, for "a modern Francophonie, nourished by humanist values, carrying original collective orientations, respectful of both the ethnic plurality of Quebec and the cultural dynamics that have been in place for nearly four centuries."¹⁵

Gérard Bouchard evokes a principle of "precedence" in favour of Quebec's founding culture, given its fragility in the North American context. Without going that far, Rocher believes that Quebec must promote its French culture through public policies. "It is necessary that an identity be asserted and that the majority use the sources of power that it has at

13 Guy Rocher, "Hégémonie, fragmentation et mondialisation de la culture", *Horizons philosophiques*, 11(1), 2000, 133.

14 Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, Toronto, Penguin Books, 1994.

15 Gérard Bouchard, François Rocher et Guy Rocher, "Les francophones québécois: un essai qui fait le pari d'une francophonie moderne", *La Presse*, 7 novembre 1991, B.3. Gérard Bouchard, François Rocher et Guy Rocher, *Les francophones québécois*, Montréal, Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, 1991.

its disposal to do so.”¹⁶ French-speaking Quebecers, while opening up to all ethnic groups, must first see them in a complementary relationship.

WHAT FUTURE FOR MULTICULTURALISM IN QUEBEC?

Rocher’s arguments against multiculturalism have been outlined in this article. Everyone will be able to assess their value and merit at a time when we are debating the possibility of formulating an original Quebec model of coexistence. For Rocher, it is clear that if such a model is to exist, it cannot do so without the recognition of national entities, in addition to that of ethnocultural diversity. Obviously, the search for this balance between individual and collective rights is far from easy, as the tumultuous debate about reasonable accommodation in Quebec has recently shown...

16 François Rocher et Guy Rocher, “La culture québécoise en devenir: les défis du pluralisme”, dans Fernand Ouellet et Michel Pagé (dir.), *Pluriethnicité, éducation et société. Construire un espace commun*, Québec, IQRC, p. 73.

RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE, LAW, AND THE SILENCES OF MULTICULTURALISM

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Multiculturalism depends for its cogency and normative appeal on a particular vision of the character and operation of law. That this understanding of the character of law in a liberal constitutional order is fundamentally naïve does not compel the abandonment of the goods associated with multiculturalism, particularly when compared with many of its historical alternatives. It is, however, cause for demanding clear-sightedness about what the limits – both descriptive and prescriptive – of multiculturalism in certain domains may be.

The domain that interests me in this short essay is multiculturalism's relationship to religious difference. And the limit at issue is that multiculturalism

turns out to have said little of interest, and provided little of use, on the most difficult questions raised by religious pluralism in a modern liberal state.

The appeal and importance of multiculturalism as it relates to religious difference is in establishing the state's baseline commitment to equal regard for religious groups, and a background sense that the polity is strengthened by the sociological fact of a broad range of beliefs, tastes, and pursuits. In matters of religion, this broad posture of equality is meaningful. It forecloses a confessional state committed to the dominance of a single religious culture, calls for a basic form of toleration toward difference, provides an ideological warrant to root

* This essay was authored in English and translated into French by the publishers of Canadian Issues. The author extends his gratitude to Matthew Traister (JD Candidate, Osgoode Hall Law School) for his superb research assistance and editorial comments.

out instances of state-imposed disadvantage and unfair privilege, and is at odds with more anti-religious, *laïc* forms of secularism (including the form of the secular being advanced in Quebec through its legislation regulating religious symbols and clothing).

“ Responses to religious difference voiced from the register of multiculturalism turn out to be both prescriptively anemic and endemically disappointing for religious groups that diverge significantly from the metaphysical and normative mainstream.”

In this, multiculturalism says certain important things about the state’s posture vis-à-vis different cultural groups. Indeed, in its early religious freedom cases under the *Charter*, the Supreme Court of Canada appealed to multiculturalism precisely to underwrite this posture of equality and toleration.¹ But such questions of intolerance and evenhandedness as among cultural groups are no longer – if they ever were – the deeper problematics presented by religious difference. As I will explain, viewed from the perspective of the constitutional contestation over religious freedom, the most vexing contemporary questions raised by religious difference and pluralism are about contesting the boundaries and limits of public normativity, a normativity that

law expresses and projects. “Multiculturalism” has offered little to the legal analysis of these problems. The result is that responses to religious difference voiced from the register of multiculturalism turn out to be both prescriptively anemic and endemically disappointing for religious groups that diverge significantly from the metaphysical and normative mainstream.

Multiculturalism’s descriptive and prescriptive deficits in respect of religious difference are incorrigible features, not implementational defects. This fact is traceable to a gap between the cultural character of liberal constitutionalism and the role that multiculturalism assigns to law. Multiculturalism presupposes/desires the existence of a tool that can embody and implement it, but that is not itself also a problem of intercultural encounter. It hopes that law will be that tool. It is not. Otherwise put, multiculturalism’s muteness on the challenging issues of religious difference is intrinsic to a flawed casting of law in the logic of multiculturalism.

CONSTITUTIONALISM IN THE DOMAIN OF CULTURE

“ The conceit of law’s distance and autonomy from culture renders multiculturalism mute on the most difficult issues of religious freedom. ”

The account of law that underwrites both popu-

¹ See e.g., *R v Big M Drug Mart Ltd*, [1985] 1 S.C.R. 295 [Big M]; *R v Edwards Books*, [1986] 2 SCR 713. The Court has continued to use multiculturalism as rhetorical underpinning for religious freedom (see, e.g., *Syndicat Northcrest v Amselem*, 2004 SCC 47; *Multani c Marguerite-Bourgeoys (Commission scolaire)*, 2006 SCC 6) but also sometimes as a concept that circumscribes the scope of the right (see, e.g., *Alberta v Hutterian Brethren of Wilson Colony*, 2009 SCC 37; *Loyola High School v Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 12).

lar and most academic treatments of religion and multiculturalism places it on a managerial perch above the cultural fray.² From this view atop culture, law is positioned (constitutional commitments to religious freedom and equality in hand) to assess and address the points of friction that arise from religious difference, and to do so in a manner informed by the dual commitments to evenhandedness and toleration that multiculturalism counsels. But this view of law's relation to the domain of culture is fundamentally naïve, and the conceit of law's distance and autonomy from culture renders multiculturalism mute on the most difficult issues of religious freedom. This view fails to acknowledge the way in which liberal constitutionalism is itself a thick cultural form, understood as a framework of precommitments, ideas, and practices used to make sense of experience.

I develop and defend this claim and its consequences at length in *Law's Religion*,³ noting the aesthetic, ritual, and ideological richness of the culture of Canadian constitutionalism. One element bears underscoring for the purposes of this essay. When we focus on how issues of religious freedom are analyzed in the jurisprudence, it becomes clear that religion never appears directly before the law. Rather, law exercises its power in thrall to a particular view of the essential nature and value of

religion, a view that is culturally rich, informed as it is by the history and commitments of liberalism. As I explain in *Law's Religion*, that rendering of religion understands its subject as essentially individual, an expression of autonomy and choice, and fundamentally private in nature. Religion that conforms with this understanding – liberal religion – is tolerable religion. It is the religion that is free.⁴ But religion is not only what law imagines it to be. The adjudication of religion is, thus, something that takes place from within culture, not above culture.

Understanding law as itself a cultural form has several important consequences for our view of law and religious difference. Multiculturalism loses its acultural managerial tool and the encounter of law and religion shows itself as a cross-cultural encounter. But multiculturalism says little about the character or nature of this encounter. We also see that toleration is a more limited virtue than we might otherwise imagine, both bounded by law's ideas about the nature of religion and (with this) more invested with power and domination than we generally care to acknowledge.⁵ We can begin to appreciate why the experience of law for some religious groups and individuals is of something far more assimilative and forceful than the story of multiculturalism can account for. And we see that the most difficult constitutional issues raised

2 See e.g. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

3 Benjamin L. Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

4 Others have made sympathetic claims: see e.g. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

5 Indeed, Canadian courts have increasingly moved away from toleration as the idea underwriting religious freedom, reaching instead for the concept of state neutrality. I discuss the reasons for this in Benjamin L. Berger, "Religious Diversity, Education, and the 'Crisis' in State Neutrality," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 29, no. 1 (2014): 103–22.

by religious individuals and communities are not about their treatment by the state vis-à-vis other religions. They are about their challenge to legal culture itself.

“But today, the most vexing questions raised by religious freedom are about challenging the adequacy and universality of the culture of law’s rule and seeking a sphere of normative independence from public authority.”

THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

The early years of constitutional debate about religious difference under the *Charter* largely focused on identifying and removing instances of the legal expression of Christian privilege in Canadian society.⁶ Multiculturalism says something – in the register of equal treatment – about these kinds of matters, which surely still arise from time to time.⁷ But today, the most vexing questions raised by religious freedom are about challenging the adequacy and universality of the culture of law’s rule and seeking a sphere of normative independence from public authority. Though sometimes presented as matters of equal treatment, their deep logic is a

challenge to the reach and pervasiveness of law and public authority, rather than an appeal to them for regard and toleration. And on these matters – owing precisely to its studied naïveté about the character of law – multiculturalism is ill-equipped to assist.

Two examples from recent case law are vivid demonstrations of this deeper, more fundamental, kind of question posed by religious difference.⁸ In the most recent instalment in the legal disputes prompted by Trinity Western University, the courts were called upon to decide whether a policy within TWU that discriminated against sexual minorities was a legitimate basis for law societies to refuse to accredit TWU’s proposed law school.⁹ Ultimately, the legal issue crystallized around the question of whether the law societies’ refusal to accredit TWU’s law school was reasonable, reflecting a proportionate balancing of freedom of religion and the avoidance of discrimination. A majority of the Supreme Court held that it was. But the school was not seeking a fair balancing of public norms; rather, it was arguing for independence from those norms and to be allowed to operate beyond the reach of a legal system that channels and enforces them. This is not about evenhandedness or neutrality. This is, at its core, a demand for law and legal normativity to withdraw from itself to allow cultural independence – an extraordinarily complicated and challenging ask that is very much in tension with the way that law is imagined in the story of multiculturalism.

6 See e.g. *Big M, Zylberberg v Sudbury School of Education* (1988), 52 DLR (4th) 577.

7 See e.g. *Mouvement laïque québécois v Saguenay (City)*, 2015 SCC 16.

8 For fuller discussions of these cases and how they mark out the frontier for religious freedom cases, see Benjamin L. Berger, “Liberal Constitutionalism and the Unsettling of the Secular,” in *Research Handbook on Law and Religion*, ed. Rex Ahdar (Northampton, Mass: Edward Elgar, 2018), 198–220.

9 *Law Society of British Columbia v Trinity Western University*, 2018 SCC 32; *Trinity Western University v Law Society of Upper Canada*, 2018 SCC 33.

In certain respects, the case of *Ktunaxa Nation v British Columbia*¹⁰ shows even more starkly the heuristic and ethical limits of multiculturalism when set against the most difficult questions posed by religious diversity. Toward the end of a long process of negotiation and resistance surrounding the development of a massive ski resort in British Columbia, the Ktunaxa Nation chose to pose a freedom of religion objection. They argued that the state-authorized development of this ski resort would drive Grizzly Bear Spirit from the area, fundamentally impairing their religious beliefs and practices. On the strength of the case law to that point, the claim appeared compelling. However, this argument asked the courts to absorb a set of non-liberal metaphysical and ontological commitments into its analysis, and ones that, taken seriously, would put the shoe very much on the other foot: it would significantly impair Crown authority over, and use of, public land. The Court did not – it seems it could not – go there. The majority created a tortured doctrinal limitation to reject the claim as outside the scope of freedom of religion. A minority opinion acknowledged the fundamental breach of the Ktunaxa's religious freedom, but nevertheless held that the need to protect public authority over land outweighed even this evisceration of the right.

The Ktunaxa's religious freedom claim was, of course, the sublimation of Indigenous sovereignty claims – fundamental challenges to state authority – that have found little success elsewhere in our constitutional order. That religious freedom is a hospitable home for such claims is telling. As I have argued elsewhere, there is an abiding element of sovereignty at the heart of claims of religious freedom, something that reaches far beyond questions of equal treatment, toleration, and neutrality, and raises questions that are unsettling to liberal constitutionalism.¹¹ This fundamental contestation over sovereignty – or fundamental independence from state authority – is the deep logic of *TWU*, *Ktunaxa*, and the most difficult questions being raised by religious difference. It is also something about which multiculturalism has precious little to say.

THE NEED TO SAY MORE

Despite valiant efforts to suggest otherwise,¹² multiculturalism is just not equipped to take us where we need to go in meeting the most urgent and vexing questions raised by deep religious difference. In this respect, as a concept, it is not unlike “secularism”: both are expressions of a broader habit of hiding the unruly lived experience of religion and

10 2017 SCC 54. For a detailed discussion of the implications of this case for Indigenous religious freedom, see Benjamin L. Berger, “Is State Neutrality Bad for Indigenous Religious Freedom?” (July 1, 2019) in Jeffrey Hewitt, Beverly Jacobs, and Richard Moon, eds., *Indigenous Spirituality and Religious Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Forthcoming), Osgoode Legal Studies Research Paper, Available at [SSRN](https://ssrn.com/abstract=3411111). On the topic of Indigenous religious freedom in Canada more generally, see Nicholas Shrubsole, *What Has No Place, Remains: The Challenges for Indigenous Religious Freedom in Canada Today* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

11 Benjamin L. Berger, “Liberal Constitutionalism and the Unsettling of the Secular,” in *Research Handbook on Law and Religion*, ed. Rex Ahdar (Northampton, Mass: Edward Elgar, 2018), 198–220.

12 See e.g. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*; Ayelet Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions: Cultural Differences and Women's Rights*, Contemporary Political Theory (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

modern constitutionalism under the tidy marquee of a principle. We are coming to appreciate how very little, indeed, broad invocations of legal principle or policy illuminate the social and political experiences of religious diversity and, moreover, how they can obstruct our view of the human and community bonds and relationships that subsist beneath such claims. We can be both multiculturalists, valuing the dispositions and postures toward difference that it encourages, and clear-eyed about its limits and blind spots.

“ Global experience in matters of religious freedom teaches that there is no avoiding the difficult questions that circulate around the acceptable geography of state power.”

Global experience in matters of religious freedom teaches that there is no avoiding the difficult questions that circulate around the acceptable geography of state power. Our legal and political responses to religious freedom and equality claims must thicken up. From a starting point of acknowledging the cultural force of liberal constitutionalism, they must say much more about the substantive values the state ought to pursue and, most importantly, how far they can be pursued. In this, humility and perspicuity are key: humility born of an appreciation for the experience of communities with illiberal worldviews and normative horizons living within the culture of law's rule, and perspicuity in respect of the cultural limits of legal toleration. Neither is a strength of multiculturalism.

FUTURE IMPERATIVES



MULTICULTURALISM @ 50: THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACK CANADIANS

JEAN AUGUSTINE

Jean Augustine made history in 1993 as the first African-Canadian woman to be elected to Canada's House of Commons as the Member of Parliament from the Greater Toronto Area constituency of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. She was reelected in four consecutive elections, serving as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister of Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, and securing unanimous legislative support to pass a historic motion designating February as Black History Month in Canada. The Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community and Diaspora, aiming to advance access, equity and inclusivity to education through community engagement and collaborative action was launched at York University in Toronto to honour her work and commitment. In 2007, Augustine was called on by the Government of Ontario to lead an initiative commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the 1807 British Slave Trade Act. Later that year, she was appointed the first-ever Fairness Commissioner for the Province of Ontario. In 2021, Ms. Augustine was Lifetime Achievement recipient for the Maclean's Parliamentarian of the Year Awards.

LOOKING BACK

Fifty years ago, under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, I collaborated in the development and launch of Canada's official multiculturalism policy, Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework. At that time, the main objectives were to encourage inter-ethnic dialogue, promote the retention of cultural groups' identities, overcome barriers to their participation in Canadian society and help immigrants to become proficient in one of the two official languages.

“Diversity is our strength and when we embrace inclusion and equity, practice openness, mutual respect and compassion for others in our communities, then we all flourish.”

Reflecting on the past 50 years of Canada's multiculturalism policy, I remain steadfast in the belief that it was the correct choice to officially embrace

a multiculturalism policy. Diversity is our strength and when we embrace inclusion and equity, practice openness, mutual respect and compassion for others in our communities, then we all flourish. As a nation that embraces multiculturalism, Canada recognizes that diverse cultural groups can co-exist alongside one another, with each group's racial, ethnic and cultural identities contributing to a resilient and inclusive society.

As a former Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Status of Women, and as a Black immigrant woman who came to Canada in the 1960s (prior to a multiculturalism policy), I have seen first-hand how accepting and embracing other cultures has allowed Canada to harness the ethnocultural, racial and religious diversity to our advantage. I have seen how a commitment to multiculturalism in the workforce has led to advances in employment equity. Through my work as a Member of Parliament, I introduced a motion to officially recognize February as Black History Month and I have seen how our communities are enriched when we celebrate various cultural groups and learn about their resilience, innovation, and determination to work towards a better Canada.

But I have also witnessed how ignorance, bias and the persistence of racism, in particular anti-Black racism, remains a barrier to full inclusion despite the best efforts of multiculturalism. I can recount occasions on which I was met with microaggressions, as I was viewed as a Black person and immigrant woman who did not belong. As the years have gone by we have come a long way, but there are still

Indigenous, Black and other racialized Members of Parliament, doctors, lawyers, teachers, software engineers and even children who sadly experience racism and discrimination in the workplace and at school despite all of their achievements and commitment to seeing Canada's continued success.

I continue to wrestle with this paradox: how does a country that values diversity and is committed to multiculturalism and inclusion with various legal instruments respond to the sad reality that there are many Canadians who continue to face systemic racism and institutional barriers to their full participation in society.

Over its 50 years of existence, multiculturalism has had to evolve in response to changing social dynamics, for instance shifting from a focus on celebrating cultural diversity (e.g., ethnic food, traditional dance or clothing) to fostering civic participation and respect of cultural differences. Now, as we look towards the future, if multiculturalism is to meet and deliver on the challenge of "supporting communities in confronting racism and discrimination, promoting intercultural and interfaith understanding and fostering equitable opportunities to participate fully in Canadian society"¹ then we have to situate our approach to multiculturalism within a space that is anti-racist and anti-oppression. This in turn will allow us to decentre the exclusionary narrative of whiteness that enables white privilege, and remains an impediment to truly reducing barriers to full and equal participation for Black Canadians.

1 [Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program](#)

REFRAMING HOW WE UNDERSTAND MULTICULTURALISM

What would this necessary reframing of multiculturalism, within an anti-racist and anti-oppression space that intentionally seeks to dismantle the systemic harms of white privilege, look like?

White privilege refers to the set of unquestioned and unearned advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people because they are White.² White privilege simultaneously limits the opportunities for Black Canadians to be given a fair opportunity while giving a boost or head start to White Canadians. As a result of white privilege, Black Canadians are constantly having to prove their worth and justify their existence by always being exceptional and having to work twice as hard if not more, just to reach the starting point enjoyed by many White Canadians.

Anti-oppression refers to strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others.³

Anti-racism is defined as the “active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism”.⁴ Together, anti-racism and anti-oppression involve examining and chal-

lenging societal structures and individual biases/beliefs, as well as power imbalances that uphold racism, misogyny, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, and other oppressive systems.

By applying an understanding of white privilege, anti-oppression and anti-racism to multiculturalism it becomes evident that the ability to achieve a real sense of belonging and acceptance as a Canadian, even if you are Canadian born in Toronto to second generation Black Canadian parents, can be significantly shaped by experiences of racism and having to navigate white privilege in systems that exist across all realms of life.

Canada’s multiculturalism policy, for all of its intentions, has as Professor George J. Sefa Dei wrote in 2011, “been ineffective in addressing broader questions of structural racism, social oppression, domination, and marginalization of peoples in society... multiculturalism, in tacit ways, comes to appropriate and obscure important discussions about privilege, systemic power, and the way in which particular bodies come to be identified within these moments”.⁵

If power imbalances and historical legacies are not questioned, we arrive at a multiculturalism policy that boldly and loudly proclaims that you are welcome to participate and bring your cultural diversity to Canadian society, while in a more subtle

2 [System of White Supremacy and White Privilege](#)

3 [CRRF Glossary of Terms](#)

4 [CRRF Glossary of Terms](#)

5 [Canadian Issues, Spring 2011](#)

and hushed tone also says this welcome is conditional. The only parts of your culture welcomed, in this version of multiculturalism, are those that the dominant culture is fond of and those that do not go against the norms and traditions sustaining white privilege. The result of this double-speak is that we achieve tolerance rather than integration. When there are unsuccessful attempts to integrate, it is always the fault of the “other/outside” cultural group and not the dominant cultural group. No examination is made of how the system by design is exclusionary. White privilege contributes to the sustaining of a racial hierarchy that shapes all the social, cultural, political and economic systems that operate in society. White privilege allows one group to dominate, set the norms, make the rules and determine the consequences. Everyone else is required to play by those rules of white privilege and those who lack this privilege are kept at the margins.

At the margins, we get diversity in the workforce but we do not get inclusion nor meaningful representation in positions of power in that workforce. The Black Canadian National Survey research project found that 96% of Black Canadians believe that racism is a serious problem in the workplace. In comparison, 56% of White Canadians surveyed responded that racism in the workplace was a minor issue or not a problem at all.⁶ Such a stark contrast in viewpoints is indicative of the very different lived experiences that Black Canadians have in comparison to White Canadians. Even when interacting within the same environments, the experiences are significantly different as one

group knows that everything has been designed to benefit them while the other group constantly has to navigate the exclusionary influences of white privilege.

When we fail to question how the rules of the game simultaneously rewards and punishes on the basis of race, we end up with employment equity action plans that were supposed to address discrimination against all women in the workforce but only benefits White women while reinforcing the systemic barriers that negatively affect Black women, Black women with disabilities and Black women who identify as belonging to LGBTQ2+.

Multiculturalism efforts that promote discussions on diversity, racism and religious discrimination or promote these values by encouraging interaction among community groups is only half of the required work. The failure to go deep and to critically ask why there are so many remaining barriers to inclusion and how different groups within various cultural communities experience these barriers remains a blind spot that has affected multiculturalism for the past 50 years.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEXT 50 YEARS?

For the past 50 years, the fabric of Canadian society has been shaped by multiculturalism. During this time, there has been a never-ending series of debates on the merits and shortcomings of multiculturalism to the extent that some have referred to criticism of multiculturalism as a growth industry. Despite these criticisms, I remain steadfast in

6 [Black Canadian National Survey, Interim Report, 2021](#)

my commitment to multiculturalism in Canada and believe that just as society adapts to change, so too must the legal frameworks and practices we use to manage our social interactions.

“I remain steadfast in my commitment to multiculturalism in Canada and believe that just as society adapts to change, so too must the legal frameworks and practices we use to manage our social interactions.”

As we have seen, despite its best efforts to foster an inclusive and respectful society where barriers to participation are addressed, the multiculturalism policy has fallen short in particular for Black Canadians. The latter, despite 50 years of policy, continue to experience high rates of social exclusion, face higher levels of unemployment, and experience discrimination at work, school and elsewhere at higher rates than other Canadians, including other racialized Canadians.

The challenges to inclusion, however, will not be met by having more cultural awareness events or by more studies on the experiences of racism. At this juncture, as we look towards the next 50 years, it is our responsibility to peel back the veneer of a multicultural mosaic utopia and engage in difficult conversations of how dominant/non-dominant cultural dynamics, colonialism and systemic discrimination foster exclusionary systems that deter the full participation of everyone in the society.

I believe that the best is yet to come for Canada's multiculturalism; but the best version, where we can say wholeheartedly all are included with equal access to opportunity will only happen if we have the courage to do the uncomfortable work of questioning the long-held narratives and power dynamics that have become institutionalized. Multiculturalism's path forward for the next 50 years must be paved with the use of anti-racism and anti-oppression approaches shaping our collective understanding of the challenges to social inclusion.

BEING BLACK: WATCHING MULTICULTURAL CANADA GROW UP

CECIL FOSTER

Cecil Foster is an author, a public intellectual and a leading academic on multiculturalism. He has published several books in fiction and non-fiction on multiculturalism and the Black and immigrant experiences in multicultural societies primarily in Canada, the United States and the Caribbean. Foster's latest book is the widely acclaimed *They Call Me George: The Untold Story of Black Train Porters and the Birth of Modern Canada* (Biblioasis 2019). He is working on a book on the foundations of official multiculturalism in Canada and the first 50 years of Canadian Multiculturalism. Foster is a professor in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University at Buffalo and he spends his time between Greater Toronto and Buffalo.

In the first decade of official multiculturalism, I arrived in Canada to immerse myself in a modern country and amongst a people collectively struggling to know themselves and seeking to determine if together they even had a future. An unavoidable question back then was whether this Canada – especially since it was by design now multicultural – could survive long enough to last another decade, far less reach a 50th anniversary. Experience quickly showed me that in the heart of this ideologically and linguistically torn country, there was no place for a racialized person like me. I am Black, an immigrant from the Caribbean, specifically from Barbados, one of the former British possessions in the Americas that like Canada had shared a supposedly common British colonial experience. As an individual, I was proudly and firmly grounded in

my culture – at home in my own skin, as it were – and had no plans to let go of the inspiration acquired out of this culture and history. Rather, I imagined Canada as a place to achieve the personal accomplishments that my culture had taught me to dream.

But in the 1970s and long after, Black people were not routinely seen on Canadian television or in Canadian movies, heard on the radio, found sitting in parliaments or as judges, claiming professorships at universities or executive positions in businesses and governments – indeed, Black people were not considered fully Canadian or entitled to such recognition. Instead, Black Canadians were beginning to disproportionately populate prisons and, for the allowable height of self-actualization, routinely did

“In the 1970s and long after, Black people were not routinely seen on Canadian television or in Canadian movies, heard on the radio, found sitting in parliaments or as judges, claiming professorships at universities or executive positions in businesses and governments.”

the manual labour in hospitals and old folks' homes, as well as in agriculture, low-skilled manufacturing and hospitality sectors. Our personal aspirations did not seem to matter, much less were they encouraged. At best, as I have argued elsewhere, we were socially marginalized with the stamp of inequality being the colour of our skin.¹

This social positioning, based on presumed racial and cultural inferiority, inextricably informs my reflections on the first 50 years of official multiculturalism in Canada. As a mainstream journalist, a public intellectual, a recognized Canadian author for fiction and non-fiction, and as an academic, mine has been a life long struggle to surmount this social positioning. From early on, I was one of the few nonwhite Canadians to have an institutional front-row view of the emerging new Canada. My entire Canadian experience has been trying to understand official multiculturalism, as both policy

and practice, as enunciated by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1971. I have advocated for fully implemented official multiculturalism, that would offer a special kind of redemption for all humanity – the dismantling of institutions of white supremacy and the ethnocultural state.² This would require that, as practice more than merely idealized policy, multiculturalism must be given a chance for actualization through full implementation of its founding principles, in order to dismantle the existing racial structures of the Canadian state. Conversely, because of my social positioning, over the past five decades I have seen Canada grow up into a promising multicultural society predicated on the respect for a common human dignity. Black and other peoples of colour are now, thankfully, making bold claims to leadership in the commanding heights of Canadian society and economy – and there is a view across the land that, indeed, their time has come and there will be no turning back. But there is still some way to go to make what is still a promise into routine social practices.

“If tolerance is at the heart of the practice of multiculturalism, we were the pioneers – for we were asked to be tolerant to the daily racism we encountered, to keep on believing and even forgiving.”

1 Cecil Foster. *A Place Called Heaven: The Meaning of Being Black in Canada*. Toronto: HarperCollinsPublishers Ltd., 1996; *Blackness and Modernity: The Colour of Humanity and the Search for Freedom*. Kingston/Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2007.

2 Cecil Foster. *Where Race Does Not Matter: The New Spirit of Modernity*. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005; *Genuine Multiculturalism: The Tragedy and Comedy of Diversity*. Kingston/Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2014.

At the time of my arrival, in spite of the establishment's rejections, outwardly there remained some personal relations that encouraged those of us the world over – then classified as visible minorities and now under multiculturalism as new Canadians to give the country a chance. If tolerance is at the heart of the practice of multiculturalism, we were the pioneers – for we were asked to be tolerant to the daily racism we encountered, to keep on believing and even forgiving. This was the promise of multiculturalism: that if not to our immediate benefit, then at least the assurance of a good life for all would remain an aspiration of this new society; by a Canada that includes all of our children equally and considers its own newer Canadians among the new inheritors of the land, and as contributors to its social good. From the beginning, there appeared to me a social contract joining us to the mainstream, something that was genuinely new and even historical, which encouraged us not to give up but to stand our ground, help build, and see what could happen. Long-suffering, we invested in hope and our personal aspirations.

But as a counterpoint to this optimism, particularly among the dominant intellectuals in those early days, there was a ponderous preoccupation with death. Noted philosopher, George Grant, had already drawn attention to a national demise in his famous lament over the death of the old Canadas within the British North America Act³ – the Canadas that were separately English and French

in a Balkanized confederation. Both solitudes were undoubtedly racially white and equally on the cusp of annexation by the neighbouring colossal empire to the south. It was also an elegy for the wider death of the British Empire, ironically a development that the newer Canadians – as former colonized people from the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Latin America – viewed as a welcome liberation. The same was true as we thought about the death of the French language or any other form of colonialism grounded in stealing native lands and placing Indigenous people within the same social margins newcomers were expected to occupy. Our arrival in Canada was a result of this liberation and in it were the seeds, we thought optimistically, for the prototypical liberation of all humanity. Multicultural Canada was a social experiment to achieve social justice, even in the wake of the seeming inevitability of the death mourned by Grant but welcomed by people like me.

In this frame of mind, established and newer Canadians alike struggled over the experiment's viability.⁴ Charles Taylor would analyze multiculturalism as a society within which individual groups – in Canada's case limited really to the English and French – struggle endlessly for recognition.⁵ To my thinking, this was nothing more than the continuation of their historic fight for dominance. Other minority groups would achieve recognition by seeing themselves as separate units within the largely homogenous armies on either side – but in the end had the same commitment to

3 George Grant. *Lament for a Nation*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1965.

4 Cecil Foster. *Caribana: The Greatest Celebration*. Toronto: Ballantine Books, 1995; *Sleep On, Beloved*. Toronto: Random House Canada Ltd., 1995.

5 Charles Taylor. *Multiculturalism: The Politics of Recognition* in Amy Gutmann (ed) *Multiculturalism: Expanded paperback Edition*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

the historic goals and outcomes of the established predetermined army of choice. Analogously, they might be soldiers of different ethnicities, cultures and races, but all holding the same standard, which for either side largely maintained the principles of white supremacy whether the version was French or English. A clear sign of this was that despite their diversity they had to speak either English or French to be officially recognized. Other academics like Will Kymlicka, painted multiculturalism as a search for a common citizenship,⁶ a new nationality not based on ethno-culturalism as was historically the case, but which in my mind ultimately still had to fit into this supreme whiteness. Canadians would be recognized as having common citizenship rights even with different ethnic backgrounds, but ultimately as individuals all belonging to a single plural nation whose so-called founding fathers were committed to ethnoracial whiteness. As in the army, combatants might be recognized first as individuals and even mercenary soldiers – perhaps based on race, ethnicity, culture, etc.

In my opinion, on their own, neither of these theories was tapping all the potential promised by official multiculturalism. How was I – a Canadian Black person according to Taylor, or is it a Black person that is Canadian according to Kymlicka – to be situated in this new Canada, especially when I start from a position of such ingrained inequality?⁷ I felt that based on the two main prongs of this thinking, whether recent or established citizens, Canadians

“Genuine multiculturalism – where power, belonging and entitlement start through individual recognition but that individuals can subsequently choose to be counted by ethnicity, racialization, gender, place of birth or any other social category that speaks to diversity and inclusiveness.”

would be building on the same old structure that had emerged from Canada’s now lamented commitment to ethno-racial white conformity through assimilation or relegation of the unassimilable to the margins of society. Collectively, this thinking was simply to protect Canada from the fallout from the death Grant lamented and which immigrants of colour celebrated even to this day by physically toppling certain statues and monuments.

For me, the answer was the order of preferences by which I simply ask to be recognized as an authentic Canadian – preferably first as an individual and then as an individual choosing to be recognized as a second, third or as many other social categories or identities as I choose. This way I could go about my personal business of building a new life in a new country but without first having to be acculturated to any established group. I found this approach useful whether as a journalist when I would first be

6 Among Kymlicka’s wide-ranging *œuvre* on multiculturalism see in particular, Will Kymlicka. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford University Press/Clarendon Press, 2003/1996.

7 *Distorted Mirror: Canada’s Racist Face*. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1991; *They Call Me George: The Untold Story of Black Train Porters and the Birth of Modern Canada*. Biblioasis, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2019.

told that we have never hired Black reporters/Journalists, or as a Black and immigrant Canadian I was also told that I did not have the Canadian culture (experience) needed for this job, or as an author when I wanted my work classified as Canadian literature but from a Black (Canadian) perspective. This ordering has to be fluid and as such Canadian multicultural identities cannot be fixed permanently. The only constant, the true fixity associated with multicultural identities, has to be the way all members of the society are positioned, placed and treated – as equal Canadians. Like the iconic North Star for slaves on the Underground Railway, the dream/promise of freedom had to be fixed. This meant the inevitable death of the historic Canadian society and its internal social ordering and its replacement with a society where for a lode-star race did not matter. And, as a public intellectual and academic, I have spent most of my time explaining this ordering and approach as genuine multiculturalism – where power, belonging and entitlement start through individual recognition but that individuals can subsequently choose to be counted by ethnicity, racialization, gender, place of birth or any other social category that speaks to diversity and inclusiveness – the commitment to the intersectionalism of daily living – of multicultural Canada and its citizenship.

So, what does this all mean pragmatically in this moment of self-reflection? I think this is what matters to understanding the social evolution that is the first 50 years of multiculturalism. Analogously, multicultural Canada began life like an orphan. It had some idea of an ancestral history that especially dominant Canadians – or some of them – wanted to retain and even preserve. Truly an unhappy consciousness, it was like the modern

individual uncertain of how much this heritage was preparing it for a new life on its own, that could only occur through a mythological rebirth, or of how much of this legacy was like those chains every Scrooge individually was destined to drag into the future unless there is a fundamental and honest recounting and recanting of past deeds. In the dominant Christian mythology that has always provided validation for Canadian thinking, and even underpinned the outlooks of Grant, Taylor and Kymlicka, multiculturalism is currently symbolically an empty grave. But is it the grave that for 50 years still awaits the three nations (English, French and confederated Canada) as lamented by Grant, something that it is a waste of time mourning as there is no social justice to be found in the life lamented? Or is it the gaping hole an abyss from which, based on the thinking of people like Taylor and Kymlicka, the old and decrepit body has escaped and has now emerged over five decades as a radically transformed society markedly different in demography and optimism than before its death? For half a century, Canadians have been trying to decide if they are living a nightmare or the dream. Going forward, they have to commit fully to one or the other, with the young people of the day seemingly in all their diversity firmly and proudly opting to be big dreamers and monument toppers.

WHAT HAS MULTICULTURALISM ACHIEVED IN CANADA AND WHAT ARE ITS CHALLENGES?

RATNA GHOSH

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INTRODUCTION

My introduction to Canada started off with an interesting experience at the famous Calgary Stampede. Having recently arrived in Canada from India, I wore a saree on this hot summer day in July and joined the crowded event when a journalist approached me and asked me where I was from. He smiled and offered to introduce me to a 'Canadian Indian'. It was exciting to see a teepee and meet an elder, and then to see a photo of the two of us in the Calgary Herald the next morning with the caption: East meets West.

That intrigued me and got me interested in the early history of Canada: how the English and French had

colonized Canada and settled here: a country that already had many indigenous groups now called First Nations, Inuit and Metis people, had since become an immigrant society. But after a century of immigration, in 1965 John Porter's influential book *The Vertical Mosaic* (1965) painted a powerful image of Canada as a vertical mosaic which demonstrated stark inequalities among social classes and hierarchy in ethnic groups with 'White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants' (WASP) at the top.

It was not until many years later when I started teaching a mandatory Multicultural Education course to pre-service teachers at McGill that I really understood the impact of the birth of Canada on Indigenous peoples, the cultural genocide that took

place and the forced residential schooling program of over 100,000 children between the 1870s and the 1990s.

It was painful for me to learn that at first, Canada's immigration policies were exclusionary and kept non-white people out: "To admit Orientals in large numbers would mean the end, the extinction of the white people. And we always have in mind the necessity of keeping this a white man's country" (The Abbotsford News,¹) said the premier of B.C. when in 1914 the steamship Komagata Maru arrived in Vancouver carrying 376 Indian passengers who were barred from entering Canada.

Structural racism and systemic discrimination against non-White people (e.g., Indian, Chinese and Blacks) I found out, was enforced through laws reflecting the social norms of the time. For example, in 1911 a ban on immigration of Blacks was approved stating: "the Negro race ...is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada" (Anthony, 2020).

LEGISLATION: MULTICULTURALISM

My arrival in Canada coincided with another dramatic event. Unfamiliar with Canadian politics, I had arrived when the country was in the grip of "Trudeaumania" caused by an eloquent and outspoken candidate for Prime Minister who reflected many of the changing values of the time (e.g., recognition of human rights after World War II), and confidently set out his vision of what Canada should be: a just society. A portion of his statement on the just society gives an idea of his thinking on equal opportunity:

"The Just Society will be one in which those regions and groups which have not fully shared in the country's affluence will be given a better opportunity... On the never-ending road to perfect justice, we will, in other words, succeed in creating the most humane and compassionate society possible" (Graham, 1998: 19-20).

This trademark phrase became the basis for his policies beginning with the Policy of Multiculturalism which Prime Minister Trudeau announced in Parliament in 1971. As a concept, multiculturalism recognized the demographic diversity of Canada. Ideologically, it was a total reversal of assimilation because it implied dissolution of British cultural domination through integration of all ethno-cultural groups into Canadian society (recommendation of the B&B Commission). And as a policy, it was an attempt to manage diversity in the country.

“ However, management of diversity was seen in static terms and focused on cultural diversity and maintenance of heritage culture and language rather than on unequal opportunities in society.”

However, management of diversity was seen in static terms and focused on cultural diversity and maintenance of heritage culture and language rather than on unequal opportunities in society. As a result, the majority cultures (both English and French) kept themselves out of Multicultural Policy. Whiteness was kept invisible, and the vertical mosaic maintained. But White resistance to

multicultural policy was not unusual because “(t)hey think it is not about them...race has nothing to do with them.” (Jay and Jones, 2005:104). Respect for other cultures cannot be legislated and developing some knowledge of the ‘other’ must be taught. So, prejudice reduction programs were introduced in schools, business, and other areas. But the focus was to ‘tolerate’ other cultural groups rather than look at diversity broadly – as a strength which brings a diversity of ideas, richness, and dynamism to a composite culture.

Changes in immigration policies, the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, and the establishment of the Canada Race Relations Foundation Act (1991) finally changed the focus from ethnic cultural and linguistic retention towards a vision of equality of opportunity measures for all Canadians. The Employment Equity Act, 1998, amended in 2013, was additional legislation to rectify historical disadvantages experienced by women, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and visible minorities. The meaning of multiculturalism in Canada had been expanded to make race relations a primary focus of Multicultural Policy. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian Constitution (1992) further consolidated the rights of all Canadians towards a just society.

PICTURE OF CANADA @ 50

So, what does Canada look like after 50 years of Multicultural Policy? This year, Canada was named ‘Best Country in the World’ by *U.S. News and World Report* (Singer, 2021). Citing data from the Migration Integration Policy Index, the article points to Canada’s “world-leading laws and policies, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

and its national policies on multiculturalism.” Other reports cited in the article say Canada is a very attractive and inclusive destination and among the “friendliest places on Earth for immigrants”. In 2020, Canada was 4th in the world for its “comprehensive, immigrant-friendly policies that emphasize equal rights, opportunities and security for newcomers.”

Canada has also been portrayed as a country of welcome to refugees particularly during crisis situations and in 2019 ranked first among 26 countries once again, as the world leader in the resettlement of refugees (UNHCR, n.d.). Canadian people were awarded the Nansen prize by UNHCR in 1986 although it has a history of exclusion of certain refugee groups during its past (Ghosh et al., 2019). In 2021, the government announced that it would take 20,000 most vulnerable refugees from Afghanistan due to the crisis created by the departure of U.S. troops. Even when immigration levels fell sharply, during the pandemic year 2020 Canada admitted 184,000 new permanent residents (Statista, 2021).

The 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, 2017a) shows Canada has 35,151,728 million people with a declining fertility rate, greying and ethnically diverse population: 22.3 percent visible minorities, 4.9 percent of Aboriginal identity, with people of European descent at 72.9 percent.

Canada continues to rank first among the OECD countries in the proportion of college and university graduates (54: 36.7 percent OECD average) in the 25-64 age group (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In 2016, First Nations people, Métis and Inuit all had made gains in postsecondary education at every level: 18.7 percent in 2006 to 23.0 percent in 2016

in college diploma. In 2018, 70 percent of 20-year-old immigrants who came to Canada before the age of 15 were in postsecondary education as compared to 56 percent of the Canadian population in that age group. Patterson et al. (2019) point out that employment growth over the previous five years “has been entirely accounted for by landed immigrants”.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

These statistics hide the type, level and conditions of employment, access to housing and well-being among various ethno-cultural groups. The Coronavirus has put a spotlight on the structural inequities in Canada. The economically disadvantaged have been affected most: it is only possible to “shelter-at-home” when one has a home. Furthermore, in this emergency, physical distancing is requiring us to develop new ways of living and communicating which involve new technologies. Poorer households have limited or no access to the Internet and equipment.

Vulnerability of racial groups implies structural racism. While race does not have scientific validity, the social concept affects the daily lived experiences of racialized people, their future and following generations. Constance Backhouse (1999) to Robyn Maynard (2017) among others have documented racism in the Canadian justice system and in state-sanctioned violence against people of colour. The 2016 Census indicates growing racial disparities in Canada: 20.8 percent people of colour are low-income compared to 12.2 percent of non-racialized people. The wage gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people was 33 percent; the wage gap between White and non-white continued to be wide despite equal pay legislations. The ‘colour

code’ persists intergenerationally for visible minorities (OCASI, 2019).

“These government sponsored, missionary run schools are responsible not only for destroying the lives of so many children over a century, but the lingering effects impact future generations.”

This year (2021) Canadians were shocked at the discovery of unmarked gravesites of hundreds believed to be mainly Indigenous children near former residential school sites in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. The appalling realization that these government sponsored, missionary run schools are responsible not only for destroying the lives of so many children over a century, but the lingering effects impact future generations of Indigenous peoples have affected all. The Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 recommendations in 2015 aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools. Only an urgent and genuine desire to reconcile the denial of human dignity written in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which a Canadian, John Humphrey helped write, could lead to an inclusive and just society.

“We need to acknowledge that our history includes darker moments... Canadians look back on these transgressions with regret and shame – as we should. But our history was also filled with many positive moments...These positive changes can never right historical wrongs. But they can serve to remind us...”

(that) The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice” (Trudeau, 2015).

Multiculturalism is 50 years later, still a controversial concept. People have different understandings of multiculturalism: retention of ethnic cultures, creation of ethnic enclaves, dangerous because it promotes “essentialism” which objectifies culture, identity and practices of ethno-cultural groups (Kymlicka, 2015). I tend to put the emphasis on equal opportunity notwithstanding differences in culture or country of origin implying a focus on racism and discrimination, but it also the right to be different.

Has the vertical mosaic that John Porter described in 1965 become flatter? Certainly, with increasing diversity in population, Canadian society is more complex than in the 1960s. Despite many years of multicultural policies, the vertical mosaic has not really changed.

Many gains have been made and while the pandemic has highlighted the rifts that exist it has also created a space and an opportunity for a new normal to develop a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1989: 317) for a composite culture or “third space”. Dominant groups have been less concerned with changing their own attitudes towards minority groups, thus maintaining the hierarchy, and often not even aware of the privileges they have but which others, particularly vulnerable groups do not (McIntosh, 2003). The BLM movement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have, along with the pandemic, provided a clear picture of the challenges to multiculturalism in Canada, a policy which the majority of Canadians support.

“ Legislation is not enough since a multicultural perspective involves humanistic values.”

Multiculturalism is a paradigm shift in ideology because it involves a change in power relations: from assimilation or homogeneity, which is at one end of the spectrum, to heterogeneity and a fusion of many cultures at the other end (Ghosh, 2018). It is a radically new way of thinking, a worldview. Legislation is not enough since a multicultural perspective involves humanistic values. Multiculturalism is a work in progress because it is not a static concept. The world is changing, and multiculturalism cannot be defined: it is always in the making, it is “never-ending”.

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MULTICULTURALISM AT A CROSSROADS: TOWARD PANDEMIC ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION IN POST-COVID-19 CANADA

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The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the official multiculturalism policy in Canada. Often held up internationally as a successful model, Canada's practice and policy of multiculturalism have enjoyed international recognition as being pioneering and effectual. Yet, this apparent successful record has not gone unchallenged during COVID-19, as racial and ethnic conflicts and divisions resurface. Since the outbreak of the global pandemic, there has been a surge in racism and xenophobia across the country towards Asian Canadians. When celebrating its 50th anniversary,

it is necessary to revisit multiculturalism at the crossroads of anti-Asian racism during COVID-19. It seems there is an urgent need for immediate action in combatting and eliminating racism by adopting a framework of pandemic anti-racism education in post-COVID-19 Canada.

MULTICULTURALISM TURNS 50

In 1971 Canada was the first country in the world to formulate an official multiculturalism policy with an objective to assist cultural groups to over-

come barriers to integrate into Canadian society while maintaining their heritage, language and culture (Guo & Wong, 2015). During the past five decades, multiculturalism has been the subject of much debate both in Canada and elsewhere. Some scholars claim that multiculturalism is a response to the pressures that Canada exerts on immigrants to integrate into common institutions (Kymlicka, 1998). It provides a framework for debating and developing fairer terms of integration, as integration is usually a long, difficult, and often painful process. However, others disagree. Wong (2008) summarizes the fragmentation critique of multiculturalism in the sociological literature over the past four decades primarily focusing on social divisiveness, clash of cultures, and ethnic marginalization and stratification. Others argue that the multiculturalism policy impedes understanding of structural power differences, such as racism and sexism, and their exclusionary effects (Bannerji 2000).

“Despite the claim that Canada continues to remain one of the last strongholds for multiculturalism in the world, the latter’s meaning has been redefined over the past five decades since its implementation.”

Reflecting on the historical development of multiculturalism, Kymlicka (2015) identifies three stages in the saga of Canadian multiculturalism with three distinct dimensions of diversity at work – ethnicity, race, and religion. In its incarnation stage, multiculturalism policy encouraged the self-organization, representation and participation of ethnic groups

defined on the basis of their country of origin. This logic of ethnicity was supplemented in the second stage by programs intended to deal with processes of racialization and racial discrimination. More recently, Canada started to witness the emergence of religion as a basis for multicultural claims, and as a result multiculturalism is now under pressure to add religion as a third track. Kymlicka argues that the contingencies by which the logics of ethnicity, race and religion have evolved and interacted over time in Canada have created a framework that retains powerful potential to help build more inclusive models of democratic citizenship in Canada.

Despite the claim that Canada continues to remain one of the last strongholds for multiculturalism in the world, the latter’s meaning has been redefined over the past five decades since its implementation (Winter 2015). Originally conceptualized as a modest remedy to nationalist marginalization in cultural and socioeconomic terms, it was about majority-minority relations, equitable participation, a shared Canadian identity, and inclusive citizenship (Winter 2015). It can be described as a conditionally inclusive form of socio-ethnic leveraging leading to pluralist group formation of a multicultural national identity. By the 1990s, Winter argues, multiculturalism became increasingly individualized and neoliberalized and the equitable participation dimension diminished. The second change in meaning occurred in the first decade of the 21st century when multiculturalism was no longer about majority-minority relations but rather managing minority-minority relations. The dominant group is now marked by its allegedly inherent capacity to be the guarantor of peaceful intraminority and interminority relations. As Winter notes, its meaning has changed from being ‘about us’ to

being ‘about them’. In agreement with Winter, it seems clear that multiculturalism in Canada has lost much of its original meaning which serves as a wake-up call for all. If Canada intends to reclaim its original goal of helping immigrants with their full participation in Canadian society, it needs to go beyond the superficial rhetoric of difference and diversity by adopting a framework that addresses its racial and ethnic tension and conflict.

ANTI-ASIAN RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA DURING COVID-19

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, racism and ethnic discrimination has resurfaced and proliferated during the global pandemic. Asian Canadians, particularly those of Chinese descent, have been spat on, verbally abused, and physically attacked. They are shamed and blamed for the spread of the virus despite the fact that they have the lowest infection rates in Canada. They are shouted at to “go home” even though some of them are born in Canada and have never visited their ancestral lands. As victims of racial discrimination, Asian Canadians have subsequently experienced high levels of anxiety, trauma, and desperation. Using critical discourse analysis, Guo and Guo (2021) critically analyzed incidents that were reported in the popular press during the pandemic pertaining to anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. Their findings reveal that there has been a significant rise of reported hate crimes perpetrated against Asian Canadians resulting primarily from ignorance, fear, and misinformation related to the global pandemic. Framing their examination using critical race theory, their research focused on anti-Asian racism concerning mask-wearing (before it was made mandatory), name calling, and attacks on China-

town. Their analysis shows that the framing of Asian Canadians as potential carriers of the virus has depicted them as weak, sickly, diseased, and foreign, and therefore ‘undesirable’ citizens. Similarly, the misperception that Western culture is superior to Asian cultures also explains the use of hate speech and name calling (e.g., ‘Chinese virus’, ‘bat eating’) and justifies the incompatibility of lifestyles and traditions that lead to a belief of cultural inferiority.

“Asian Canadians, particularly those of Chinese descent, have been spat on, verbally abused, and physically attacked... As victims of racial discrimination, Asian Canadians have subsequently experienced high levels of anxiety, trauma, and desperation.”

To understand how Chinatown became the symbol of disease and the targets of racist attacks during COVID-19, Guo and Guo (2021) situated the discussion in the historical context of the Chinese in Canada. It appears that anti-Asian hostility had been driven by a racialized ‘Yellow Peril’ hysteria depicting peoples of the East as an existential danger to Western civilization. It seems a parallel can be drawn to how Chinese Canadians were treated in Canada’s racist past. Since the Chinese arrived in Canada, the presence of Chinese people was compared to that of the plague and vices such as gambling, opium addiction, disease, and unsanitary conditions. Their analysis demonstrates how deeply rooted racial discrimination is in Canada, a point illustrated by Guo and Wong (2018) in

reflecting on Canada's immigration, racial and ethnic history since its confederation over one hundred and fifty years ago. Despite Canada's claimed nonracist immigration policies and multiculturalism to protect minorities from possible prejudice and discrimination, Asians and other racialized peoples within Canada experience racism and ethnic discrimination socially in their everyday lives. COVID-19 triggered an angry backlash that unleashed some of the historical sentiments against the Chinese and deeply entrenched racial ideologies within the Canadian cultural framework. The anti-Asian and anti-Chinese racism and xenophobia reflect and retains "the historical process of discursive racialization by which Asian Canadians have been socially constructed as biologically inferior, culturally backward, and racially undesirable" (Guo & Guo, 2021, p. 204).

TOWARD PANDEMIC ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION IN POST-COVID-19 CANADA

“On this occasion of celebrating the 50th anniversary of Canada’s official multiculturalism policy, it is time to engage in critical deep reflections on the rhetoric of Canadian exceptionalism presenting the country as a culturally diverse and inclusive nation.”

In light of Canada's growing anti-Asian sentiments since the outbreak of COVID-19, it seems clear that multiculturalism is at a crossroads. In agreement with Kymlicka (2015), more emphasis and resources are needed to fight racism in Canada. On this

occasion of celebrating the 50th anniversary of Canada's official multiculturalism policy, it is time to engage in critical deep reflections on the rhetoric of Canadian exceptionalism presenting the country as a culturally diverse and inclusive nation. To condemn and combat anti-Asian and anti-Chinese racism and xenophobia related to COVID-19, I propose pandemic anti-racism education that aims to call out any form of racism and xenophobia that is directly related to the global pandemic and eliminate racial oppression for achieving social justice in post-COVID-19 Canada (Guo & Guo, 2021). For this discussion, I draw on Dei's (Dei, 1996; Dei, James-Wilson & Zine, 2001) anti-racism education model that views education as a racially, culturally and politically mediated experience. The model encompasses four learning objectives to integrate multiple centres of knowledge; recognize and respect for difference; affect social and educational change related to equity, access and social justice; and teach community empowerment. It requires that educators acknowledge the existing inequities in social structures and educational environments, understand their role in these structures, and actively advocate for change. More specifically, Guo and Guo (2021) argue, "Educators need to explicitly teach pandemic anti-racism and develop awareness of discursive racialization and xenophobic violence and discrimination in relation to COVID-19 and discuss action plans to eliminate them" (p. 206). To achieve this goal, the role of teachers and instructors extends from the sphere of the classroom into the community and requires engaging with social and political issues. In particular, it requires collaboration among teachers, students, administrators and community activists to work towards a change at a broader level. This is exactly what is needed in combating racism as a contagious virus that

requires collective efforts in achieving social justice in post-COVID-19 Canada.

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