LOOKING AT THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

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This article was adapted from the author's speaking notes at a November 30-December 1, 2017 forum in Gatineau, Quebec called "Measuring Identity, Diversity and Inclusion in Canada @ 150 and Beyond." It discusses a contemporary shift in the Canadian public's attitudes toward the contributions of Indigenous peoples and official language communities in Canada and highlights key milestones in the history of Nunavut (e.g., Nunavut Land Claim Agreement and Inuit Languages Protection Act).

Are we undergoing a shift in the way we collectively envision the contribution of Indigenous people and official language communities in Canada? YES, but it has been slow in coming.

There have been significant changes to the attitudes of Canadians towards the contribution of Indigenous people as a country. Over the last 20 years, these attitudes have changed for the better, especially in the past decade. The contributions made by leaders of Nunavut have been significant in our Territory. The negotiation and ratification of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in May 1993 was a milestone in the history of Canada. In this historic land claim, Inuit negotiated to manage a territory that represents one-fifth the land mass of Canada. On July 1, 1993, the Inuit of Nunavut also negotiated to create a government from within the agreement, chosing to create a public government instead of a self-government. In exchange for a public government, the federal government agreed to include in the Nunavut Accord the following clauses: By 2020, 85% of government employees in Nunavut would be Inuit; and the working language of the government would be Inuktut (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun).

Looking back at the intensions of the Government of Canada in 1993 and again in 1999 when Nunavut was created, it looked promising for the people of Nunavut.

As of September 30, 2017, 51% of hires in the Government of Nunavut's Departments, Agencies, Boards and Corporations were Inuit.[1] However only 36% of executive positions and 17% of senior management were filled by Inuit. Lack of education and in particular lack of post secondary education was the main reason for this discrepency. More should have been done since the creation of Nunavut in 1999. There has been a lack of pro-active initiatives made by both governments, Ter-

1 Government of Nunavut, Department of Finance, "Towards a Representative Public Service" (30 September 2017).

ritorial and Federal. The Nunavut Land Claim Organization, the parent of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, monitors the progress of the Government and there have been many, many meetings to enforce Article 23 of the Land Claim, which obligates the Government of Nunavut to have Inuit employment at 85% by year 2020.

The Inuit of Nunavut believe that good faith had been broken by both governments in this very important agreement made between the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut in its acceptance of its contents and obligations. As a nation, Canadian views and attitudes are shifting with renewed recognition of the contributions of Indigenous people; efforts are being made to improve relations; reconciliation by the Government of Canada with all Indigenous people has begun and will continue for the better.[2] I am optimistic that things will only move forward. The future looks brighter. More training programs are being developed by the Government of Nunavut and its public government institutions. Arctic College, in partnership with southern universities, is carrying out postsecondary education in Iqaluit, the capital city of Nunavut. Other communities continue with satellite college programs. My hope and ambition is to have an Arctic University. If we are to truly become a bilingual territory with the emphasis on Official Languages and to protect Inuit Languages we need to continue Inuktut education after grade 12. To accomplish this, the university in Nunavut would have to create programs in Inuktut that are equivalent to those in English.

This brings me to the Official Languages of Nunavut, Inuktut (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun) along side English and French and the Inuit Languages Protection Act. When the Nunavut Accord was agreed upon they instilled that the Government of Nunavut's working language to be in the Inuktut languages.

For many reasons, one being the lack of Inuit speaking management personnel, the workplace language continues to be primarily in English. But as mentioned earlier, efforts to learn and hire Inuit who speak their mother tongue is slowly becoming more visible.

Yes, we are undergoing a shift agressively in Nunavut to make Inuktut the working languages of our public institutions, including in the private sector. In 2008, the Official Languages Act was amended to include Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun as official languages, in addition to English and French. At the same time, an Act to protect the Inuit languages was introduced and passed in 2008, however some sections of the Act were put on hold. On July 9, 2017 (Nunavut Day), the Minister of Languages announced that Part 1, Sections 3 to 5 of the Inuit Languages Protection Act would now be enacted. These sections are outlined below:

- Section 3: Inuit Language Rights and Duties – where every organization would now have to translate and display all signs, marketing and promotional materials produced in the workplace into Inuktut and reception services would be in the Inuktut languages.

- Section 4: Government Contracts are to be changed so that all bidders are required to show how Inuit languages will be delivered if the contractor is delivering its services.

- Section 5: Service of civil claim – anyone in the Nunavut Court to be given language preference.

The enactment of these sections now makes the Act whole in its entirety.

So how can we best respect our commitments? Keep your word! Set timelines. Set consequences if they are not followed. Reconciliation is seen by action – showing respect to the human race, giving a helping hand, and through kindness, from the crib till Resting in Peace.

The rise of multiple identities implies that we are a welcoming country, however, we seem to forget those left behind: we need better training for jobs, less overcrowding of homes in the North, and the right to work in the languages of our people.

2 See Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 1 in Attachment C.

ATTACHMENT C

In a recent survey of the Canadian public in November 2017, the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS) found that 3 in 4 Canadians (74%) hold positive views towards Aboriginals (see Table 1 below) – similar to the rate found in March 2017 (73%). This is compared to 61% in March 2016, 62% in February 2014, and 58% in March 2013 (see Figure 1). In March of 2012, nearly two-thirds of Canadians surveyed (65%) held positive views toward Aboriginals. According to the November 2017 survey, 85% of Aboriginals surveyed held positive views toward Aboriginals in Canada as did 77% of English-speaking Quebecers and 83% of persons living in the Atlantic provinces.

TABLE 1: VIEWS TOWARD ABORIGINALS IN CANADA

	Total (2.344)	Aboriginal / First Nations (310)	FR ROC (264)	EN QC (289)	BC+Terr. (198)	Prairies (381)	ON (839)	QC (714)	ATL (212)
TOTAL POSITIVE	74%	85%	73%	77%	73%	64%	76%	75%	83%
Very positive	30%	58%	25%	34%	28%	23%	35%	25%	40%
Somewhat positive	44%	28%	47%	43%	45%	41%	41%	49%	43%
TOTAL NEGATIVE	17%	7%	20%	15%	18%	29%	13%	16%	10%
Somewhat negative	14%	5%	17%	13%	16%	24%	11%	14%	6%
Very negative	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	5%	2%	2%	4%
I don't know	7%	5%	7%	6%	8%	4%	8%	7%	5%
I prefer not to answer	3%	3%	0%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	1%

The November 2017 survey also revealed that a majority of Canadians (59%) view relations between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Canada positively, and this finding is consistent with the views held by Aboriginal / First Nations respondents to the survey (60%). Atlantic Canadians viewed these relations the most positively at 69% (see Table 2). Earlier in 2017, 53% of Canadians viewed these relations as positive compared to only 39% in March 2016, 37% in March 2015, 42% in February 2014 and 43% in March 2013 (see Figure 1).

TABLE 2: VIEWS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ABORIGINALS AND NON-ABORIGINALS IN CANADA

	Total (2.344)	Aboriginal / First Nations (310)	FR ROC (264)	EN QC (289)	BC+Terr. (198)	Prairies (381)	ON (839)	QC (714)	ATL (212)
TOTAL POSITIVE	59%	60%	59%	57%	61%	52%	61%	58%	69%
Very positive	18%	30%	17%	15%	18%	15%	20%	15%	23%
Somewhat positive	42%	30%	43%	42%	42%	38%	41%	43%	46%
TOTAL NEGATIVE	29%	31%	32%	31%	28%	41%	27%	28%	23%
Somewhat negative	24%	20%	26%	28%	26%	31%	21%	23%	19%
Very negative	6%	11%	5%	3%	2%	11%	5%	5%	4%
I don't know	9%	5%	8%	10%	11%	6%	9%	12%	7%
I prefer not to answer	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%

FIGURE 1: VIEWS TOWARD ABORIGINALS AND OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ABORIGINALS AND NON-ABORIGINALS IN CANADA

