AN EVER-CHANGING FACE AND IDENTITY

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There was a palpable sense of Canada's coming of age on the world stage during the country's centennial celebrations in 1967. Expo 67 greeted the world and the world saw Canada in a new way. With a new flag devoid of the Union Jack, foreigners increasingly saw Canada as discarding vestiges of its British colonial past. Expo host Montréal was Canada's lively bicultural metropolis. The dispositional prerequisites of British Canadians' Britishness were evaporating as Britain's power internationally continued to ebb. Nevertheless, those of British ethnic origins continued to sit atop the country's political, economic, and social pecking orders.[1]

Also pivotal in 1967 was the introduction of a liberalized immigration policy, giving people from all over the world equal opportunity for admission. Immigrants were no longer identified by their ethnic origins but by their education, occupational skills, and language. This opened the door to Canada for many professional and skilled Asians as well as others from many lands and cultures.

During the centennial celebrations, a Royal Commission acknowledged and promoted bilingualism and biculturalism. Simultaneously, the children and grandchildren of the flood of early twentieth century European immigrants were unwinding their lingering Old World identities; acculturating, intermarrying, and assimilating largely into the English-speaking group in a post-Holocaust world increasingly taken with individual rights. The concept of Canada as an "equal partnership" of two founding peoples, English and French, pervaded federal government thinking.

1 JOHN PORTER, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

Others who had settled in the country over the century chafed at their secondary status. J. B. Rudnyckyj, a Galician-born immigrant folklorist and member of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission, promoted the recognition of the needs and contributions of other ethnic groups to Canada's cultural enrichment beyond those speaking the "two colonial languages."[2] This soon led to a multicultural policy in 1971, the world's first. It represented a form of "liberal multiculturalism," the belief that the recognition and accommodation of ethnic diversity strengthens democratic institutions and diminishes ethnic hierarchies while expanding human rights and freedoms.[3]

Official and public consciousness of Canada's Indigenous peoples remained marginal; neither the bicultural nor multicultural frame included them. A government White Paper in 1969 proposing their assimilation by jettisoning the *Indian Act* provoked a backlash. A wave of Indigenous activism began with a Red Paper and assertions that Indigenous peoples continued to hold Aboriginal title to land. Academic research, a revised Canadian constitution in 1982, and court decisions heightened the legal status of Indigenous peoples.

The new constitution entrenched official bilingualism and directed the judiciary to interpret newly enshrined individual and group rights in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the country's multicultural heritage. The Reform Party, which sprang up in 1987 and became the second largest party in Parliament in 1997, derided the B&B Commission's conception of Canada "as unfair to the vast majority of unilingual Canadians." It also vowed to eliminate funding for multiculturalism programs and abolish the Department of Multiculturalism, created in 1984, that administered them.[4] Other critics castigated multiculturalism as a wrong-headed policy that divided Canadians. They contended multiculturalism encouraged groups to highlight rather than downplay their "tribalisms," putting Canada at risk of ethnic balkanization.[5]

Many Quebeckers felt the multiculturalism policy as an imposition by English Canada that reduced the status of biculturalism and weakened Québec's ability to shield its distinctive character. In their view, the underlying assumption of multiculturalism is that there are no primary cultures, just multiple cultures of equal worth and status. Quebecers posited "interculturalism" as an alternative; this would take the centrality of Québec's francophone culture for granted and seek to integrate other minorities into that common public culture.[6] This model combines multiculturalism's sensitivity to diversity with a secularist sensitivity to universal rights. Interculturalism is not so much a matter of difference in policy as of narrative and identity; it is

2 Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Book I: "The Official Languages (1967), pp. 155-169.

3 WILL KYMLICKA, *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

4 Reform Party of Canada, *Principles and Policies* (Blue Book) (n.p., 1991), pp. 33-34.

5 For example, NEIL BISSONDATH, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin 1994), and REGINALD W. BIBBY, *Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1990).

6 GÉRARD BOUCHARD, "What is Interculturalism?" *McGill Law Journal*, vol. 56, no. 2 (2011), pp. 435-468.

about the ongoing association of a French-speaking people in a historically stable community.[7]

The 1996 census underscored the new reality of Canada's multicultural society. For the first time, only a minority of the immigrant population was born in Britain and other European countries.[8] In 1970, the top two immigrant source countries had been the United Kingdom and the United States. Only three of the top ten immigrant sources – the West Indies, India, and China – were non-traditional. By 2010, seven of the top ten source countries were non-traditional, led by the Philippines. Canadian governments also began to view multiculturalism as an economic resource, leveraging the knowledge and experience of immigrants to attract foreign investment and expand trade with immigrants' countries of origin.

As Canadian society became more secular, polyethnic, and religiously diverse, foreign cultural practices have emerged as a political issue. In the 2015 federal election, the government party campaigned against "barbaric cultural practices" (as if "honour killings" and female genital mutilation were common practices among some immigrant groups) and against women wearing a niqab at citizenship ceremonies.[9] However, attitudes about the contributions of immigrants "bringing in new ideas and cultures" are more positive than in other western states; decreasing numbers of Canadians say there are "too many" immigrants.[10] In this sesquicentennial year, another federal government has put its imprimatur on the traits of diversity and inclusiveness by putting in place a Cabinet Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, charged with improving the economic status of immigrants, promoting diversity, multiculturalism and linguistic duality, and improving relations with Indigenous peoples.[11] The title of the responsible department, "Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship," contrasts the title of the Department of Immigration and Colonization which existed from 1917 to 1936, subsequent to the decades when colonization had occurred, in large part at the expense of Indigenous peoples and when policy and public opinion were not favourable to refugees and non-European minorities.

In 1967, the Department of Indian Affairs managed the lives of most Indigenous peoples. Created in 1876, it undermined Indigenous languages and cultures in pursuit of an imaginary model of homogeneous civilizational integrity. Today, in 2017, a Department of Indigenous Services operates to close the socioeconomic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, and another Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations works to make "foundational changes to… laws, policies and operational practices based on the recognition of rights" of Indigenous peoples and to advance

7 CHARLES TAYLOR, "Interculturalism or Multiculturalism?" *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 38 no. 4-5 (May 2012), pp. 413-423.

8 Statistics Canada, "1996 Census: Immigration and citizenship," *The Daily*, Nov. 4, 1997, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/971104/dq971104-eng.htm

9 Conservative Party of Canada, "Protect our Economy: Our Conservative Plan to Protect the Economy," (2015), p. 116.

10 Jack Jedwab, "Receiving and Giving: How Does the Canadian Public Feel about Immigration and Integration?" In John Biles, Meyer Burstein, and James Frideres, eds., *Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century* (Kingston: Queen's University School of Policy Studies, 2008), pp. 214 and 222.

11 Canada, "Cabinet Committee Mandates and Membership," May 12, 2017, http://pm.gc.ca/eng/cabinet-committee-mandate-and-membership

their self-determination and self-government.[12]

The intervening decades between 1967 and 2017 witnessed Anglophone and commercial flight from Montréal and larger numbers of visible minority groups arriving as immigrants; they represented almost 80% of immigrants between 2006 and 2011 and are now over 20% of the population, transforming Toronto and Vancouver; these groups will soon be the majority in these cities. The diverse immigrants of recent decades have reconfigured the meaning of national identity for established Canadians. However, the presence of the French and the Indigenous peoples makes Canada a multinational as well as a polyethnic state.

The vertical mosaic that was Canada in 1967 has not been upended, but the appearance of two refugees from China and Haiti as Governors-General, a First Nations Minister of Justice, a turbaned Sikh as Minister of Defence, and an Ismaili mayor of Calgary attests to the greater openness of the political elite to non-British, non-French, and Indigenous Canadians. The construction and reconstruction of Canadian society has meant that national identity has always been provisional, continuing to evolve, becoming significantly different from the images of the charter groups of French and British.

12 "New Ministers to support the renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples" Aug. 28, 2017, http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/08/28/new-ministers-support-renewed-relationship-indigenous-peoples