INTRODUCTION

E PLURIBUS PLURIBUS? THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS OF BEING CANADIAN

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Jack Jedwab is the President of the Association for Canadian Studies and the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration. Holding a PhD in Canadian History from Concordia University, he taught at Université du Québec à Montréal and McGill University. He has taught courses on the history of immigration in Quebec, on ethnic minorities in Quebec, on official language minorities in Canada and on sport in Canada. He has also authored essays for books, journals and newspapers across the country, in addition to being the author of various publications and government reports on issues of immigration, multiculturalism, human rights and official languages.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Association for Canadian Studies (1973–2023) we asked "who are we" as a people (s) to the contributors to this edition of Canadian Issues. The report that ultimately gave birth to the ACS was Tom Symons "To Know Ourselves" and for half a century, our organization has been examining this question via conferences, surveys and publications. In all likelihood we'll be continuing to do so in coming decades, as the one consensus that emerges from the contributions to this edition of Canadian Issues is that there is no consensus. Inviting experts to examine and define our identity tends to result in a distinct agreement to disagree. We are in effect a country with multiple and/or split personalities. We're constantly challenged with the task of reconciling or coming to terms with who we are collectively while making efforts to engage in reconciliation.

In effect, there is diversity within our diversity. According to the eminent philosopher Charles Taylor, in order to know ourselves as people(s) we

need to think in terms of deep diversity. He insists that asking whether Canadians can accept deep diversity is the "only formula on which a united federal Canada can be rebuilt".

A few other things stand out across the many observations that arise from the texts that follow. One is the changing discourse amongst thought leaders in Canada as there is considerably greater use of the term "diversity" rather than "multiculturalism" when describing the country's multiple and intersecting identities. This is amply demonstrated in research conducted by Larregue, and Warren in their review of fifteen years (2006–2021) of submissions to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). They further report that the theme of colonialism is the object of significant uptake in research projects conducted by Canadian academics in the social sciences and humanities who increasingly describe Canadian society as settler-colonial and/or racialized.

Another revelation from the texts that follow, is the historic importance of reconciliation between peoples and communities being presented in binary/bilateral terms and thus increasingly cast as indigenous and non-indigenous (or indigenous and settler), French and English, domestic and foreign-born, etc. The challenge issued by deep diversity is whether such binary approaches can unite the two parties around a shared vision where plural identities often underlie both the "them" and the "us".

Yet another observation that arises from the texts is the discursive gap between the academy and policy makers on the one hand and the broader public on the other with the use of terminology by the former that is not always well understood by the latter. By no means is this a new phenomenon but one wonders whether the gap is widening. In his essay John Milloy stresses the importance of personal and institutional trust in the process of reconciliation and he expresses concern that declining trust in elites jeopardizes reconciliation efforts.

A big thanks to all of the contributors to this edition of Canadian Issues. Below you'll find short summary of each of the texts:

From perhaps the very beginnings of Canada might be described as a work in progress and historian Jocelyn Letourneau insists that this continues to be the case. Rather than responding to the question "Who Are We?", he suggests the more appropriate question is what kind of country we've built. The "we" in question is the sum total of all those who, from yesterday to today, as individuals, members of any community, Indigenous people, Francophones, Anglophones or Allophones, long-established or recent arrivals, visible minorities or not, and who else. All mentioned have participated in different ambitions and positions throughout the building of what has long been called Canada – a name that could be spelled with a "K" to emphasize the initializing presence of the First Peoples in the collective experience that followed. Letourneau describes Canada as a country in perpetual reconciliation mode addressing tensions, conflicts, hostilities, discrimination and/or rejection that has always marked Canada's history. For Letourneau, the country remains a work in progress.

As noted above, Charles Taylor observes that to build an inclusive country Canada would have to support "deep" diversity, in which a plurality of

ways of belonging would also be acknowledged and accepted. In effect, he urges accommodation of the multiple ways of being Canadian so that a person of Italian extraction in Toronto or someone of Chinese origin in Vancouver might indeed feel Canadian as a bearer of individual rights in a multicultural mosaic. A *Québécois* or a Cree or a Dene can belong in a very different way, that these persons are part of Canada through being members of their national communities. Reciprocally, the *Québécois*, Cree, or Dene would accept the perfect legitimacy of the "mosaic" identity.

During the 1980's, Teresa Woo-Paw was inspired by the message associated with Canadian multiculturalism. The legislative framework called for the recognition of "the right of all individuals to preserve and share their cultural heritage while retaining their right to full and equitable participation in Canadian society. She observes that while some barriers have been broken and there is now greater diversity in leadership, the minority experience nonetheless remains filled with added hurdles. Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, Black Lives Matter, Islamophobia, the resurgence of anti-Semitism and anti-Asian racism call for examination and ultimately for systemic or institutional change. Woo-Paw suggests that we need to remind ourselves of the principles enunciated in Canada's act of multiculturalism which aimed to remove barriers and calls upon leadership to act accordingly.

Richard Bourhis stresses the importance of multiple identities and suggests it is essential to see them as additive so as to contribute to a more integrated and harmonious personal self. The idea of a free, plural, and democratic society, such as Canada, is to enable all individuals to express and live their multiple identities without forcing them to identify with a single national, ethnic, religious, or gender category. Social cohesion is developed by enabling individuals to express a multitude of identities without being accused of treachery, being punished, or being repudiated by the group to which they belong or by the dominant majority.

FCFA President, Liane Roy describes Canada as a country with three major components: its Aboriginal peoples, Francophones and Anglophones. She believes that there is not a single national history in Canada and rather several national stories yet to be merged into one common understanding of who we are and where we come from as Canadians. Canada's francophones have their own stories, which include the founding of New France, the founding of Acadia, the founding of Quebec, the role of francophones in the founding of Ontario and Western Canada. Roy stresses the importance of living together and sees immigration not only as an economic solution but as essential to supporting our diversity and openness to the world. While Canada as a country strives to be inclusive and to value minorities, it's not a given as intolerance and hate speech remain highly problematic.

My text discusses the idea that Canada is a post-national State, a term that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau used in 2015 to describe the country. When Canadians are asked "how many nations are there in the country?", there are important differences in opinion that can be seen in Quebec when it's compared with the rest of Canada. For the better part of the twentieth century most people tended to equate nation with country (and many still do so).

A survey conducted by Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies in July 2022 reveals that while some one in six Quebecers think that there is one nation in Canada, that view is held by nearly one in two persons outside of Quebec (with some variation between Ontario and British Columbia and the other regions of the country). Nearly 60% of Quebecers believe that there are at least ten nations in Canada.

Post-nationalism or non-nationalism are terms that tend to describe states that possess no "core identity" or "official culture" and hence where nation states and national identities lose their importance. While it is correct to suggest that Canada does not have a single or singular culture, it is not clear that national identities are losing their importance. However, underlying the description of Canada as post-national is continued confusion about the meaning and use of the term nation.

Julien Larregue, and Jean-Philippe Warren offer important insights into the changes in discourse in universities via a review of all Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant submissions. Their analysis points to a clear shift in research themes over the past fifteen years (2006–2021). They observe that multiculturalism themed submissions have been largely displaced by a focus on diversity. Studies of ethnic groups have given way to a much larger focus on indigenous or racialized groups. They conclude that while Canadian public opinion remains attached to the ideal of a multicultural society, Canadian researchers are abandoning the terms "multiculturalism" and "interculturalism" (and variations of the terms derivatives) and prioritizing work on colonization and racialization while describing Canadian society as settler-colonial and racialized.

John Milloy contends that being Canadian has been all about dialogue and discussion. To-date, the backdrop to all this talk has been nation building and he believes that we should be proud of the Canada that we have built, warts and all. However, he wonders whether the manner in which we undertake dialogue has run its course? In particular he feels that traditional elites leading much of the dialogue have lost credibility amongst most Canadians. The top-down nature involved institutions like governments, universities, business, and faith communities who are today viewed with a degree of cynicism and in many cases seen as relics of colonialism and defenders of the status quo. He suggests that we need to think about who is best positioned to media intergroup conflicts in the country.

In their essay, Carla Peck and Alan Sears share findings from a survey on how teachers understand the concept of ethnic diversity. The majority of teachers they surveyed affirmed that over their careers they had never personally thought about their ethnic identities. By consequence, they've also not given much consideration to how such identities might influence how they teach and interact with their students and their families. Rather most of the teachers assumed that everyone shares the same basic values, or that they should share them. Peck and Sears thus conclude that teachers want to teach about diversity without difference. Repeatedly teachers explained that the most important thing to emphasize when teaching about diversity are the characteristics people have in common. They

conclude that such an approach to thinking about ethnic diversity has serious ramifications not only for teaching about diversity, but also for the manner in which teachers respond to and interact with the students (and families of students) in their classes.

The final word in this volume goes to Canada's chief statistician Anil Arora writing with Maire Sinha and Sharanjit Uppal. They call for a balanced view of our country when thinking about its national identity and the importance of acknowledging the good and the bad as we together move forward. They note that Canada's future demographic growth will increasingly depend on immigration and integration into our knowledge-based labour market, in the face of an aging population and the corresponding demands on our social system(s). Arora et al. say that we will need to address the downward trend in immigrants' propensity to become Canadian citizens. Doing so will ensure that new Canadians and their children stay and succeed in Canada for generations to come. Supporting Canadian identity will require that our intersecting identities live alongside one another in relative harmony and are guided by a common set of values.