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BACKGROUND PAPER



Canadian Multiculturalism

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Canadian Multiculturalism
(Background Paper)

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CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM*

1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of Canada as a “multicultural society” can be interpreted in different ways: descriptively (as a sociological fact), prescriptively (as ideology) or politically (as policy).

As a sociological fact, multiculturalism refers to the presence of people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Ideologically, multiculturalism consists of a relatively coherent set of ideas and ideals pertaining to the celebration of Canada’s cultural diversity. At the policy level, multiculturalism refers to the management of diversity through formal initiatives in the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal domains.

This study focuses on an analysis of Canadian multiculturalism both as a sociological fact and as a federal public policy. It goes on to look at attitudes to multiculturalism, as well as provincial and territorial multiculturalism policies. It also provides a chronology of federal policy on multiculturalism, and selected references.

2 BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

2.1 MULTICULTURALISM AS A SOCIOLOGICAL FACT OF CANADIAN LIFE

Canada’s history of settlement and colonization has resulted in a multicultural society made up of three founding peoples – Indigenous, French, and British – and of many other racial and ethnic groups.

The Indigenous peoples include First Nations (Status and Non-Status Indians), Métis and Inuit. Their proportion of Canada’s total population is increasing. Statistics Canada’s 2016 Census revealed that just over 2.1 million people reported having some Indigenous ancestry, representing 6.2% of the total population. By comparison, in the 2011 Census, people with Indigenous ancestry represented 4.3% of the population.

French and British colonizers began arriving in the early 1600s, and at the time of Confederation, Canada’s population was chiefly British (60%) and French (30%). At the turn of the 20th century, immigrants from other European countries were allowed entry into Canada. In percentage terms, the influx peaked in 1912 and 1913, when annual arrivals exceeded 5% of the total population. The proportion of the population born outside the country dropped during the Great Depression and the Second World War, but has been rising since the early 1950s. The sources of immigration have also shifted toward locations such as Asia, the Caribbean, and South and Central America.

By 1981, the combination of a declining birth rate and ongoing immigration saw the British and French populations decline to 40% and 27%, respectively. At the beginning of the 21st century, the proportion of people with British, French, and/or

Canadian ethnic origins had dropped to 46%. (The term “Canadian” ethnic origin was first introduced in the 1996 Census.) An ethnic diversity survey published by Statistics Canada in 2003 showed that 21% of the population aged 15 years and older was of British-only ancestry, while 10% reported only French origins, 8% were Canadian only, and 7% were a mix of these three origins.

This increased diversity is evident from the data from the 2016 Census carried out by Statistics Canada, in which more than 250 different ethnic origins or ancestries were reported. The most common reported ancestries were Canadian, English, Scottish, French and Irish, followed by German, Chinese, Italian, First Nations, Indian (from India), Ukrainian, Dutch and Polish. The census data also found that 21.9% of the population was born outside Canada – the highest proportion since the 1921 Census. In 2016, the largest number of immigrants was from Asia, representing 48.1% of the population born abroad. The visible minority population – that is, the non-white population, excluding the Indigenous population – accounted for 22.3% of the total population, up from 4.7% in 1981.

Linguistic diversity is also at the core of Canadian multiculturalism. In 2016, according to census data, English was the first language (mother tongue) for 58.1% of the population. This was a slight decrease from 2011, when 58.6% of the population said English was their mother tongue.

The same trend was observed for French, the second most common mother tongue after English: 21.4% of the population reported speaking French as their first language, compared with 22% in 2011. Lastly, the percentage of those whose mother tongue was a language other than English or French was 22.9% in 2016, up 1.6% from 2011.

In 2016, “immigrant” languages – that is, languages other than English, French, Indigenous languages or sign language – were the mother tongues of 22.3% of the Canadian population (more than 7.7 million people). The immigrant languages spoken most often at home were Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog and Arabic. The Indigenous languages spoken by the largest number of people were Cree languages, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, Dene and Montagnais (Innu).

2.2 MULTICULTURALISM AS A PUBLIC POLICY AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Analysts generally agree that federal multiculturalism policy has evolved through three developmental phases: the incipient stage (pre-1971), the formative period (1971–1981), and institutionalization (1982 to the present).

2.2.1 THE INCIPIENT STAGE (PRE-1971)

The era preceding 1971 can best be described as a time of gradual movement toward acceptance of ethnic diversity as legitimate and integral to Canadian society. Nation-building in the symbolic and cultural sense was oriented toward the replication of a British type of society in Canada. Culturally, this was reflected in Canada’s political, economic and social institutions. All Canadians were defined as British subjects until the passage of the *Canadian Citizenship Act* in 1947, and a variety of

cultural symbols legitimized the British underpinnings of English-speaking Canada. For the most part, central authorities dismissed the value of cultural heterogeneity, considering racial and ethnic differences as inimical to national interests and detrimental to Canada's character and integrity. Only the massive influx of post-World War II immigrants from Europe prompted central authorities to rethink the role and status of "other ethnic groups" within the evolving dynamic of Canadian society.

Later, events and developments during the 1960s paved the way for the eventual demise of the official policy of assimilation and the subsequent appearance of multiculturalism. Pressures for change stemmed from the growing assertiveness of Canada's Indigenous peoples, the force of Québécois nationalism and increasing resentment on the part of some ethnic minorities regarding their place in society.

2.2.2 THE FORMATIVE PERIOD (1971–1981)

In 1969, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism published Book Four of its report, which dealt with the contribution of non-Indigenous, non-French and non-English ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada. The Commission recommended the "integration" (not assimilation) into Canadian society of those ethnic groups with full citizenship rights and equal participation in Canada's institutional structure. These recommendations led to the introduction in 1971 of the Multiculturalism Policy. Its key objectives were these:

- to assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity;
- to assist cultural groups to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society (thus, the multiculturalism policy advocated the full involvement and equal participation of ethnic minorities in mainstream institutions, without denying them the right to identify with select elements of their cultural past if they so chose);
- to promote creative exchanges among all Canadian cultural groups; and
- to assist immigrants in acquiring at least one of the two official languages.

Achieving these policy objectives depended on government funding. Nearly \$200 million was set aside in the 10 years following the implementation of the policy for special initiatives in language and cultural maintenance. A Multicultural Directorate within the Department of the Secretary of State was approved in 1972 to assist in the implementation of multicultural policies and programs. The directorate sponsored activities aimed at assisting ethnic minorities in the areas of human rights, freedom from racial discrimination, citizenship, immigration and cultural diversity. A Ministry of Multiculturalism was created in 1973 to monitor the implementation of multicultural initiatives within government departments. In addition, formal linkages between the government and ethnic organizations were established to provide ongoing input into the decision-making process. An example was the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism, established in 1973 and later renamed the Canadian Ethnocultural Council.

The architects of the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy perceived barriers to social adaptation and economic success largely in linguistic or cultural terms. The marked increase in the arrival of visible minority immigrants whose main concerns were

obtaining employment, housing and education, as well as fighting discrimination, required a shift in policy thinking. Equality through the removal of racially discriminatory barriers became the main focus of multicultural programs, and race relations policies and programs were put in place to uncover, isolate and combat racial discrimination at personal and institutional levels. Particular emphasis was placed on encouraging and facilitating the ways in which cultural minority groups could fully participate in Canadian society.

2.2.3 INSTITUTIONALIZATION (1982 TO THE PRESENT)

The 1980s witnessed a growing institutionalization of multicultural policy. Shifts in this policy coincided with a difficult period for race relations in Canada. Immigration had noticeably changed the composition of the population in large cities over a short period of time. Canada also began to see the emergence of a few individuals and groups promoting racist ideas. The government first concentrated on the changes needed in order to help Canadian institutions adapt to the presence of the new immigrant groups. It also introduced anti-discrimination programs designed to help remove social and cultural barriers separating minority and majority groups in Canada.

With the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the Charter) in 1982, the multicultural heritage of Canadians was recognized in the Constitution. Section 27 of the Charter states: "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."

This provision is critical in placing multiculturalism within the wider framework of Canadian society. It empowers the courts to take Canada's multicultural reality into account at the highest levels of decision-making. In the words of a former human rights commissioner, it provides a useful "interpretative prism" to assist the courts when balancing individual and multicultural (and often collective) rights. A relevant example is the issue of freedom of individual expression, which must take account of the prohibition against racial slurs or circulation of racially based hate propaganda. Hence, the principle underlying the freedom of individual expression does not extend to absolute free speech.

Moreover, the Charter addresses the elimination of expressions of discrimination by guaranteeing both equality and fairness to all under the law, regardless of race or ethnicity. Section 15(1) states:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

In addition, section 15(2) establishes entitlement to non-discriminatory benefits without denying the need for additional measures to assist disadvantaged groups.

In 1984, the Special Parliamentary Committee on Visible Minorities produced its well-known report *Equality Now!*, and in 1985, a House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism was created. In 1987, the committee issued an

extensive report that called for the enactment of a new policy on multiculturalism and the creation of the Department of Multiculturalism.

A new multiculturalism policy with a clearer sense of purpose and direction came into effect in 1988 when the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was adopted by Parliament. Canada was the first country in the world to pass a national multiculturalism law. Still today, the Act sets out the legal framework for Canada's multiculturalism policy.

The Act acknowledges multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society with an integral role in the decision-making process of the federal government. Directed toward the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada, the Act seeks to assist in the preservation of culture and language, to reduce discrimination, to enhance cultural awareness and understanding, and to promote culturally sensitive institutional change at the federal level.

In order to maintain a balance between cultural distinctiveness and equality, the Act specifies the right of all to identify with the cultural heritage of their choice, yet retain "full and equitable participation ... in the ... shaping of all aspects of Canadian society." In effect, the Act seeks to preserve, enhance and incorporate cultural differences into the functioning of Canadian society, while ensuring equal access and full participation for all Canadians in the social, political, and economic spheres. It also focuses on the eradication of racism and the removal of discriminatory barriers as ways to fulfill Canada's human rights commitments.

Moreover, the Act presents multiculturalism as a positive instrument of change that aims to remove barriers that preclude the involvement, equity, and representation of all citizens in Canada's institutions, as well as their access to those institutions. The Act recognizes the need to increase minority participation in Canada's major institutions by bringing diversity into these institutions as a natural, normal, and positive component of decision-making, resource allocation, and the setting of priorities. Under the Act, all government agencies, departments and Crown corporations – not just the department responsible for multiculturalism – are expected to provide leadership in advancing Canada's multicultural mix and to take part in the design and implementation of plans, programs, procedures and decision-making strategies that enhance the full and equal participation of minorities within institutional structures.

It is also noteworthy that the Act makes the government accountable to both Parliament and the public for ensuring compliance with its provisions by requiring annual reports. A multiculturalism secretariat was established to support the government in implementing improved delivery of government services in federal institutions.

In 1988, the Government of Canada formally apologized for the wrongful incarceration, seizure of property and disenfranchisement of Japanese Canadians during World War II and offered compensation. The Government of Canada and the National Association of Japanese Canadians signed the *Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement*, and the federal government promised to create the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

The *Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act* was adopted by Parliament in 1991. It established a Race Relations Foundation in Toronto with the purpose of helping to eliminate racism and racial discrimination through public education. Funding for the establishment of the Foundation was deferred until 1996, when the federal government provided a one-time endowment of \$24 million to establish the Foundation. The Foundation's core mandate included the following:

- undertaking research, collecting data, and developing a national information base to further understanding of racism and racial discrimination;
- providing information to support effective race relations training and the development of professional standards; and
- disseminating information to increase public awareness of the importance of eliminating racism.

The *Canadian Heritage Languages Institute Act*, which was adopted by Parliament in 1991, provided for the establishment of a Heritage Languages Institute in Edmonton, with the purpose of developing national standards for teacher training and curriculum content for ethnic minority language classes in Canada. Before it could be created, however, the 1992 Budget deferred the Institute's establishment until further notice. In January 2012, under the provisions of the *Statutes Repeal Act*, the *Canadian Heritage Languages Institute Act* was repealed.

Legislation creating a full-fledged Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was adopted by Parliament in 1991. The institutionalized programs established under the newly created department were:

- Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding “to promote among Canadians and in Canadian institutions appreciation, acceptance and implementation of the principles of racial equality and multiculturalism”;
- Heritage Cultures and Languages “to assist Canadians to preserve, enhance and share their cultures, languages and ethnocultural group identities”; and
- Community Support and Participation “to support the full and equitable participation in Canadian life of individuals and communities from Canada's racial and ethnocultural minorities.”

Where early multicultural policies concentrated on cultural preservation and intercultural sharing through promotion of ethnic presses and festivals, the rejuvenated multiculturalism policy emphasized cross-cultural understanding and the attainment of social and economic integration through institutional change, affirmative action to equalize opportunity, and the removal of discriminating barriers.

The new department was short-lived, however; it was dismantled in 1993. Its multiculturalism programs were integrated into the new and larger Department of Canadian Heritage, while programs associated with citizenship (citizenship registration and promotion) were assigned to the newly established Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

The Standing Committee on Multiculturalism and Citizenship released its last report in 1993, shortly before it ceased to exist when the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was disbanded. Entitled *Study of the Implementation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in Federal Institutions*, the report made recommendations suggesting various ways of improving the evaluation of federal institutions' progress in implementing the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. Other key recommendations identified specific measures whereby government departments and agencies could strengthen their commitment to the principles of the Act.

Following increased criticism of the multiculturalism policy voiced by various groups and individuals from different parts of Canadian society, the Department of Canadian Heritage launched a comprehensive review of its multiculturalism programming activities in 1995. In 1997, the federal government announced a new policy that focused on three objectives: social justice (building a fair and equitable society); civic participation (ensuring that Canadians of all origins participate in the shaping of our communities and country); and identity (fostering a society that recognizes, respects and reflects a diversity of cultures so that people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging to Canada).

The new policy prioritized proposals that:

- assisted in the development of strategies to facilitate the full and active participation of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural communities in Canada;
- supported collective community initiatives and responses to ethnic, racial, religious and cultural conflict and hate-motivated activities;
- improved the ability of public institutions to respond to ethnic, racial, religious and cultural diversity;
- encouraged and assisted in the development of inclusive policies, programs and practices within federal departments and agencies; and
- increased public awareness, understanding and dialogue with respect to multiculturalism, racism and cultural diversity in Canada.

In 2002, the government announced that Canadian Multiculturalism Day would be held every year on 27 June.

In the February 2005 Budget, the government announced a five-year investment of \$56 million for Canada's Action Plan Against Racism. The budget also allocated \$25 million over the following three years for an Acknowledgement, Commemoration, and Education (ACE) Program that would undertake commemorative and educational initiatives to highlight the contributions of ethnocultural groups particularly affected by war measures or the immigration policies of the day. Agreements-in-principle were reached with the Ukrainian-Canadian, Italian-Canadian, and Chinese-Canadian communities, but the government changed before these agreements could be put in place.

Meanwhile, in March 2005, the government released *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*. Its objectives were to strengthen social cohesion, to further

Canada's human rights framework, and to demonstrate federal leadership in the fight against racism and hate-motivated crime.

At the international level, on 23 November 2005 Canada became the first country to adopt the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The Convention recognizes that books, films, television programs, and other cultural goods and services have a distinctive nature that goes beyond their commercial value. It also reaffirms the right of countries to take measures to foster diverse cultural expressions.

In 2006, the federal government offered a full apology to Chinese-Canadians for the head tax that was imposed on Chinese immigrants until 1923 and Canada's subsequent refusal, until 1947, to accept Chinese immigrants. The government also replaced the ACE program, described above, with the Community Historical Recognition Program (which ended on 31 March 2013) and the National Historical Recognition Program to commemorate the historical experiences and contributions of ethnocultural communities.

In 2008, responsibility for multiculturalism was transferred from the Department of Canadian Heritage to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, whose minister was renamed the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. The multiculturalism policy was modified to stress the following priorities:

- support for the economic, social, and cultural integration of new Canadians and cultural communities;
- facilitation of programs that promote mentorship, volunteerism, leadership, and civic education among at-risk youth of different cultural backgrounds; and
- promotion of intercultural understanding and Canadian values (democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law) through community initiatives, with the objective of addressing issues of cultural social exclusion (parallel communities) and radicalization.

In 2008, the federal government announced the creation of the Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism to recognize the contribution and work of individuals and groups dedicated to promoting multiculturalism and helping newcomers integrate into Canada.

In 2009, Canada became a full member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. This organization was renamed the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in 2012. Canada chaired the IHRA from March 2013 to February 2014.

In 2010, Canada hosted the second annual conference of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (ICCA). At the conference, the ICCA developed the Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism and in 2011 Canada became the first country to sign it.

That same year, the following three new objectives for the multiculturalism policy were implemented:

- to build an integrated, socially cohesive society;
- to improve the responsiveness of institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population; and
- to actively engage in discussions on multiculturalism and diversity at an international level.

In 2013, the government created the Office of Religious Freedom with a mandate to defend religious minorities, promote religious freedom and advance policies and programs that support the right to freedom of religion. As a section of Global Affairs Canada, the Office focus was abroad. The Office closed its doors on 31 March 2016.

On 23 April 2015, Parliament passed Bill S-219, known as the *Journey to Freedom Day Act*, which commemorates the exodus of Vietnamese refugees and their acceptance in Canada after the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War.

In June 2015, Canada chaired the inaugural meeting of the International Contact Group for Freedom of Religion or Belief. This informal group seeks to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief through interstate cooperation.

Also in June 2015, the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* was passed by Parliament. The Act amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Civil Marriage Act*, the *Criminal Code* and other Acts to stipulate a minimum age of 16 years for marriage and to specify that a permanent resident or foreign national is inadmissible on grounds of practising polygamy in Canada.

Following Canada's 2015 elections, the Government of Canada announced in November 2015 that the multiculturalism portfolio was being transferred from the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to the Department of Canadian Heritage. However, the objectives of the Multiculturalism Program were still the same as those announced in 2010.

On 17 May 2016, the government announced the creation of the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion (OHRFI), to replace the former Office of Religious Freedom. The OHRFI comes under Global Affairs Canada and serves as a focal point for engagement with faith and belief communities to consult on promoting religious freedom and human rights, among other subjects.

Also in May 2016, the Government of Canada delivered a formal apology for the *Komagata Maru* incident in 1914. This Japanese ship arrived in Vancouver in May 1914 with 376 passengers on board from South Asia. A total of 352 passengers were refused entry to Canada because of the immigration policy of that era.

In March 2017, Motion M-103 on systemic racism and religious discrimination was passed by the House of Commons, and on 8 June 2017, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage began a study on how the government could achieve the following two objectives:

- (i) develop a whole-of-government approach to reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination, including Islamophobia, in Canada, while ensuring a community-centred focus with a holistic response through evidence-based policy making, and
- (ii) collect data to contextualize hate crime reports and to conduct needs assessments for impacted communities.

Further to this motion, in February 2018 the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage published a report entitled *Taking Action Against Systemic Racism and Religious Discrimination Including Islamophobia*. The report made 30 recommendations, including updating and reinstating the previous *Canadian Action Plan Against Racism*, establishing uniform pan-Canadian guidelines and standards for the collection and handling of hate crime data and hate incident data, developing an anti-racism framework, and increasing multiculturalism funding dedicated to eradicating systemic racism and religious discrimination and to promoting greater intercultural understanding and awareness. The report also recommended that 29 January be designated as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia and other forms of religious discrimination.

2.3 ATTITUDES TOWARD MULTICULTURALISM

Various publications and polls suggest that Canadians are generally supportive of a multicultural society, at least in principle if not always in practice. Indeed, attitudes toward immigration and multiculturalism have become more positive over the years. According to the Focus Canada surveys conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, the percentage of Canadians who see multiculturalism as a symbol of Canadian identity increased from 37% in 1997 to 54% in 2015. At the same time, the percentage of Canadians who feel that immigration levels are too high dropped from 61% in 1977 to 37% in 2016.

While it appears as though Canadians are largely in favour of multiculturalism, attitudes about religious diversity are more mixed. According to a survey conducted by the Angus Reid Institute in 2017, when asked whether religious diversity in Canada was good or bad, 26% of Canadians responded that it was a good thing, 23% said it was a bad thing, and the remainder of respondents said they were unsure or they felt the impact was mixed.

Attitudes toward multiculturalism vary from region to region. In particular, many Québécois have expressed uneasiness about, or even resistance to, the federal multiculturalism policy since its inception. This uneasiness is largely explained in terms of the perception, by many Québécois, of multiculturalism as another intrusion by federal authorities into their province's internal affairs. Many are inclined to view multiculturalism as a ploy to downgrade the distinct society status of Québécois to the level of an ethnic minority culture under the domination of English-speaking Canada. Multiculturalism is thus seen as an attempt to dilute the French fact in

Canada, weakening francophone status and threatening the partnership of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians. For many Québécois, the idea of reducing the rights of French-speaking Canadians to the same level as those of other ethno-racial minorities in the name of multicultural equality is inconsistent with the special compact between the three founding peoples of Canada.

In addition, some commentators have expressed the fear that the multiculturalism policy is promoting too much diversity at the expense of unity. Critics say the policy is divisive because it emphasizes what is different, rather than the values that are Canadian. Canadian culture and symbols, it is felt, are being discarded in the effort to accommodate other cultures. On the other hand, defenders of Canada's approach to multiculturalism argue that it encourages integration by telling immigrants they do not have to choose between preserving their cultural heritage and participating in Canadian society. Rather, they can do both.

In his book *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, published in 1994, author Neil Bissoondath leads the charge against the government's multiculturalism policy. His book reiterates his concern over the potential divisiveness inherent in government promotion of cultural diversity. In Bissoondath's opinion, the government's encouragement of ethnic differences leads immigrants to adopt a "psychology of separation" from the mainstream culture. Multiculturalism is blamed for isolating ethno-racial groups in distinct enclaves by fostering an inward-focused mentality that drives a wedge between Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds. The author argues that unity and cohesion are being sacrificed for a philosophy that separates, intensifies misunderstanding and hostility, and pits one group against another in the competition for power and resources.

Other prominent authors, such as Richard Gwyn, in his 1995 book *Nationalism Without Walls*, and Jack Granatstein, in his 1998 book *Who Killed Canadian History?*, have criticized what they see as the negative impacts of the multiculturalism policy. Gwyn argues that the political elite was mistaken in rationalizing that the backlash against multiculturalism was caused by temporary "employment anxiety" in the early 1990s, rather than a widespread fear that Canadians were becoming "strangers in their own land." Granatstein implicates official multiculturalism and political correctness in the death of Canadian history, both in schools and among Canadian youth in general. He claims that a number of studies in schools and at post-secondary levels of education show that Canadians are learning less and less about their history and cannot pass relatively basic tests about historical events or personalities. Granatstein also argues that multiculturalism policies have helped spread the idea among immigrants and even native-born Canadians that Canada, particularly English-speaking Canada, has no culture and identity of its own.

In response to these arguments, in 1998, philosopher Will Kymlicka published *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada*. He says the evidence does not support claims that multiculturalism has decreased the rate of integration of immigrants. Using statistics on naturalization rates for immigrants, levels of political participation among ethnocultural groups, rates at which new Canadians can speak an official language and rates of intermarriage, Kymlicka argues that the

multiculturalism policy has worked and that there is no evidence that it has promoted ethnic separateness.

As noted at the beginning of this section, recent polls show that multiculturalism is largely seen in a positive light. In a review of public opinion research on attitudes toward multiculturalism from 2006 to 2009, Stuart Soroka and Sarah Robertson found that multiculturalism is “viewed as an integral and largely positive aspect of the Canadian state.” At the same time, they found that Canadians “see some value in shared values and traditions as well.”

2.4 PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL MULTICULTURALISM POLICIES

All provincial governments have adopted some form of multiculturalism policy. At present, six of the ten provinces – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia – have enacted multiculturalism legislation. Eight provinces – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia – have created a multiculturalism advisory council that reports to the minister responsible for multiculturalism. In Alberta, the Alberta Human Rights Commission performs the role of multiculturalism advisory council. In Nova Scotia, the legislation is implemented by both a Cabinet committee on multiculturalism and advisory councils. Ontario has an official multicultural policy and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration is responsible for promoting social inclusion, civic and community engagement and recognition. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador launched the province’s policy on multiculturalism in 2008 and the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills leads its implementation.

While the territorial governments do not have multiculturalism policies per se, they have human rights Acts that prohibit discrimination based on, among other things, race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed or religion. In Whitehorse, the Multicultural Centre of the Yukon provides services to immigrants.

2.4.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia adopted the *Multiculturalism Act* in 1993. It requires the government to “generally, carry on government services and programs in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of British Columbia.” Each ministry and Crown corporation makes an annual report describing its efforts to promote multiculturalism. The minister responsible for multiculturalism submits an omnibus report, *Report on Multiculturalism: Government of British Columbia*, to the legislature. The Multicultural Advisory Council advises the minister responsible for multiculturalism on issues related to anti-racism and multiculturalism. It brings people together from across British Columbia who are dedicated to promoting multiculturalism.

In order to promote understanding of diversity, in 2008 British Columbia launched EmbraceBC. With support from the provincial and federal governments, this program provides information resources as well as funding for community-based anti-racism and multiculturalism projects.

That same year, the Government of British Columbia launched the British Columbia Multicultural Awards, which recognize individuals, organizations and businesses whose exceptional work helps bring diverse cultures together.

On 15 May 2014, the Government of British Columbia issued a formal apology to Chinese Canadians for the historic wrongs done to them by past provincial governments.

In British Columbia, the third week in November every year is dedicated to celebrating multiculturalism.

2.4.2 ALBERTA

Alberta first adopted multiculturalism legislation in 1984 with the passage of the *Alberta Cultural Heritage Act*. Multiculturalism was thereby recognized as a fundamental characteristic of Alberta society, which confers economic as well as social and cultural benefits on all Albertans. It was replaced in 1990 by the *Alberta Multiculturalism Act*, of which the main objectives were to encourage respect for and promote an awareness of the multicultural heritage of Alberta and to foster an environment in which all Albertans can participate and contribute to the cultural, social, economic and political life of their province. The Act established a Multiculturalism Commission to advise the government on policy and programs respecting multiculturalism, as well as a Multiculturalism Advisory Council to make policy recommendations to the Commission. A Multicultural Fund was also set up to finance programs and services related to its objectives and to provide grants to eligible persons and organizations.

In 1996, the government merged the human rights and multiculturalism programs. The *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act* retained the main objectives of the *Alberta Multiculturalism Act*, and the Alberta Human Rights Commission took over the duties of the former Multiculturalism Commission. Similarly, the Multicultural Fund continued as the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Fund. In 2009, Alberta's human rights legislation was amended and was renamed the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. The Multiculturalism Fund became the Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund.

2.4.3 SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan was the first province to adopt legislation on multiculturalism. The *Saskatchewan Multicultural Act* was first passed in 1974. In 1997, a new *Multiculturalism Act* was enacted, which reaches beyond the traditional scope of multiculturalism to address the social justice issues of society today, such as racism and discrimination. The purposes of the Act (section 3) are:

- (a) to recognize that the diversity of Saskatchewan people with respect to race, cultural heritage, religion, ethnicity, ancestry and place of origin is a fundamental characteristic of Saskatchewan society that enriches the lives of all Saskatchewan people;
- (b) to encourage respect for the multicultural heritage of Saskatchewan;
- (c) to foster a climate for harmonious relations among people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds without sacrificing their distinctive cultural and ethnic identities;
- (d) to encourage the continuation of a multicultural society.

The Government of Saskatchewan supports multicultural activity primarily through the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation. Lottery funding directly supports the activities of over 1,200 volunteer-driven organizations.

2.4.4 MANITOBA

Manitoba adopted the *Manitoba Intercultural Council Act* in 1984. Under the Act, the Council's mandate is to make recommendations to the government, through the minister responsible for ethnocultural matters in the province, on education, human rights, immigrant settlement, media and communication, and cultural heritage. In the summer of 1992, the Manitoba legislature adopted a new provincial *Multiculturalism Act*, the preamble of which states:

Manitoba's multicultural society is not a collection of many separate societies, divided by language and culture, but is a single society united by shared laws, values, aspirations and responsibilities.

The new Act established a Multiculturalism Secretariat whose role is to "identify, prioritize and implement actions to contribute to the achievement of a successful multicultural society in Manitoba." The Secretariat was established under the direction and control of the minister, and allows the minister to administer and carry out the provisions of the Act.

Manitoba provides funding for projects that promote multiculturalism and combat racism through the Ethnocultural Community Support Program, part of the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage.

In 2015, Manitoba announced that the Manitoba Advisory Council on Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism would be created to replace the Manitoba Immigration Council and the Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council. The new Council's mandate is to provide information, advice and recommendations to the government on the following matters:

- (a) matters relating to citizenship and immigration, including
 - (i) the attraction of immigrants to Manitoba and the retention of immigrants,
 - (ii) the long-term settlement and integration of immigrants, and
 - (iii) the full inclusion and participation of immigrants in the economic, social and cultural life of Manitoba;
- (b) matters relating to multiculturalism, including intercultural relations and ethnic and linguistic diversity.

2.4.5 ONTARIO

Although Ontario inaugurated an official multicultural policy in 1977 that promoted the cultural activities of the various ethnic groups, formal legislation establishing a Ministry of Citizenship and Culture (now the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) came into force only in 1982. Under the *Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act*, the Ministry is responsible for “recognizing the pluralistic nature of Ontario society, to stress the full participation of all Ontarians as equal members of the community, encouraging the sharing of cultural heritage while affirming those elements held in common by all residents.”

In February 2016, the Government of Ontario announced that it was establishing an Anti-Racism Directorate to address systemic racism in government policies, decisions and programs.

On 7 March 2017, the Government of Ontario published *A Better Way Forward: Ontario’s 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan*, an action plan outlining the government’s strategy to eliminate systemic racism. The plan included:

- developing a disaggregated race data collection framework;
- introducing a new Ontario Black Youth Action Plan;
- developing an anti-racism impact assessment framework;
- introducing anti-racism legislation that would ensure future sustainability and accountability of the province’s anti-racism work by providing a framework for government and organizations to identify and combat systemic racism; and
- implementing targeted public education and awareness initiatives on racism in all its forms, including Islamophobia and antisemitism.

On 1 June 2017, the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017* was enacted. It provides for the following:

- retaining the Anti-Racism Directorate;
- maintaining and regularly reviewing an anti-racism strategy; and
- reviewing the anti-racism strategy at least every five years.

In June 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration announced the launch of the Multicultural Community Capacity Grants program, which seeks to help newcomers and ethnocultural communities participate fully in the civic, cultural, social and economic life of the province.

2.4.6 QUEBEC

Quebec designates its policy as “interculturalism.” The policy is mainly concerned with the acceptance of, and communication and interaction between, culturally diverse groups (cultural communities) without, however, implying any intrinsic equality among them. Diversity is tolerated and encouraged, but only within a framework that

establishes the unquestioned supremacy of French in the language and culture of Quebec.

In 1981, the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration set out its intercultural objectives by publishing a plan of action entitled *Autant de façons d'être Québécois* (Québécois – Each and Every One). The plan talked about the development of a strategy to:

- develop cultural communities and ensure that their uniqueness is maintained;
- sensitize francophones to the contribution of cultural communities to Quebec's heritage and cultural development; and
- facilitate the integration of cultural communities into Quebec society, especially those sectors historically excluded or under-represented within institutional settings.

In 1984, the National Assembly passed legislation creating the Conseil des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration (Council of Cultural Communities and Immigration), later known as the Conseil des relations interculturelles (Council of Intercultural Relations). The Council advised the minister on the planning and implementation of government policies relating to cultural communities and immigration. It also commissioned studies and undertook research on relevant issues.

In 1986, the Government of Quebec published the *Déclaration sur les relations interethniques et interraciales* (Declaration on Intercultural and Interracial Relations). This declaration condemns racism and racial discrimination and commits the government "to encourage the full participation of every person in the economic, social and cultural development of Quebec, regardless of colour, religion, ethnic or national origin."

Quebec's intercultural orientation toward immigrants and diversity was further confirmed with the release at the end of 1990 of a white paper entitled *Let's Build Quebec Together: A Policy Statement on Immigration and Integration*. Three principles were reinforced in the government's policy:

- Quebec is a French-speaking society.
- Quebec is a democratic society in which everyone is expected to contribute to public life.
- Quebec is a pluralistic society that respects the diversity of various cultures from within a democratic framework.

To meet these obligations, the white paper proposed a formal "moral contract" between immigrants and native-born Québécois. Quebec would declare itself a francophone, pluralistic society, yet one that is mindful of cultural differences. Immigrants would subscribe to Quebec's *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and contribute to Quebec nation-building in cooperation with native-born Québécois.

In 2005, the National Assembly passed legislation creating the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities, which replaced the former Ministry of Cultural

Communities and Immigration. As spelled out in the legislation, the main functions of the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities with regard to cultural communities are:

- to support cultural communities in order to facilitate their full participation in Quebec society;
- to foster openness to pluralism; and
- to foster closer intercultural relations among the people of Quebec.

In 2007, the Government of Quebec established the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, headed by co-chairs Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor. The Commission was established in response to a number of cases that gave rise to a public debate over the accommodation of religious practices and the broader question of the integration of immigrants and minorities. The Commission's report, published in May 2008, concluded that, while "the foundations of collective life in Québec [were] not in a critical situation," there was a crisis of perception regarding reasonable accommodation. Bouchard and Taylor said the policies of interculturalism and secularism should be clearly defined. The Commission also made a number of recommendations on integrating immigrants, improving public understanding of intercultural practices, and fighting inequality and discrimination.

In 2008, the Government of Quebec published *Diversity: An Added Value – Government policy to promote participation of all in Québec's development*. It set out three policy directions:

- recognize and combat prejudice and discrimination;
- tackle all forms of discrimination and ensure better representation of under-represented groups in public and private institutions and in businesses; and
- ensure coherence and complementarity of efforts to combat prejudice and discrimination.

In 2011, the Conseil des relations interculturelles was disbanded. Its activities were integrated with the activities of the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities.

In April 2014, the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities became the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion. On 7 March 2016, the Government of Quebec issued a new policy on immigration, participation and inclusion entitled *Together, We Are Quebec*. It also published an action plan, with four objectives:

- harnessing the strategic benefits of permanent and temporary immigration;
- making it possible for immigrants to quickly and effectively complete the immigration process;
- strengthening trust and solidarity among people of all origins; and

- striving for substantive equality through cooperation with economic leaders, local community partners, and departments and agencies.

On 18 October 2017, the National Assembly passed *An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for requests for accommodations on religious grounds in certain bodies*. This legislation laid out the procedures for providing and receiving services from public organizations with faces uncovered.

2.4.7 NEW BRUNSWICK

New Brunswick introduced its Policy on Multiculturalism in 1986. The policy is guided by the principles of equality, appreciation and preservation of cultural heritages, and participation. In the late 1980s, the provincial government established a Ministerial Advisory Committee to provide advice to the minister.

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour is responsible for the Population Growth Division, which in turn is responsible for settlement and multicultural communities. The Division also administers the Multicultural Grants Program, which assists community partners working to meet the objectives of the Policy on Multiculturalism.

2.4.8 NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia adopted its multiculturalism legislation in 1989. The *Act to Promote and Preserve Multiculturalism* recognizes multiculturalism as an inherent feature of Nova Scotia society and pledges the government to the maintenance of good relations between cultural communities. The Act provides for two administrative structures to manage its implementation: a Cabinet Committee on Multiculturalism to oversee the application of the policy on a government-wide basis and a Multicultural Advisory Committee to advise the Cabinet committee and review the programs. The Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage is responsible for the administration of the Act.

In 2017, the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage issued Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan, which outlines various ways to promote cultural diversity, including:

- updating the province's 1989 *Act to Promote and Preserve Multiculturalism*;
- improving access to early childhood development intervention programs for Indigenous, Acadian and Francophone, African Nova Scotian, and immigrant families; and
- strengthening the province's cultural offices.

2.4.9 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Prince Edward Island adopted a Provincial Multicultural Policy in 1988. Its purpose is to “promote cultural survival and expression, further cross-cultural expression, further cross-cultural understanding, acknowledge the contribution of cultural diversity and ensure the equal treatment of all people living in Prince Edward Island.” The Policy is built on four principles: equality, appreciation, preservation and participation. A Ministerial Advisory Committee advises the minister of Tourism and Culture, who is responsible for multiculturalism.

2.4.10 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

In 2008, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador launched the Policy on Multiculturalism for the province. It sets out the provincial government’s commitment to “the promotion of multiculturalism and cross-cultural understanding where the cultural diversity of all people is valued, supported and enhanced to collectively build a self-reliant, prosperous province.” The policy is designed to guide government programs and services. The Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, which is part of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, works to establish partnerships which promote multicultural activities.

3 CHRONOLOGY OF FEDERAL POLICY ON MULTICULTURALISM

- 1948 Canada adhered to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which applies to all human beings, regardless of sex, race, religion, culture or ideology.
- 1960 Parliament passed the *Canadian Bill of Rights*, which prohibits discrimination for reasons of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion or sex.
- 1967 Racial discrimination provisions that had existed in Canadian immigration law since the early 20th century were abolished.
- 1969 The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism released Book Four of its report, on the contribution of ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada.
- 1970 Canada ratified the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*.
- 1971 Canada became the first country in the world to introduce a multiculturalism policy.
- 1972 First appointment of a (junior) minister for Multiculturalism.
- 1973 The Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (later renamed the Canadian Ethnocultural Council) was established to support the minister.

CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

- 1974 Saskatchewan became the first province to adopt legislation regarding multiculturalism.
- 1976 Canada ratified the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.
- 1977 Parliament adopted the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which established the Canadian Human Rights Commission to monitor and mediate disputes over human rights in Canada.
- 1982 The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* enshrined equality rights in the Constitution and acknowledged Canada's multicultural heritage.
- 1984 The House of Commons Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society issued its *Equality Now!* report.
- 1985 Establishment of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism.
- 1986 Parliament passed the *Employment Equity Act*.
- 1988 Royal Assent was given on 21 July to the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* after Parliament had adopted the legislation with all-party support.
- The federal government formally apologized for the wrongful incarceration and the disenfranchisement of Japanese Canadians and the seizure of their property during World War II and offered compensation.
- 1990 Multiculturalism Canada tabled its first annual report on the implementation of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* by the Government of Canada.
- 1991 Royal Assent was given to the *Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Act* on 17 January. On 21 April, the new Department was officially established, with Gerry Weiner appointed as the first full-time minister.
- 1993 The federal government announced that Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada would be split along its two main components: the multiculturalism programs would be merged with the new Department of Canadian Heritage and the citizenship programs would be amalgamated with the new Department of Citizenship and Immigration.
- 1994 The federal government announced that it would not pay out any compensation to national ethnic groups to redress past indignities.
- 1995 The House of Commons unanimously passed a motion formally recognizing February as Black History Month.
- 1996 The federal government established the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.
- 1997 The federal government announced a renewed multiculturalism program.

- 2002 The federal government announced that Canadian Multiculturalism Day would be held on 27 June each year.
In May, the Government of Canada signed an official declaration designating May as Asian Heritage Month.
- 2005 In the February budget, the federal government announced commemorative and educational initiatives to highlight the contributions of ethnocultural groups particularly affected by war measures or the immigration policies of the day.
In March, the federal government released *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*.
- 2005 Between August and November, the federal government announced agreements-in-principle with the Ukrainian-Canadian, Italian-Canadian, and Chinese-Canadian communities as part of the Acknowledgement, Commemoration, and Education Program announced in the February 2005 Budget.
- 2006 The federal government offered a full apology to Chinese-Canadians for the head tax that was imposed on Chinese immigrants until 1923 and the subsequent exclusion of Chinese immigrants until 1947.
The federal government announced the Community Historical Recognition Program and the National Historical Recognition Program to commemorate the historical experiences and contributions of ethnocultural communities.
- 2008 Responsibility for multiculturalism transferred from the Department of Canadian Heritage to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.
The Senate unanimously approved and passed the motion to recognize the contributions of Black Canadians and February as Black History Month.
The federal government launched the Paul Yuzyk Award for Multiculturalism.
- 2009 Canada became a full member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (now known as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance).
- 2010 Canada hosted the second annual conference of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism.
- 2011 Canada became the first country to sign the Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism, which was developed by the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism.
- 2013 The government created the Office of Religious Freedom, with a mandate to defend religious minorities, promote religious freedom and advance policies and programs that support the right to freedom of religion.
Canada served as Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance from March 2013 to February 2014.

- 2015 Royal Assent was given to the *Journey to Freedom Day Act*, which commemorates the exodus of Vietnamese refugees and their acceptance in Canada after the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War, on 23 April 2015.
- The *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, which amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Civil Marriage Act* and the *Criminal Code*, received Royal Assent on 18 June 2015.
- In June 2015, Canada held the inaugural meeting of the International Contact Group for Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- On 4 November, the federal government announced that the multiculturalism portfolio was being transferred from the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- 2016 On 17 May 2016, the government announced the creation of the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion (OHRFI), which replaced the Office of Religious Freedom established in 2013 and was given an expanded mandate.
- The Government of Canada delivered a formal apology for the *Komagata Maru* incident in 1914, when 352 out of 376 passengers of the ship, primarily of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu origin, were refused entry to Canada because of the immigration policy of that era.
- 2017 In March 2017, Motion M-103 on systemic racism and religious discrimination was passed by the House of Commons, and on 8 June 2017, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage began a study on these subjects.
- 2018 In February 2018, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage published a report entitled *Taking Action Against Systemic Racism and Religious Discrimination Including Islamophobia*.

NOTES

- * This paper was published as a Library of Parliament Current Issue Review in January 1994 and has been updated regularly since then. It became a Background Paper in 2009. Marc Leman, formerly of the Library of Parliament, contributed to earlier versions of this paper.

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