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# WHO WE ARE



JACK JEDWAB  
CHARLES TAYLOR  
JULIEN LARREGUE & JEAN-PHILIPPE WARREN

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## LETTERS

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INTRODUCTION

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

JACK JEDWAB

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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 multi-cultural 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.

# DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

CHARLES TAYLOR

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Charles Margrave Taylor (born November 5, 1931) is a Canadian philosopher from Montreal, Quebec, and professor emeritus at McGill University best known for his contributions to political philosophy, the philosophy of social science, the history of philosophy, and intellectual history. His work has earned him the Kyoto Prize, the Templeton Prize, the Berggruen Prize for Philosophy, and the John W. Kluge Prize.

In 2007, Taylor served with Gérard Bouchard on the Bouchard–Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation with regard to cultural differences in the province of Quebec.

He has also made contributions to moral philosophy, epistemology, hermeneutics, aesthetics, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of action.

In Canada, we face challenges to our very conception of diversity. In the wake of the battle surrounding the Meech lake constitutional accord, many of those who rallied around the Charter and multiculturalism to reject the notion of Quebec as a distinct society were proud of their acceptance of

diversity – and in some respects rightly so. They saw themselves as defenders of what one might call first-level diversity – the view that a population with great differences in culture and outlook and background nevertheless shares the same idea of what it is to belong to Canada. Whatever their other

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted and updated from *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*, Charles Taylor, Edited by Guy Laforest, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993, pages 182–184.

differences, their patriotism or manner of belonging is seen as uniform, and this is felt to be a necessity if the country is to hold together.

Of course, multiculturalism as a policy has been criticized for failing to address all the forms of diversity requiring protection. It is argued that a too exclusive concentration on it deflects our attention from the injustices and discrimination rooted in the systemic racism which narrows and blights the lives of many racialized Canadians including Indigenous peoples, African and Asian Canadians.

Beyond this, there is also another dimension of diversity. For many Quebeckers, the way of being a Canadian (for those who still want to be) is, by their belonging to a constituent element of Canada, *la nation québécoise*. Something analogous holds for Indigenous communities in this country; their way of participating in the Canadian polity is not accommodated by first-level diversity. This resulting sense of exclusion felt by these groups is puzzling to Canadians who only fully acknowledge and are sensitive to first-level diversity.

To build a country for everyone, Canada would have to allow for second-level or “deep” diversity, in which a plurality of ways of belonging would also be acknowledged and accepted. Someone of, say, Italian extraction in Toronto or Chinese origin in Vancouver might indeed feel Canadian as a bearer of individual rights in a multicultural mosaic. His or her belonging would not “pass through” some other community, although their transnational identity might shape who they are and how they contribute to Canada. But this person might nevertheless accept that 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.

Is this utopian? Could people ever come to see their country this way? Could they even find it exciting and an object of pride that they belong to a country that allows deep diversity? Pessimists say no, because they do not see how such a country could have a sense of unity. They feel that the model of citizenship has to be uniform, or people will have no sense of belonging to the same polity. Those who hold this view tend to take the United States as their paradigm, which has indeed been hostile to deep diversity and has sometimes tried to stamp it out as “un-American”.

These pessimists should bear in mind three things. First, deep diversity is the only formula on which a united federal Canada can be rebuilt, once we recall the reasons why we all need Canada – namely, for law and order, collective provision, regional equality, and mutual self-help, as mentioned above. Second, in many parts of the world today, the degree and nature of difference resembles the Canadian reality rather than the American one. Thirdly, if a uniform model of citizenship better fits the classical image of the Western liberal state, it is also true that this is a straitjacket for many political societies. The world needs other models to be legitimated in order to allow for more humane and less constraining modes of political cohabitation.

Instead of pushing ourselves to the point of breakup in the name of the uniform model, we would do our own and other peoples a favour by exploring the space of deep diversity. To those who believe in

according people the freedom to be themselves, this would be counted as a gain in civilization.

In this exploration we would not be alone. Europe watchers will have noticed how certain attempts in the European community to impose a rigorous unity have created even deeper divisions in these societies.

Finally, even if a break-up were to occur, and we divided to form two polities with uniform

citizenship, both successor states would find that they had failed after all to banish the challenge of deep diversity; because the only way that they can do justice to Indigenous peoples is by adopting a pluralist mould. Neither Quebec nor the Rest of Canada (ROC) could succeed in imitating the United States – or the European national states in their chauvinist prime. So let us recognize this now and take the road of deep diversity together.

# FROM A MULTICULTURAL TO A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY? SOME TRENDS IN CURRENT RESEARCH

JULIEN LARREGUE & JEAN-PHILIPPE WARREN

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Julien Larregue is an assistant professor of sociology at Université Laval. He has published a book on contemporary biocriminology (*Héréditaire. L'éternel retour des théories biologiques du crime*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2020).

Jean-Philippe Warren is a Professor of Sociology at Concordia University. He has published extensively on Quebec history. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Canadian research in social sciences and humanities continues to evolve in response to the debates that shape the contemporary world. In order to track its evolution in regard to the struggle against ethnic, racial, and cultural discrimination, this article presents an analysis of all grant applications submitted to SSHRC since 2006, whether funded or

not.<sup>1</sup> From this vast collection, we have retained, as an initial approximation, only the key terms used to describe the submissions.<sup>2</sup> Our aim is to gain a better understanding of how the Canadian academic community has positioned itself over the past fifteen years in relation to what is, undeniably, one of the great challenges of living together.

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1 It is clear that the applications submitted to SSHRC are by no means encompassing the realities of research performed in social sciences and humanities in Canada. This is just one indicator among others.

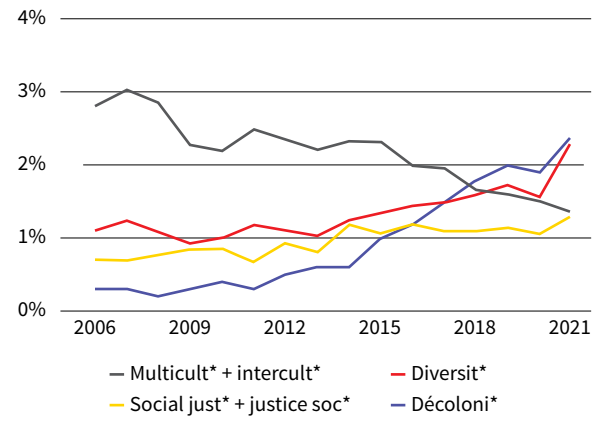
2 The body of projects is composed of the following funding programs: Master's and Doctoral Scholarships, Knowledge Development, Knowledge, Connection, Major Collaborative Research Initiatives, Partnership Engagement, Partnership Development, Partnership, Standard Research Grants.

## THE DECLINE OF MULTICULTURALISM

The first trend that emerges from a review of our corpus is that, while Canadian public opinion remains generally attached to the ideal of a multicultural society,<sup>3</sup> researchers are witnessing a certain abandonment of the terms “multiculturalism” and “interculturalism” (and their derivatives)—the use of which has dropped by half since 2006 in applications submitted to SSHRC (Figure 1).

This decline may be partly related to a growing distrust of an intercultural or multicultural approach that is insufficiently critical. In Quebec, we know that interculturalism, regularly presented as the defense of a (historical) “us” against the (said “visible”<sup>4</sup>) “others”, is very often reduced to what Jack Jedwab calls univocal or one-dimensional interculturalism, where precedence is given to the majority culture.<sup>5</sup> Yet, it seems that a similar criticism is increasingly being expressed regarding multiculturalism, which is increasingly portrayed as an attempt to reduce social exclusion to its mere cultural dimension, to produce a “post-racial” version of systemic racism and absolve it from any

FIGURE 1. EVOLUTION OF THE SHARE OF SSHRC PROJECTS FOCUSING ON MULTICULTURALISM, DIVERSITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, 2006-2021.



political burden.<sup>6</sup> For some time now, the vision advocated by multicultural policies has been strongly questioned by postcolonial theorists, who view it as a subtle way of perpetuating white domination.<sup>7</sup> As a Canadian researcher recently wrote: “At a more complex level, multiculturalism can be defined as a biopolitical form of governance that regulates the following triangulation: Canadian

3 Michael J. Donnelly (2021) Discrimination and Multiculturalism in Canada: Exceptional or Incoherent Public Attitudes?, *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 51:1, p. 166-188; Augie Fleras, 50 Years Of Canadian Multiculturalism: Accounting for its Durability, Theorizing the Crisis, Anticipating the Future, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, *Canadian Ethnic Studies Association*, Volume 51, Number 2, 2019, pp. 9–59. For an excellent insight into the debates revolving around multiculturalism, read Multiculturalism@50 and the Promise of a Just Society, *Canadian Issues*, autumn-winter 2021.

4 Benessaïeh, A. (2019). “Dix ans après Bouchard-Taylor: l’interculturalisme en question”. *Recherches sociographiques*, 60(1), 11–34.

5 Jack Jedwab, “Il y a plus qu’une définition de l’interculturalisme”, *Le Devoir*, 21 septembre 2016, p. A6.

6 Alana Lentin (2014), “Post-race, post politics: the paradoxical rise of culture after multiculturalism”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37:8, p. 1268-1285.

7 Sneja Gunew. *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalism*. London: Routledge, 2004; Ghassan Hage. *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*. Annandale: Pluto Press, 1998; Gerald Kernerman. *Multicultural Nationalism: Civilizing Difference, Constituting Community*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005.

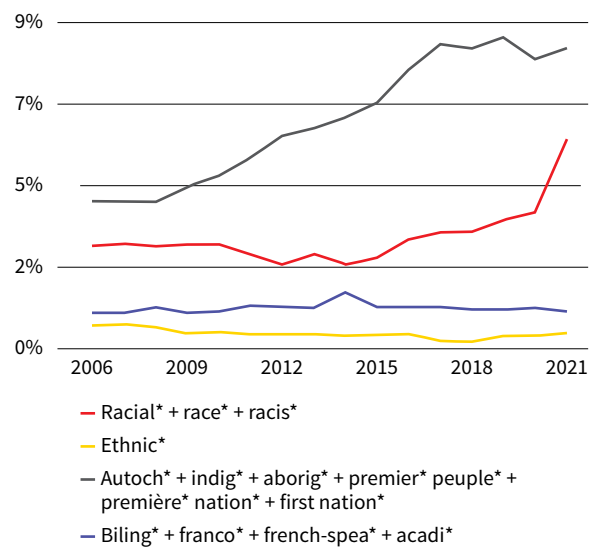
settler society (English and French), Indigenous populations, and racialized immigrants.”<sup>8</sup>

Seemingly taking note of such criticisms, funding applications submitted to SSHRC have increasingly opted to address the challenges of social integration and mobility using terms related to “social justice” (rising from 0.7% to 1.3% between 2006 and 2021), “diversity” (rising from 1.1% to 2.3% between 2006 and 2021) or “decolonization” (rising from 0.3% to 2.4% between 2006 and 2021) (Figure 1). Over the past twenty years, a similar trend has been observed in Australia, where certain forms of critical fatigue of the term equity (known as “equity fatigue”) has led to the adoption of a new vocabulary centered around the notion of diversity.<sup>9</sup> The enthusiasm for the concept of diversity is such, in Canada,<sup>10</sup> as elsewhere in the world, that it has become a “buzzword” that can refer to a “myriad of realities and definitions”<sup>11</sup>, which, paradoxically, added to its appeal.

## THE RISE IN THE STUDY OF INDIGENOUS AND RACIALIZED GROUPS

The decline of multicultural or intercultural themes is accompanied by a new interest in the study of racialized and indigenous groups in SSHRC grant applications. In analyzing the contents of the

**FIGURE 2. CHANGES IN THE SHARE OF SSHRC PROJECTS FOCUSING ON RACE, ETHNICITY, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FRANCOPHONES, 2006–2021.**



*Canadian Review of Sociology*, Howard Ramos has established that, from 1964 to 2010, “[e]thnicity is overtaken by race as time goes on.<sup>12</sup>” “Generally, the in-text mention of the terms ethnicity and ethnic far outnumbered race over the last half century of the CRS, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. [...]

8 Marina Gomá, “Challenging the Narrative of Canadian Multicultural Benevolence: A Feminist Anti-Racist Critique”, *OMNES: The Journal of Multicultural Society*, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 81-113,

9 Sara Ahmed, “Doing Diversity Work in Higher Education in Australia”, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 38 no 6, Dec 2006, p. 745-768.

10 Jean-Philippe Warren, “L’usage du concept de diversité en histoire Québécoise”, *Bulletin d’histoire politique*, Volume 27, numéro 3, été 2019, p. 180-194.

11 Sophia Labadi, “Introduction: investing in cultural diversity”, *International social science journal*, LXI(61), 2010, p. 2-13; Dirk Jacobs, “Diversity. Polyphony of the concept”, *Contested Concepts in Migration Studies*, Routledge, 2021, p. 95-110.

12 Howard Ramos, “From Ethnicity to Race in the Canadian Review of Sociology, 1964 to 2010”, *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, 50(3), p. 337-356.

Interestingly, however, their prominence shifted over time with race being mentioned in a greater proportion of publications in the 2000s.<sup>13</sup>

As far as our corpus is concerned, it can be said that the surge in applications submitted to SSHRC involving indigenous nations was noted in 2006, as a result of the surge of claims that followed the submission of the report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (the Erasmus-Dussault Commission) a decade earlier. As for applications pertaining to racialized groups, they have mainly emerged in the last ten years, alongside the rise of prominent social movements, such as the establishment of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013, and perhaps even more notably with the protests that followed the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

The SSHRC has not remained indifferent to the evolution of debates on these issues. In 2003, for example, the federal agency issued several recommendations in a report entitled “*Les possibilités de la recherche autochtone*.” One of the report’s objectives was to encourage research “by and with” Canada’s indigenous researchers and communities on a range of issues of concern to them. In 2021, SSHRC’s Advisory Committee on Addressing Black Racism in Research and Research Training Programs identified several promising avenues for strengthening equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education institutions.

Prompted by SSHRC initiatives, as well as by

researchers who denounced the slow progress of equity issues in Canada’s predominantly liberal<sup>14</sup> universities, there has been a noticeable increase in researchers’ preoccupation with issues affecting indigenous and racialized groups over the past fifteen years (Chart 2). By 2021, nearly one in eight (13.3%) of SSHRC project submissions used one or more keywords derived from the terms race or indigenous compared with around 1 in 15 in 2006 (6.7%).

## CONCLUSION

Relying merely on the number of applications submitted to SSHRC (which obviously offers an incomplete view of the situation, and would benefit from further refinement, particularly with regard to the age and language of applicants), Canadian researchers increasingly perceive Canada as a (“settler-colonial”) and racialized society. The prism of multiculturalism seems to have been abandoned in favor of a more critical perspective, in which issues of colonization and racialization take precedence. In the United States, the dissemination of Critical Race Theory has provoked considerable controversy and even led to ideological censorship measures, especially in Florida at the instigation of conservative Governor DeSantis.<sup>15</sup> So far, in Canada, the similar shift in research themes has been much less controversial, partly because it is based on an already fragmented conception of Canada as a mosaic. Researchers have, therefore, been able to replace the study of ethnic groups,

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>14</sup> Frances Henry, Enakshi Dua, Carl E. James, Audrey Kobayashi, Peter Li, Howard Ramos, and Malinda S. Smith. *The Equity Myth. Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Victor Ray. *On Critical Race Theory: Why It Matters & Why You Should Care*. New York: Random House, 2022.



in part, with a focus on colonized and racialized groups, in line with the quest for social justice that has always inspired multicultural policies. Such a trend may lead us to believe that we are witnessing the replacement, within humanities and social science research projects, at least partially, of an image of Canada as a multicultural society by that of Canada as a multiracial society.

# WE NEED TO TALK: CANADIAN IDENTITY AND REIMAGINING OUR TRADITION OF DIALOGUE

JOHN MILLOY

---

John Milloy is a former MPP and Ontario Liberal cabinet minister currently serving as the director of the Centre for Public Ethics, and assistant professor of public ethics, at Martin Luther University College, and the inaugural practitioner in residence in Wilfrid Laurier University's Political Science department. He is also a lecturer in the University of Waterloo's Master of Public Service Program.

We need to talk.

Canada is facing some major problems and we need to figure out how to deal with them.

High inflation, rising mortgage rates, financial insecurity, a crumbling healthcare system, and a seemingly intractable war in the Ukraine dominate the news as do disturbing reports of increasing crime in our urban centres. The idea of home ownership, once one of life's natural steppingstones, appears out of reach for many young people – a psychological hit that not all older Canadians fully appreciate.

The threat of climate change continues to grow, creating an underlying grimness about the future of our planet. Despite international agreements, government programs and targeted taxes, the climate change news never seems to be good.

Then there are national divisions based on geography, politics, race, ethnicity, and religion: regional tensions involving Quebec and Western Canada, particularly Alberta; increasingly shrill and hyper-partisan political discourse; and louder calls for the greater inclusion of racialized Canadians in the mainstream and the dismantling of what many believe is systemic racism prevalent in our society.

Many argue that Indigenous Reconciliation is proceeding at glacial speed while growing Antisemitism and Islamophobia should be a concern to us all.

The pandemic certainly didn't help matters. Fueled by what felt like a never-ending lockdown, tensions between those supportive of strict public health measures, including vaccine mandates, and their critics, reached a boiling point in early 2022. The so-called "Freedom Convoy" employed a decidedly unCanadian strategy of occupying Parliament Hill and its precincts, hardening positions on both sides of the issue further.

The trucker convoy, whose voices were amplified by both the mainstream and social media, demonstrated that there are certain elements of our society that are very angry. Although this white-hot rage doesn't seem to have extended beyond this vocal minority, that doesn't mean that most Canadians aren't frustrated and divided over the long list of challenges facing our nation.

Which brings us back to the need for dialogue. And the term dialogue is not used here as a synonym for armchair criticism or the lobbing of jeremiads at the "other side". It is about working to find a way for us to live together so that everyone succeeds.

To address grievances tied to regional and identity issues we need to better understand each other. To accept the sacrifices that need to be made to tackle major issues like climate change, we need to come to a full understanding of our common responsibilities. To find policy solutions to complex issues like income inequality, we need to hear the best ideas and accept the fact that no side has a monopoly on the truth.

Luckily, we are a nation of "talkers", and this is an important aspect of our common identity that we can draw upon. The history of Canada has been one of dialogue. Pre-Confederation saw efforts by English Protestants and French Catholics to engage in discussion about a nation where both groups could flourish. The religious nature of this ongoing dialogue lessened over the years and by the 60s, the focus of our national dialogue was on Francophone Quebec verses the "Rest of Canada" – a discussion that continued through several federal commissions, the election of separatist Governments in Quebec and two referendums.

The steady stream of non-European newcomers to Canada and the growing cultural diversity of our population led to a focus on multiculturalism starting in the late 1960s. Dialogue concentrated on how we could build a nation that welcomed diversity and accommodated cultural differences in a manner where once again, everyone succeeded.

Canada's Indigenous People were absent from much of this dialogue and it wasn't until the Oka crisis of the early 1990s that we saw efforts begin to include them in the conversation. The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 and the subsequent discovery of unmarked graves at the site of former Residential Schools placed this dialogue much higher on the agenda and it continues to be a dominant area of concern for many Canadians even if progress seems to be very slow.

Yes, being Canadian has been all about dialogue and discussion. And the backdrop to all this talk has been nation building and we should be proud of the Canada that we have built, warts and all.

Yet, has this type of dialogue run its course?

Our public debate is becoming increasingly strident. Within the world of politics, the media and punditry there appears to be less room for understanding, compromise and a willingness to see a situation from other perspectives. Political strategy is increasingly about dividing the population with wedge issues to create a strategic coalition that will get you enough seats in the House of Commons or Legislature.

Even though most Canadians still hold middle of the road opinions, we are often quick to demonize those who don't share our views. Forgiveness is a word that is largely absent from our public discourse and the ease with which we label each other and our actions as "racist", "sexist" or a variety of other serious accusations is worrisome.

There is another problem with the traditional Canadian approach to dialogue. It has usually been led by elites who no longer appear open to meaningful exchanges with those who hold contrary views. These same elites have also lost their credibility in the eyes of many Canadians. Institutions like governments, universities, business, and faith communities are today viewed by many with a degree of cynicism and often seen as relics of colonialism, systemically racist and defenders of the status quo.

Could anyone imagine a Royal Commission on the Future of Canada succeeding in the current climate?

The answer, it would appear, would be to have ordinary Canadians talk to ordinary Canadians

without the involvement of mediating institutions that nobody trusts. But would that work?

Yes, there are major issues with "fake news" and our inability to establish an agreed upon set of facts to govern our discussions. But the problem runs deeper. As a colleague once privately asked me about an inter-faith dialogue event - a great example of ordinary people talking to ordinary people - what exactly are we going to "talk" about?

My colleague raised an important question. Beyond the logistical barriers of "regular folks" talking to "regular folks" what would they say to each other about their differences over the issues of the day? Anyone who has experienced a ruined Thanksgiving due to a dinner table debate between a "pro-vaxxer" and an "anti-vaxxer" can attest to the current difficulty of talking things through and finding common ground.

Locking ordinary people in a room and telling them that they can't leave until they have reached an understanding is often little more than a fantasy. Not only are issues often technically complex, but without an appreciation of each other as fellow human beings worthy of respect, each with a distinct biography, combined with some humility about ourselves and our opinions, little is going to happen.

Instead of talking through issues what if we worked through issues - together?

It may sound trite but how many of us haven't marveled at media stories of members of a Mosque and a Synagogue jointly coming together to help welcome a refugee family? How many involved

in a volunteer initiative haven't been struck by the cross section of individuals participating? No matter the differences of their backgrounds, economic standing, race, or religion they have plenty to talk about – the project underway. They come to learn and appreciate each other. They tend to put their grievances aside and are more open to building a common life together where each side flourishes.

Canada is a country of grass root community builders. Although international comparisons are always difficult, we appear to be a leading nation in terms of volunteer rates. According to Statistics Canada, nearly 8/10 Canadians over the age of 15 engage in some sort of formal or informal volunteering adding to up to billions of hours and making a significant contribution to our GDP.<sup>1</sup>

There are clouds on the horizon. Recent statistics show that Canada's non-profit sector is facing challenges when it comes to attracting and retaining volunteers with close to 2/3 of organizations facing a shortage.<sup>2</sup> Some of this decline is certainly tied to public health concerns, but it may also reflect a reluctance to engage in the wider community.

Should our political agenda involve a national strategy on volunteering? Are there other ways to call Canadians to action? What about empowering individuals and communities to get involved in direct decision making and giving them a role

in implementing solutions? What about programs aimed at community development; increased national service opportunities; exchanges and other travel opportunities across Canada, particularly for young people? Would this provide a foundation for better understanding?

Some may argue that it is too reminiscent of the failed “Big Society” policy introduced by the Cameron government in the United Kingdom – a nation-wide effort to shift decision making to the local level, empower citizens and build community. There is no question that the “Big Society” failed to deliver, and the Cameron government quietly dropped the initiative. It's failure, however, was not because the idea of government trying to facilitate community building and encouraging its citizens to engage on problems was inherently bad. It failed because it became an excuse for the government of the day to cut spending and try to foist the costs on civil society and cheaper private sector delivery agents.<sup>3</sup>

No matter the specific form, we need to find a way to bring people together and focusing on projects, initiatives and community building appears to hold more promise than traditional top-down dialogue in our increasingly divided and polarized country.

Despite our problems and our inability to talk about them, let's not abandon hope. Canada's population

1 Hahmann, Tara. Volunteering counts: Formal and Informal contributions of Canadians in 2018. *Insights on Canadian Society*. Statistics Canada, April 23, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00002-eng.pdf?st=adt5zOdv>

2 “Critical Lack of volunteers putting Canadian non-profit services at risk: Volunteer Canada.” CBC News. January 24, 2023. [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/volunteer-shortage-caanada-1.6723348](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/volunteer-shortage-caanada-1.6723348); Statistics Canada. Table 33-10-0617-01, *Volunteers and challenges businesses face in volunteer recruitment and retention, fourth quarter of 2022*. <https://doi.org/10.25318/3310061701-eng>

3 See for example, Hélène Balazard, Robert Fisher, Matt Scott, “The ‘big society’ in the United Kingdom: privatization or democratisation of public services”, *Revue française d'administration publique* 2017/3 (No 163) p. 507–520.

still appears compassionate and caring. The last several years have been tough, however, and there are signs that things may be fraying around the edges. The future holds many serious challenges and maintaining and strengthening a sense of understanding and unity needs to be a national priority. Let's recognize that dialogue is still built into the Canadian DNA but acknowledge that it may need to be reimagined in these turbulent times.

## FRANCOPHONE IDENTITY IN CANADA: AN INTERVIEW WITH LIANE ROY, PRESIDENT OF THE FFAC

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*The following is an edited transcript of a Q&A with Liane Roy, President of the Federation of Francophone and Acadian Communities of Canada, and Serge Quinty, Communications Director.*

**ACS:** Could you describe your personal identity(ies), how you define yourself, and what you consider to be the most important element in this respect?

**Liane Roy:** Of course, when I'm in Canada, my answer is a little different from when I'm abroad. Because when I'm in Canada, I define myself as an Acadian who belongs to a Canadian Francophonie that is much broader and inclusive, plural, supportive, modern and that includes all those who want to speak French. Now, that's when I'm in Canada. If someone asks me the question when I'm outside Canada, it's similar to the previous answer, but I'll add that in Canada, we have two official languages, and I'll explain that New Brunswick, where I live, is officially bilingual.

**ACS:** If you had to describe Canada and its people to a foreign visitor, what would you say?

**LR:** I would say that Canada is a country that includes three major components: Indigenous Peoples, Francophones and Anglophones. At the same time, being a model for the treatment of minorities and identity-seeking groups is very important for our country. Here, people can live in security, regardless of their ethnicity or situation. Canada is a country governed by the rule of law, where the major constitutional and legislative instruments are very important, notably the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is what enables us to coexist. But despite everything, there is still work to be done. Canada is not experiencing the rise in intolerance and hate speech that we see elsewhere,

especially in the United States. However, with everything that happened in Ottawa in the winter of 2022, it has to be said that we are not immune to these trends.

**ACS:** What elements would you focus on in constructing a Canadian national narrative, given Canada's regional diversity and cultural pluralism? Do you think there is such a thing as a national history?

**LR:** I think there are many national histories. Francophones have their narratives, which include the founding of Acadia, the founding of Quebec, the founding of New France, the deportation of the Acadians, language protections, and so on. This is a dimension which is hardly, if ever, taught to young Anglophones or even, to young Francophones. Let me give you an example. Last week, I was at a conference in Calgary, Alberta, and we were given a tour of what used to be Rouleauville. The first inhabitants of the Calgary area, other than First Nations, were Francophones, and they founded the Basin that gave birth to the city of Calgary. I was completely unaware of this history. Another example: the experience of Indigenous Peoples is not at all integrated into Canada's identity narrative. We've only recently started talking about it.

We know very little about our history. Canada was born out of a complex and often conflictual relationship with Indigenous Peoples, Francophones and Anglophones. This complex relationship has evolved with the arrival of successive waves of immigrants. Our country has only just reached the level of maturity required to deal with some of these contradictions in its historical development, and to reckon with them. In short, Canadian history

can be viewed through three key pillars: language issues, multiculturalism and reconciliation with First Nations.

**ACS:** Which institutions and policies in Canadian history do you consider most important in your definitions of Canadian identities?

**LR:** I'd like to come back to the three key pillars: official languages, multiculturalism and reconciliation. So the four I chose – which are, in my opinion, the most important – are the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, multiculturalism, official languages policies and the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms creates the infrastructure for dealing with minorities and equity-seeking groups. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission enables Canada to come up with a synthesized view of the conflicting and contradictory elements of its history.

A few words about the monarchy. For me, it's a mixed record. On the one hand, the monarchical system underpins all the treaties that have been signed with Indigenous Peoples. On the other hand, it's also a symbol of colonialism. For Acadians, the monarchy is also the controversial element that deported us; that was responsible for the deportation.

If I come back to the official languages policy, for us, it has enabled francophone civil society to organize and structure itself into networks, including the Federation, of which I am president, and our entire network. In a way, it's the official languages policy that has allowed us to exist and still allow us to exist. So it's very important.



**ACS:** Which of the following do you see as the greatest challenge to reconciliation? In terms of differences?

**LR:** The following issues: the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, visible minorities, racialized people and white people, and relations between immigrants and non-immigrants. Too often, two concepts are held in opposition when they don't need to be. It is possible to create a way of living together based on this complex richness and diversity.

We can also see that Canada is changing. The face of our society is changing. But this is an opportunity to shape Canadian society as a whole, not just for Francophones, but for all of us. As a civil society, we have the opportunity to shape the society in which we want to live in harmony.

**SQ:** I could add a few brief words to round off these remarks. In terms of living together, we are fortunate in Canada to be in a situation where we can make societal choices immediately in the next few years that will influence how the next generations, the groups that make up modern Canadian society, will form a community together. How are we going to resolve the conflicts and histories of injustice that have led to destruction – the destruction of First Nation communities, for example? How will we re-establish our relationship with these communities? How are we going to identify the systemic obstacles to the integration of newcomers? How are we going to eliminate the obstacles caused by systemic racism, and thus avoid conflicts among future generations of Canadians? In Canada, we're currently in a situation where we have the opportunity to make choices about society, to build something

together that may not resemble what we've seen up to now, but something new that brings us together.

**LR:** Let me give you an example. A few years ago, a francophone living in New Brunswick, a native of Morocco, said: "You know, we have to ask ourselves the question in Acadia: Are we bringing in immigrants in simply to preserve and continue expressing our francophone culture, exactly as we've been doing for 50 or 60 years? Or can we talk to each other to build something new, together, a new Francophonie, which will probably be different from the one we've known."

Immigration isn't just economic – we can learn from each other. And build the diverse, inclusive community we are striving for.

**ACS:** Is there anything you'd like to add?

**LR:** If there's one thing that ties it all together, it's the concept of coexistence or, in French, "vivre ensemble". That's the most important thing. It came up in the majority of responses. It's one of the fundamental values of our federation. Furthermore, it's not always obvious. I'm not saying we're there yet, but that's what we're aiming for.

**SQ:** When we celebrated Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, one of the things the FCFA put forward was that things had changed between the 100th anniversary in 1967 and the 150th. Canadians had lost the desire to talk to each other and get to know each other. So what had to be done was to give Canadians opportunities to get to know each other, to understand each other and also to have a common understanding of their identity. I think the indicators show that we're a long way from

that common understanding. Many of the lists of Canada's top ten authors of 2023 feature only English-speaking authors. I'm also thinking of the 2007 CBC series *The Story of Us*. When we get to the New Brunswick episode, the history of New Brunswick begins in 1783 with the Loyalists, as if nothing had happened before then. So we Acadians would say, "Hello, *bonjour!* We're here!"

**LR:** We were there.

# CATEGORIZATION “THEM AND US”, MULTIPLE IDENTITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN CANADA

RICHARD BOURHIS

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Richard Bourhis obtained a B.A. in psychology from McGill University and a Ph. D. in social psychology from the University of Bristol, UK, in 1977. He was Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at McMaster University in Ontario until 1988, then full professor in the Department of Psychology at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) until 2015, and is currently Emeritus professor emeritus at UQAM. Mr. Bourhis has published over 170 articles/chapters and numerous books in English and French on relations between immigrants and host communities, discrimination, intercultural communication, bilingualism and language planning. He received an honorary doctorate from the Université de Lorraine, France, the Gold Medal of the Canadian Psychological Association the Canadian Psychological Association’s Gold Medal for lifetime contribution to Canadian psychology, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada

Social psychology uses four concepts to study harmonious or conflictual intergroup relations in multi-ethnic societies, such as Canada: categorization, multiple identities, prejudice, and discrimination (Bourhis, 2021). Let’s approach the theme of categorization with a quote from Albert Einstein, the scientist who proposed the theory of

relativity on the eve of the Second World War. Here is his observation in 1936 on the categories prescribed to him and the prejudices he suffered from.

“If my theory of relativity is proven successful, Germany will claim me as a German, Switzerland will say that I am a Swiss citizen and France will

state that I am a great scientist. Should my theory prove untrue, France will say that I am a Swiss, the Swiss will say I am German and the Germans will declare that I am a Jew.”

Beyond the great scientist Einstein, there is Einstein the German, Einstein the Jew, and Einstein the resident of France and the United States. There is Einstein, a person who belongs to several distinct social categories, but also an individual who belongs to the largest of tribes, that of humans. These affiliations are as real as they are arbitrary. Belonging to one social category rather than another means you may or may not be the target of prejudice and discrimination. If the theory of relativity had been wrong, Einstein could have been only a foreigner or an asylum seeker, and not any usual kind. Fortunately for Einstein, the scientist, the theory of relativity proved to be correct. But above all, regardless of his genius and scientific contributions, it was thanks to his political acumen that he was able to leave Nazi Germany just in time to avoid the genocide extermination against the Jews- his most vulnerable categorical affiliation. Thus, belonging to one social category rather than another may or may not make us the target of prejudice, discrimination, or genocide.

Social categorization is a cognitive tool that helps us partition and classify our physical from our social environment. Categorization is a fundamental, normal, efficient, and necessary process in human beings. But social categorization also has its dark side, as it has been the case since the dawn of time.

We are likely to say “us” when referring to our in-group - individuals whom we categorize as members of our own group to which we belong and

with whom we tend to identify. On the other hand, we define an out-group as people whom we categorize as members belonging to a group *other than our own*, and with whom we do not identify. Thus, we tend to refer to an out-group as “them”.

In social psychology, there is a lot of interest in intergroup phenomena that are related to imposed social categories, which are linked to gender, age, ethnic origin, religious, linguistic, cultural background, as well as physical or mental disability. In many of these cases, we did not choose to be affiliated with valued or undervalued groups at birth. Individuals encompassed by these categories can hardly deny that they are members of these groups, and they cannot easily change their affiliation, even if the impenetrability of these categories and their social status vary according to cultural, political, and historical contexts. In Quebec, for example, a Haitian woman of a certain age who is afflicted by racism, sexism, and ageism cannot easily extricate herself from her devalued affiliation to escape the prejudice and discrimination she may experience on a daily basis.

We are all part of a multitude of social groups and categories. Our self-categorization bridges the gap between our unique personal self and our belonging to multiple categories. At what point does the “personal self” become the “collective us”? Social context and our beliefs and emotions have a lot to do with it. Our “personal self” is most prominent in our emotional relationships with our parents, siblings, friends, and life partners. The “collective we” becomes important when our personal fate becomes dependent on our collective destiny as a member of our social categories, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, or language.

Here’s an example of belonging to multiple categories. I quote from an interview with the Montreal athlete Bruny Surin, who had just won the 100 meters at the British Athletics Grand Prix on August 5, 2000.

The journalist asks: “Is there anything you’d like to say, without any questions being asked?”

Bruny Surin: “Yes... I don’t like to talk politics. You may be aware that I belong to several communities. Yes, I’m proud to be Haitian. Yes, I’m proud to be a Quebecer, and yes, I will proudly wear Canada’s colors at the Sydney Olympics. But my personal choice would be to wear a jersey bearing the colors of Haiti, Quebec, and Canada at the same time. And above all, to be the first to cross the finish line in the 100-meter final at the Sydney Games.” *La Presse*, August 13, 2000, “The personality of the week”.

The athlete, Bruny Surin, demonstrates the possibility of representing multiple belongings and how his positive identities have enriched his personal athletic achievements. In 2022, Bruny Surin received the Order of Canada’s medal for his commitment to facilitating sports activities for young people from all cultural backgrounds in Montreal’s underprivileged neighborhoods for over twenty years.

Multiple positive identities can be additive and 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. Alas, in polarized societies, social groups often force individuals to prove their loyalty by choosing a single identity affiliation. Whether in the name of a majority or a minority, individuals are forced to take sides: “Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?”, “Are you with us or against us?”

Sometimes, “critical events” force individuals to choose a single category, often marginalized by the majority. Let’s take the example of September 11, 2001, the day of the deadliest terrorist attack in US history. These attacks were carried out in New York and Washington by 19 suicide bombers, including 15 from Saudi Arabia, led by Osama Bin Laden, who was based in Afghanistan at the time. The attacks were followed in real-time by millions of television viewers around the world, who watched in horror as the planes hit the World Trade Center. The official death toll was 2,977, with 6,291 injured.

Ten years later, in 2021, Rima Elkouri, a journalist working at *La Presse* in Montreal, examined the before and after September 11, 2001 regarding the Muslims who make up 3% of Quebec’s population. Coming from a variety of backgrounds, including Syrian, Rima Elkouri notes the way that the Western majority stigmatizes Muslim minorities as being guilty by association, and, thus, contributes to the construction of the “suspicious Arab Muslim” stereotype. Rima Elkouri describes the impact September 11th tragedy on her self-perception, and how it has affected her multiple identities. Published in *La Presse* on September 7, 2021, Rima Elkouri describes her experience in this way:

“I didn’t change on the night of September 10th to 11th 2001. What changed was the way people looked at me. For me, as for thousands of other citizens with Arab roots, there was a ‘before’ and an ‘after’, with very personal implications. The day before, we may have been a thousand different things—Christians, Muslims, atheists, born in Montreal, Aleppo, Chicoutimi, Beirut, or Algiers, but on the morning of September 11, we were just one single thing: Arabs, and as such, suspects. We may have had a thousand faces, a thousand professions, a thousand backgrounds with hyphenated identities that didn’t fit into any little box – Quebecer-Syrian-Armenian-Senegalese-French-Lebanese in my case – but the hyphens were put away. There were only two boxes left, as suggested by George W. Bush: ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. Do not choose sides. We have done it for you... In the face of horror, our puffy eyes were filled with fear, our hearts were broken for the American victims; nonetheless, we unwillingly drifted into the ‘Them’ camp. Those who, while mourning 3,000 innocent deaths, were designated guilty by association. Those who must be watched and distrusted. Those who are constantly asked to prove their innocence, to explain that no, Arab is not being synonymous with Islamist or terrorist, no, we have no sympathy for al-Qaeda fanatics, no, violent extremism is not ‘in our culture’...”

The Montreal journalist’s personal experience reflects what many Arabs who live in the West have experienced since the events of September 11, 2001: their nuanced identities are reduced to a single category: suspicious minority. This is the collateral damage of the “us-them” polarization, which followed a tragic event that claimed so many victims in the United States. These factors bring us

to the psychology of prejudice and discrimination.

Prejudice is a negative attitude towards members of an out-group, based on false and fixed generalizations. Prejudice is expressed primarily at the affective and emotional levels. Feelings associated with prejudice can range from a simple discomfort in the presence of an out-group member to distrust, fear, disgust, and hostility.

Discrimination depends on both social categorization as “us-them” and prejudice. When people take action, when behavioral reactions can be observed, it becomes a question of discrimination. On the one hand, discrimination can manifest itself in verbal and non-verbal behaviors by expressing antipathy towards an out-group. Discrimination involves behaviors that favor the in-group, but can also reject people because they belong to an out-group. Research reveals that discrimination based on in-group bias is a universal attitude that consists in treating members of our own group more favorably than members of out-groups. A consequence of consciously or unconsciously providing preferential treatment to candidates from our own group when it comes to hiring in companies or public administrations, which is valuable for the advancement of our in-group, is that it ends up disadvantaging out-groups that are excluded from these institutions. Public health research reveals that, in the long run, discrimination undermines the mental and physical health of its victims (Bourhis, 2020).

Both Individual and systemic discrimination are often consciously or implicitly legitimized by underlying ideologies such as sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia. As John Berry notes,

discrimination remains a global phenomenon that has corrosive consequences for its victims and is ultimately dehumanizing for those who perpetrate it. It is in the interest of all citizens to support efforts to fight against individual and systemic discrimination in Canada and around the world.

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# BEAUTIFUL LOSERS<sup>1</sup>

JOCELYN LÉTOURNEAU

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Jocelyn Létourneau is a professor with the Department of History, a researcher at CELAT (Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions) and holder of the Canada Research Chair in Contemporary Political History and Economy in Quebec at the Université Laval. A Fellow of the Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung of Bielefeld University between 1994 and 1995, he is a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where he was a Fellow between 1997 and 1998. Elected in 2004 to the Academy of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada, he is a graduate of the Université Laval and the University of Toronto. Invited many times as a professor to foreign universities, he sits on the advisory committees of several scholarly journals.

A prolific author, Jocelyn Létourneau, alone or jointly, has written or directed several works on his preferred topics: the production of a common sense of identity within complex societies, the uses of history in public interlocution, the historical consciousness of young people in a globalization context, the identity status of Quebeckers, etc. Among his publications, what specifically comes to mind is *Passer à l'avenir: Histoire, mémoire, identité dans le Québec d'aujourd'hui* (2000), which earned him the prix Spirale de l'essai in 2001, and *Le Québec, les Québécois: un parcours historique* (2004), a small book dedicated to the public that accompanies the permanent exhibition entitled *Le temps des Québécois* at the Museum of Civilization in Quebec. Recently, he published *Que veulent vraiment les Québécois? Regard sur l'intention nationale au Québec (français), d'hier à aujourd'hui* (Boréal, 2006).

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1 Borrowed from Leonard Cohen.



Having received his education at the Laval University and the University of Toronto, Professor Létourneau is currently in charge of a university/community research alliance, which will enable him to collect data on the ways that Canadians interact with the past and build a historical identity for themselves. Jocelyn Létourneau frequently gets involved in public debates, particularly on sensitive and controversial issues affecting the relationships linking history, memory and identity in the (re)construction of the City.

The question at stake is not to tell who “we” are as people, but what kind of country we have built. The “we” at issue 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, have participated, from different ambitions and positions, in 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 was to follow.

So, what kind of country have we built? There’s no point, except to reconcile everyone around a warm maple wood fire, in denying the tensions, conflicts, hostilities, discrimination or rejection that have marked Canada’s history from the outset. Canadians may well, for some time and for the most part, especially outside Quebec and outside native reserves and “inner ghettos”, define their country as a haven of peace, tolerance, openness, and inclusion, but to stick to these nice attributes, they’re no better than anyone else.

Or are they? If so, we should ask why Canada has become what it is, a country whose “historicity deficit”<sup>2</sup> is not lamentable, though it has been and remains deplorable in many respects.

There’s a fundamental reason why Canada has become what it is – a country attractive to its inhabitants and a magnet for immigrants. This is because, historically, no single constituent group of Canada has succeeded in imposing, either totally or finally, its design on the destiny of the country. In essence, Canada is the product of unfinished conquest, ambiguous domination, and incomplete subjugation by its external and internal colonizers<sup>3</sup>. It is a project that developed as a consequence of the fact that all those who sought to shape it according to their univocal or unilateral agenda have failed. At heart, Canada is a country of “beautiful losers”.

I like this expression, which in my mind refers not to a miserable status, but to an honorable condition. I use it, not to suggest that Canadians, whatever their main culture of belonging, allegiance, or conformity (Anglophone, Francophone, or Indigenous),

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2 “Historicity deficit” conceptualizes the gap between what Canada actually is, and what it could have been had it developed ideally. What ideality are we talking about here? Let’s imagine a state close to paradise...

3 Peter H. Russell, *Canada’s Odyssey. A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests*, Toronto, UTP, 2017. I don’t pretend to follow the author’s arguments to the letter; however, his general idea seems right to me.

are a bunch of docile defeated or duntrod-den mediocrities – as opposed to Americans, for example, who are reputed to be superb winners according to their national canon. I say beautiful losers in the sense that, as a result of the unexpectedness of history and the limited capacities of the power groups who articulated the Canadian experience, and also because of the moderantist ideas of some of its leaders, it has not been possible in this country for any group or culture whatsoever to completely dominate, fully dispose of or control the national deal for good, despite the unequal, but not completely flawed, nature of the reciprocal relationship between the various parties making up Canada. In fact, the Canadian historical experience has crowned no single or final winner. Within this historical experience, the so-called “victors” often found themselves cuckolded by the passage of time, while the “vanquished”, on their knees, humiliated or obedient, ended up acting from the interstices unoccupied, ignored, or neglected by the dominant powers, only to stand up again<sup>4</sup>.

As a result, Canada remains – unfortunately for many who would prefer the country to have finally arrived at its destination and bolted to eternal time with sturdy spikes – a work in progress. Canada is a State of tension and friction. While its stability is underpinned by important pieces of legislation, revived in 1982 following a convoluted political operation that produced neither a total winner nor a complete loser, but many frustrated parties, in

keeping with the Canadian tradition of beautiful losers, the country’s evolution remains the product of small empirical dynamics rather than the fruit of a grand theoretical Idea. The discord, divisions and antagonisms that mark the country are settled around tables and through words, not in the streets and with swords, with the annoyances and weariness that result from such a way of condensing problems.

What are the constants that have marked Canada to this day, giving the country a certain continuity and steadfastness through its oscillations and disruptions? The disdain for violence, the rejection of radicalism, the primacy of politics and the search for complex arrangements are four important pillars on which the country has been built. Canada’s guiding principle is moderation. As we know, there have been many deviations and distortions in this approach. It is the historian’s duty to recall them. But these appear as occasional digressions, a sort of recurring hiccup, in relation to what fundamentally characterizes the country: compulsory restraint, which stems from the nature of the constraint interdependencies that have engraved, but not burdened, Canada’s destiny.

Considered a pale condition by many idealists, the “Canadian middle ground” is not essence or quintessence. It has nothing to do with some *bon-ententiste* principle. Rather, it has emerged in the wake of unsuccessful or traumatic experiences of

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4 It’s been a long and arduous journey to restore the First Peoples to the status of collective subjects who are listened to and respected. It remains to be seen how far it will go beyond good intentions. On the Francophone side, I’m not sure that Gabrielle Roy’s famous phrase (“When did I first realize that I was, in my country, a species to be treated as inferior?” - we’re in the 1910s), could be uttered today. Inferior no longer makes sense. That doesn’t mean the situation is enviable. What word should be used to describe the French condition in Canada outside Quebec, including that of the Acadians in New Brunswick? Ignored? Neglected? Underestimated? Snubbed? Sacrificed? All good answers? Canadian Anglo-conformity struggles to come to terms with Francophone discordance, knowing it has no choice but to live with it.

immoderation, experiences that have brought in their wake an awareness – often slow, sluggish, and tortuous – of the harmful repercussions of excess, and the consequent development of a political culture of balance, which the vast majority of Canadians want to preserve, *nolens volens*.

Again, this is not to deny that the Canadian historical experience has been punctuated by abuses and outrages. In Canada, after the French had given up on conquering the Indigenous peoples, who were also quarrelling against each other, the British, and later their Canadian heirs, attempted to impose a global project of domination on a territory to be colonized and nationalized, in other words, to be uniformized. While the pernicious effects of this project cannot be minimized, it has failed more than it has succeeded. When we look at the Canadian situation from the vantage point of our contemporaneity, we have to admit that the history of Canada is that of the (aborted) reduction of First Peoples and Métis, the (failed) provincialization of Francophones, the (missed) reduction of non-whites<sup>5</sup> and the (unsuccessful) nationalization of the country, to which we could add that of the (ineffective) relegation of women.

In the 1970s, the policy of multiculturalism was introduced as a framework for the country's "diversity", in order to bring Canada together as a Whole, despite its disunity. In truth, multiculturalism is yet another manifestation of the reality of the beautiful losers. It is an admission of defeat by the pretending powers in the face of the

resilience, resistance and persistence of enduring communities that have never yielded to the ambitions, dictates, and exactions of the powerful. In a sense, Canadian multiculturalism, associated as it should be (as is often forgotten...) with the concepts of federalism, bilingualism, provincialism, regionalism, democratic individualism and even nationalism, all expressions of Canada's dazzling complexity and irreducibility, expresses the recognition that there is no way to fit or melt the country into a matrix where the whole would swallow or dissolve its parts entirely or ultimately.

To unify and fortify Canada, the Constitution Act of 1867 was updated in 1982 to include a Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Pierre Elliott Trudeau's aim was to anchor Canadian identity in a forward-looking political project, purged of what he saw as Canada's unfortunate demons (tribalism, ethnicism, nationalism, provincialism, separatism, regionalism, and identitarianism), all sectarianism inherited from the past. While Trudeau's actions have stabilized the Canadian situation, which was particularly tense in the 1960s and 1970s, he has lost the bet to rebuild the country beyond its historicity. Not only did he fail to eliminate the structural vectors of national disunity that still fuel the Canadian dynamics, albeit within a tighter regulatory framework, but he also paved the way for the amplification of the diversity phenomenon in Canada, which was not necessarily a bad thing. Indeed, several minorities have been able to integrate into the agora and become recognized components of the body politic. The number of

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5 There are still hypocritical, systemic forms of racism in Canadian society, which amount to the abject. However, the Black revival is an undeniable phenomenon, unlike in the U.S., where the idea that the social contract is based on an insidious racial contract has, since 2018, been fiercely rejected by large segments of the right.

“beautiful losers” has only increased, apparently undermining the consolidation of Canada as a State. In fact, the reproduction of Canada as a country has not been altered. We need to understand why. Canada’s possibility, if not the source of its viability and vitality, lies in the ability of its leaders to allow the country’s disunities to express themselves in the political arena, by offering them acceptable – that is, inevitably equivocal and baroque – modes of conjugation. Whatever may be said, this is what has happened over the past half-century, once the decision-makers, gathering behind the scenes and out of the spots, were condemned to run a country that has often been described as “impossible”.

The challenge for Justin Trudeau, Canada’s current helmsman, is not to jettison the country’s complicated heritage. It’s a question of making do with Canadian discordance, which is beautifully incompressible, and of associating it with original political forms, while not allowing himself to be distracted by all those who, tired of negotiating kanadianity, seek to transform it into mere diversity, a sophism of avoidance rather than a canvas of acquiescence to the country’s constituent disunities, or to sublimate it into a great Canadian unanimity and uniformity, a devious scenario rather than a forward-looking estimate for Kanada.

# TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY: AFTER 50+ YEARS OF OFFICIAL MULTICULTURALISM IN CANADA, ARE WE ANY FURTHER AHEAD?<sup>1</sup>

CARLA L. PECK AND ALAN SEARS

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On October 8, 1971, then Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, rose in the House of Commons to announce his government's response to a set of recommendations contained in the report of the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*. Trudeau's speech dealt with recommendations in *Volume IV* of the Commission's

report concentrating on "the contribution by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution" (Trudeau, 1971). The Prime Minister's purpose was largely to allay concerns of some non-English and non-French Canadians that their cultures might be threatened or diminished in

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1 This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SRG #410-2010-1180.

the rush to implement official bilingualism across the country. Trudeau asserted that “although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other.” He went on to say, “A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians.” This brief statement of policy, however, was significant for the development of the Canadian state, Canadians’ sense of their own identity(ies), and the evolution of policy and practice in diversity education across the country.

The period following the initial articulation of the multiculturalism policy saw a shift in approaches to diversity education from more assimilationist models to ones more focused on inclusion and social justice. Joshee (2004), Joshee and Johnson (2007), and Peck et al. (2010) document these changes in detail arguing that while the general trend has been toward policies more oriented to social justice there has been some retrenchment in recent years with an increasing focus on promoting social cohesion. Still, in an extensive review of research in the area, Bickmore (2014) concludes that “research shows that Canadian citizenship education about intercultural diversity and equity issues is increasingly inclusive and justice-oriented in policy pronouncements but still practiced and understood in much less inclusive or thoughtful terms by teachers and students in actual schools” (p. 265).

### **TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

In this article we explore the conceptions of ethnic diversity held by two groups of four teachers,

one from a mid-sized urban elementary school in Alberta and the other from a mid-sized urban elementary school in New Brunswick. Consistent with the majority of teachers across the country, these eight teachers were members of the White, dominant society (Macintosh, 2022; Ryan, et al., 2009; Turner, 2014) and used the term “Canadian” to describe their ethnic identity. Space constraints prevent us from exploring all aspects of our findings but we wish to highlight the two we think have the most bearing on teachers’ understandings of ethnic diversity, following by a brief discussion about implications of these findings on teaching.

### **ETHNIC DIVERSITY AS AN “ACCESSORY”**

During focus group and individual interviews, a distinct conception of “ethnic diversity as an accessory” emerged among participants. This conception derives from the belief that the expression of one’s ethnic identity involves choice; that as easily as someone can put on an earring, or decide which pair of shoes to wear, so too can they decide whether or not to express their ethnic identity through material (e.g., clothing) or other means. In other words, ethnic identity is an external element and not something that is internal or intrinsic to one’s identity, and expressing it is always a matter of individual choice. There appeared to be no understanding among our participants that identity is also, in part, group-defined and that the expression of certain aspects of one’s ethnic identity is – or at least might be – in some ways involuntary. Nor did our participants seem to understand that ethnicity is fluid and plural (or at least potentially plural); the expression of one’s ethnic identity may change depending on the social, political, and/or cultural context in which one finds oneself.

Most participants demonstrated a superficial understanding of how people may express their ethnicity, consistently referencing foods, fairs and festivals as markers of ethnic identity. Other markers of ethnic identity, such as religion, regionality, cultural practices, and language were largely absent from our participants' conceptions of ethnic diversity. We were somewhat shocked when Francophone French Immersion teachers in particular seemed unable to make connections between language, culture and ethnic identity. The focus for these teachers was on "doing their job" of teaching the French language. They made no connections between language and identity, even when asked explicit questions about it.

According to our participants, when people "choose" to express their ethnic identity, this is both exotic and foreign. The exotic view involves strangeness but also, for some, a desire to possess the same imagined exotic quality of the Other. Said one participant: "I don't have any ethnic anything and I've *always* wanted it." The foreign view of diversity is that it exists and/or originates outside of Canada. For example, when discussing whether or not a school should change a Christmas concert to a Winter concert, one teacher said, "there have been discussions before where staff members have said, 'well, this is Canada, and this is how we do it here. If they don't like it, they can stay home'." Almost none of our participants expressed the understanding that diversity has been a characteristic of Canadian society since before Confederation.

### **DIVERSITY WITHOUT DIFFERENCE**

In a rather interesting turn, while our participants othered those they imagined as not like

them, they also attempted to erase perceived differences through the discourse of sameness. All of our participants argued that all people have the same hopes for their lives and therefore any other differences related to one's ethnic identity are not substantive in nature and can be "overcome." This is an assumed sameness on the part of participants; they assumed that everyone shares the same basic values, or that they *should* share them. Here we assert that these teachers want to teach about diversity *without* difference. Over and over again, teachers explained that the most important thing to emphasize when teaching about diversity are the characteristics people have in common. We have numerous examples of this in our data, from one participant claiming that "people are people are people" to another's emphasis on finding "the commonalities and work towards getting better collectively, not staying the same individually."

This colour-blind approach to thinking about ethnic diversity has serious implications not only for teaching about diversity, but also for how teachers respond to and interact with the students (and families of students) in their classes. As Martin (2014) points out "a majority of white pre-service and practising teachers subscribe and adherently follow the colour-blind ideology and will claim to be ignorant of whiteness ideology (that is, ignorant of the structural advantages they have and cultural norms they promote)" (p.2). For example, while all participants acknowledged and described various elements that contribute to their sense of their ethnic identity, the label "Canadian" remained unmarked and therefore unremarkable. What we mean by this is that "Canadian" was an empty term unmarked by ethnicity (or "race", or culture). Instead, our participants relied on citizenship

(by birth) and locality to explain “Canadian.” For example, one participant argued that “Canadian means that you’re not...you don’t have any background or anything.” While it is possible that this implies an openness to multiple, possible Canadian identities, based on our other data we believe that it is more a case of our participants exerting (perhaps unknowingly) a form of White or dominant society privilege (Carr & Lund, 2007) masked in an ideal of liberal neutrality. Such privilege goes unnamed by members of the dominant society and enables them to be willfully ignorant of the structural and attitudinal dimensions of the privilege that shapes every aspect of their lives (Dei et al., 2004; Martin, 2014; Pearce, 2005; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) including, in the case of our study, our participants’ ideas about students and teaching. The majority of teachers affirmed that over their teaching careers

they had never thought about their ethnic identities and how they might influence how they teach and interact with their students and their families. Yet, our data seem to indicate that our participants’ sense of their ethnic identities shaped the way they thought about ethnic diversity generally, and in the context of their professional practice specifically.

We hope that mapping teachers’ conceptions of ethnic diversity will lead to a more complete understanding of the knowledge structures that inform their understandings of ethnic diversity and how these understandings shape the pedagogical decisions they make. Given that teachers are responsible for interpreting and implementing school curricula generally, and outcomes related to ethnic diversity in particular, more research into their understandings of ethnic diversity is warranted.



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# CANADA: POST-NATIONAL, MULTINATIONAL OR NEITHER?

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described Canada as a country with “no core identity” and thus called it post-national (Foran, 2017). The notion that a country has no core identity is sometimes associated with such things as deep diversity, multiculturalism and/or more specifically multiethnic countries or states. In effect, they presume that the country has no dominant ethnic majority and/or other identity-based majority as its defining demographic characteristic. Underlying academic and/

or political conversations about whether Canada is post, bi-national or multi-national are varying or diverging definitions of the term nation and its related use or misuse. Ongoing conversation in Canada about nationalism, nations and nationhood are important towards helping us define who we are as Canadians in the era of multiple and intersecting identities. That which follows will examine will offer insights into these issues with a focus on how Quebec defines national identity and what that implies for Canadian identities.

## WHAT KIND OF NATIONAL IDENTITY? FROM FRENCH CANADIAN TO QUEBEC NATIONALISM

Nadeau and Barlow (2006) point out that: "...French Canadians tend to see Canada as a country made up of two nations, while the English tend to think that 'country' and 'nation' are one and the same". But prior to the 1960's that view was largely predicated on equating nation (s) with ethnic or ethno-national group and thus many French Canadians assumed that the other nation was British or English Canadian (and not simply Canadian). Until well into the 1960's the French population in Quebec (hereafter francophones) and those elsewhere in Canada described themselves as *Canadiens* and/or *Canadien-Français* (French Canadian). The pre-1960's vision of two nations in Canada, one ethnically British and the other ethnically French, also meant that there were two such nations in the province of Quebec (we'll return to this issue shortly).

During the 1960's during the period hailed at the Quiet Revolution, there was considerable movement amongst francophone Quebecers away from French-Canadian nationalism towards Quebec nationalism. In effect, the growing sense that the protection of French language and culture was best secured in Quebec saw many French-Canadian nationalists become Quebec nationalists increasingly looked to the provincial government to preserve and promote their core identity and determined it was preferable to identify as a national majority in Quebec - as a Quebecois - rather than as part of the national francophone minority in Canada.

In recognition of the growing concerns over the

future of the French language and culture across the country, in 1963, the Government of Canada established a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism aimed at developing an equal partnership between the country's British and French peoples which were also referred to as its founding peoples. After considerable deliberation, the Government did not go for the bicultural model and rather opted for multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. In April 1971, then Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau stated that no singular culture could define Canada and thus while there could be official languages (as enshrined in the 1969 Official Languages Act) there could be no official culture (Jedwab 2005).

Reacting to Trudeau's bilingual/multicultural vision for Canada, then Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa argued that the policy of multiculturalism was highly unsuited to Québec where, he said, "...the predominant population group is linguistically and culturally French, where a large minority is linguistically and culturally English, and where there are many minorities having other linguistic and cultural origins."

During the late 1960's several gestures aimed at affirming Quebec's national identity with the legislature was renamed Quebec National Assembly and the province's library was became the National Library. That said, the transition to Quebec nationalism did not imply the outright detachment from Canada (other than amongst some Quebecers that favored establishing a separate country). Rather the majority of Quebec nationalists identified primarily with Quebec and therefore tended to render Canadian identification subordinate to it (ironically this might be seen as putting the nation before the

country). That was predominantly the case for the many Quebec francophones that felt reflected in the nationalist vision – a feeling not shared by most of Quebec’s non-francophones.

## BLURRING THE NATION

Although they’re often used interchangeably it is widely held that there are important differences between nation, state, and country. Country and State are sometimes seen as symmetrical as they tend to apply to self-governing political entities while a nation is widely seen as a group of people who share the same culture but do not have sovereignty. For the better part of the twentieth century most people tended to equate nation with country (and many still do so). By consequence, in the later part of that century and into the next one when Quebec politicians, intellectuals and others called for Quebec to be recognized by the rest of Canada as a nation it was widely assumed that they were speaking about one that was independent or separate from Canada (or the rest of Canada).

However, the way in which some politicians use the term nation may blur the aforementioned distinctions and unintentionally or intentionally promote ambiguity by allowing multiple interpretation by citizens. When in 2001 he was sworn in as Quebec Premier, the late Bernard Landry declared in French that “my action in this sense is based on a central and powerful idea that is largely accepted: that Quebec forms a nation.” Switching to English, Landry added, “I warmly invite you, English-speaking compatriots, to participate fully in the construction of a plural and inclusive Quebec, a Quebec that will stand proud beside the other occidental nations.” (CBC, 2001). Elsewhere Landry

observed that “Quebec is a nation without the complete status of one.” These observations suggest that nation may or may not imply country.

In 2006 in the House of Commons, the separatist Bloc Québécois asked for a vote on a motion to recognize that Quebecers form a nation. In response to what was regarded as “an unusual request” then Prime Minister Stephen Harper put forward a motion asking that “...this House recognize that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.”

During the debate in Parliament over the motion, Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe contended that the refusal to recognize the Quebec nation, to recognize an obvious reality, could be called a great Canadian mental block. He added that the only attitude that shows respect for Quebecers is to recognize them for what they are, that is, a nation that continues to be a nation even if it is no longer part of Canada...a nation because that is what we are...Quebecers form a nation whether or not they remain within a so-called united Canada. They form a nation whether or not they become a country.”

Harper used the French term Québécois rather than Quebecer in the English version of the motion thus raising questions about whether he referred to all Quebecers or just the majority French population. It raised concerns that the motion’s formulation might imply that Quebec is being recognized as an ethnic nation rather than a civic entity. But this all became academic as soon after the motion’s adoption it has become increasingly common for Quebec politicians (federalist and sovereignist alike) to simply refer to the Quebec nation in public discourse (as opposed to the Québécois nation) thereby disassociating the “nation” from its ethnic dimension

even for some the Quebec nation sought primarily to reflect the interests of the ethnocultural French majority (about which not all saw something morally or ethically wrong).

In its 2017 Policy on Québec Affirmation and Canadian Relations, the Liberal Government of Quebec remarked that "... Québec is free to make its own choices and able to shape its own destiny and development. Québec has all the characteristics of, and recognizes itself as, a nation...the Québec nation is not limited to its reality as a predominantly French-speaking society in North America. The Québec nation includes all the people living in Québec. It includes, in particular, Québec's English-speaking community, which has certain specific rights and prerogatives. It also recognizes eleven Aboriginal nations."

### **NATIONS IN THE NATION: HOW MANY NATIONS ARE THERE IN CANADA AND IN QUEBEC?**

A multinational state is a sovereign entity that comprises two or more nations or states within. By contrast, a nation state is a singularity that is not characterized by dual or multiple national identities. Political scientist Alain Noël declares "Canada is undeniably a multinational federation but he says this fact is not recognized either constitutionally or politically." Proponents of the vision of Canada as a multinational federation tend to repeat that it is an indisputable fact and therefore not open to debate (as Duceppe suggested those with opposing views suffer from a mental block). As said however as Canadians still equate nation with country.

It is worth noting that while Quebec politicians often refer to Quebec as a singular nation the Government officially acknowledges that are eleven indigenous nations with the territory.<sup>1</sup> Hence Quebec can be classified as a multination or multinational nation. Indeed in following the logic of multinational recognition, the indigenous nations of Quebec are nations within a multination entity (Quebec) that is in turn part of another multinational entity (Canada).

When asked how many nations that Canadians believe there are in the country, there are important differences between Quebecers and other Canadians. A survey conducted by Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadians 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 a view shared by half of British Columbians surveyed. Those outside of Quebec who subscribe to the idea that there are a multiplicity of nations within the country are likely thinking of the many First Nations across the country).

There is also a noteworthy difference in views amongst Quebecers around how many nations there are in Canada as over one in three non-francophones believe that there is only one nation compared with some one in ten Quebec francophones.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/premieres-nations-inuits/profil-des-nations/a-propos-nations](http://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/portrait-quebec/premieres-nations-inuits/profil-des-nations/a-propos-nations)

**TABLE 1. QUEBEC INCREASINGLY REFERS TO ITSELF AS A NATION AS DO SEVERAL INDIGENOUS GROUPS. HOW MANY NATIONS DO YOU THINK THAT THERE ARE IN THE COUNTRY?**

	CANADA	BC	AB	PRAIRIES	ON	QC	ATLANTIC
1	38%	42%	<b>49%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>49%</b>
2	8%	<b>4%</b>	7%	5%	10%	9%	6%
3	11%	<b>4%</b>	11%	9%	11%	<b>15%</b>	8%
10	16%	19%	<b>8%</b>	15%	14%	<b>23%</b>	11%
50+	28%	31%	25%	<b>19%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>36%</b>	27%

Source: Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies. July 8–10, 2022.

**TABLE 2. QUEBEC INCREASINGLY REFERS TO ITSELF AS A NATION AS DO SEVERAL INDIGENOUS GROUPS. HOW MANY NATIONS DO YOU THINK THAT THERE ARE IN THE COUNTRY?**

QUEBEC	FRANCOPHONE	NON-FRANCOPHONE
1	11%	36%
2	9%	8%
3	17%	13%
10	26%	17%

Source: Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies. July 8–10, 2022.

### WHO'S IN AND WHO'S OUT? ATTACHMENT AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE QUEBEC NATION

A key issue arising from debates about nation and country is the impact on people's respective attachment, belonging and/or identification. Leadership of a given nation like to see, and therefore often, describe their members as a cohesive and coherent unit with shared culture and experiences. Identity formation of the nation centers around language, ethnicity and/or religion amongst other identity markers. But where the nation is defined by geographic boundaries not all members may feel

reflected and/or represented in the vision of the nation and that seems especially to be the case for those persons who simply don't identify the dominant marker that is the defining characteristic of the nation. Debates around who feels as though they are part of the nation and who doesn't have often been said to determine whether the nation should be described as civic (inclusive) or ethnic (exclusive). Yet others have suggested that the term sociological nation is more appropriate than ethnic nation with the former referring to "a status group united by common historical memory and fighting for the prestige of power and culture with other nations" (Norkus 2004). The distinctions between the sociological, civic and ethnic nation are a good deal more complex and nuanced than they in which they get presented. Still there are varying degrees within nations in terms of who feels they do or don't identify and why that is the case. Canada is a good example in that regard as historically large numbers of francophones have not felt reflected or represented in the vision underlying the nation/country. The same is true for Quebec as much of its anglophone population does not feel a strong sense of attachment to Quebec (and probably less so to the Quebec nation).

**TABLE 3. ATTACHMENT TO QUEBEC AND CANADA ON THE PART OF QUEBEC FRANCOPHONES AND ANGLOPHONES.**

QUEBEC	FRENCH		ENGLISH	
	ATTACHMENT TO CANADA	ATTACHMENT TO QUEBEC	ATTACHMENT TO CANADA	ATTACHMENT TO QUEBEC
Very Attached	29.5%	53.9%	61.5%	23.7%
Somewhat Attached	39.5%	35.4%	28.2%	44.7%
Not very attached	21.3%	8.2%	5.1%	18.4%
Not attached at all	9.1%	1.6%	2.6%	10.5%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	0.6%	0.9%	2.6%	2.6%
Total		100.0%		100.0%

Source: Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies, February 20–March 3, 2023.

The 2017 Quebec Liberal party policy statement declares that: “...the majority of Quebecers feel that they are both Quebecers and Canadians. A vast majority of Quebecers feel a strong attachment to Québec, based on a national identity” Yet it is clear that the majority of anglophone Quebecers feel a much weaker sense of attachment to Quebec than do francophones. As illustrated in the Table below, the degree to which anglophones express attachment to Quebec is roughly similar to the extent to which francophones feel attached to Canada. Still, majorities of francophones and anglophones in Quebec feel attached to Quebec and Canada respectively but it would be hard to deny when considering the survey results below that either “nation” is not without problems of “national” unity.

### **CONCLUSION: IS CANADA POST NATIONAL, BINATIONAL OR MULTINATIONAL?**

In response to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s characterization of Canada as post national

respected writer Charles Foran claims that no “nation” can truly behave postnationally as it possesses established mechanisms of state governance and control via armies, borders and passports which the PM oversees. Still Justin Trudeau’s characterization of Canada as having no core identity or as former PM Pierre Trudeau said has “no official culture” is probably at the root of the view that it is no post-national. Post-nationalism or non-nationalism is the process or trend by which nation states and national identities lose their importance. On the other hand a multiplicity of nations within a given territory risks diminishing the political importance and status of affirming national status. Underlying all this is an ongoing debate about how nations and multinationalism is defined, a conversation that is not easy to undertake when its respective visions are not the object of debate.

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# CANADIAN IDENTITY – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

ANIL ARORA, MAIRE SINHA AND SHARANJIT UPPAL

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No need to travel through time to identify turning points in Canadian thinking and understanding of ourselves. Still fresh in our minds is the COVID-19 pandemic. The unification of Canadians in the early days was followed by some degree of polarization in the thoughts and values toward public health measures, the media, and democratic institutions in general – though perhaps not to the same extent as our neighbours to the south.

The pandemic also put into question some historical sources of Canadian pride, notably Canada's universal health-care system, which has become strained with staff shortages and postponed surgeries and routine preventative care. The labour market and economy also took a hit, and for the Canadian identity, it magnified the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Challenges to job and income stability was most often experienced by the lower-paying and essential sectors (e.g., grocery store clerks), while knowledge-based jobs were less impacted, as workers were able to shift online. This was coupled with the possible lasting impacts on upward economic mobility for the younger generation and immigrants, brought on by the rising cost of living and financial barriers to homeownership.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, pride in Canadian history was put to the test, as the country witnessed the discovery of unmarked burial sites at previous residential school locations. These injustices and other examples of systemic racism was punctuated by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that sparked protests in Canada and around the world over discrimination faced by Indigenous and racialized people. These events ultimately provoked Canadians to think about themselves and our traditional sources of pride.

Have these transformative events signaled a change in being Canadian, or was there ever a single Canadian identity to begin with? Questions on national identity can be a source of much esoteric debate, though data can help simplify and make sense of who we were, who we are, and where we are headed.

Over the years, Canada's identity as a country has continuously changed, being shaped by shifts in the socio-demographic landscape of Canada and the intertwined dimensions of social change, geopolitical events (e.g., wars, the Great Depression) and policy shifts. And while identity, in itself, can be an interesting declaration of who Canadians are and what they stand for, the notion of how Canadians view themselves and others can have implications on our social cohesion, civic engagement and participation, and connections with others. It also manifests into the degree Canadians believe that everyone should have a chance to succeed, regardless of differences in gender, age, ethnicity, language, disability status, or sexual orientation.

Looking at the history of this country, the sheer pace of social and demographic change in the past 50 years is unprecedented, and yet for the most part, we live alongside one another peacefully. The crime rate has been generally decreasing since the 1990s, and our social services, open-access political systems, and overall quality of life are often the envy of the world, consistently ranking among the top internationally. In many ways, Canada is a country that has successfully channeled the resources and talents of individuals from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds.

Our diversity is in large part thanks to immigration,

combined with the cultural richness flowing from Canada's Indigenous groups who have lived on this land for thousands of years. European settlers represented the bulk of new immigrants during the first 100 years after Confederation. And, while not a homogenous group, the shift in immigration policy in the 1960s meant the growth in the plurality of ethnic backgrounds alongside languages other than English and French, as well as non-Christian religions, notably Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism.

In 2021, the majority of immigrants were from Asia, including the Middle East, and an increasing share were born in Africa. Meanwhile, the share of immigrants born in Europe continued to drop, going from 62% of immigrants in 1971 to 10% in 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Reflecting the change in immigrant source countries and their descendants, 1 in 4 people now belong to a racialized group, compared to fewer than 1 in 20 people in the early 1980s. This proportion is projected to grow between 38% and 43% by 2041.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, with the recent federal *Immigration plan to grow the economy*,<sup>3</sup> it is expected that both population growth and diversity will accelerate at an impressive pace.

Currently, in the two large urban centres, racialized Canadians already represent the majority of the population, standing at 59% in Toronto and 58%

in Vancouver. And, while Toronto and Vancouver are currently the two most racialized major cities, other areas of Canada will likely see changes in the demographic composition in the future, with an increasing share of immigrants residing in other cities in Ontario, notably Ottawa and Kingston, as well as Atlantic Canada.

In addition to the racialized populations, Indigenous population are increasing and representing a larger share of the population. In 2021, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis accounted for 5% of the Canadian population, up from less than 3% in the mid-1990s.

This growing cultural mosaic, where different groups coexist and flourish together, has often defined Canada's identity, both within our country and on the world stage. Indeed, the official multiculturalism policy of Canada is often a source of national pride and a stark contrast to the melting pot system, emphasized in other immigrant-receiving countries. Does this tenet still define our national identity? Does the idea of multiculturalism envelop the intersecting identities, based not only on culture but age, gender, region, disability status, sexual orientation, and various other markers of individual identity? Are we moving towards a more individualistic sense of identity, and possibly a more divisive society?

Data tell us that while we may be increasingly

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1 Statistics Canada. 2022 (October). "Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians", *The Daily*. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.htm)

2 Statistics Canada. 2022 (September). "Canada in 2041: A larger, more diverse population with greater differences between regions", *The Daily*. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220908/dq220908a-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220908/dq220908a-eng.htm)

3 See An Immigration Plan to Grow the Economy - Canada.ca (November 2022). [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html)

diverse in a growing number of ways with potential challenges to social cohesion, Canadians continue to stand united in the fundamental values of equality and protection of human rights. With it, there is a mutual respect and responsibility to uphold these values. It is perhaps these shared values, combined with our diversity, that makes Canada stand out internationally, and what defines us as Canadians.

One of the clearest examples of this collective value system is the pride in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Adopted in 1982, the vast majority of Canadians (93%) still consider the Charter an important symbol of Canadian identity, guaranteeing the rights to equality, democracy, and mobility.<sup>4</sup> While this symbol and other national symbols are largely conceptual representations of a country’s identity, they can have a positive effect on bonding and emotional attachment to our country.

The appreciation of the Charter is perhaps a tangible representation of the values that Canadians hold dear to their figurative hearts, including human rights, gender equality, ethnical and cultural diversity, linguistic duality and respect for Indigenous culture.

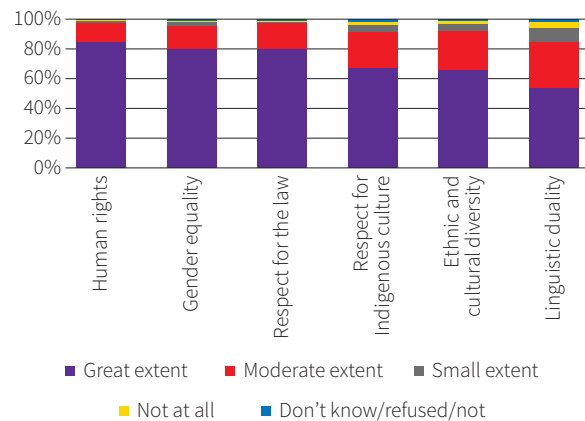
Nearly all Canadians (98%) personally agree with the value of human rights, with 85% agreeing to a great extent (Chart 1). Similarly, 97% believe in the respect for the law and 95% for gender equality. Other values are also highly regarded among Canadians. Take for example ethnic and cultural diversity. Overall, 92% personally agree with this value – identical to the proportion who agree with

the value of respecting Indigenous culture.

And, just as Canada is diverse, so are our personal adherence to these values. Women, immigrants and particularly recent immigrants, and Francophones are generally more likely to personally hold these values. Also, Indigenous peoples, whether First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, are more likely than non-Indigenous people to believe to a great extent in the need to respect Indigenous culture (84% versus 67%).

This possible rosy picture of Canada, however, may need to be tempered when we draw the distinction between personal belief systems and perceptions of collective Canadian values. Across a range of values, people are less inclined to identify them as shared Canadians values. In 2020, 92%

**FIGURE 1. NEARLY ALL CANADIANS PERSONALLY AGREE WITH THE VALUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Social Identity, 2020

4 Based on results from the General Social Survey on Social Identity (2020). [www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5024](http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5024)

of Canadians believed human rights as a shared Canadian value, with 57% feeling to a great extent that Canadians valued human rights. This was the only value where more than half of the population strongly believed it was a Canadian ideal. And even for this shared value, there has been a decline over time in people's beliefs as a shared value.

The share of Canadians believing to a great extent in the shared collective values of human rights, gender equality, ethnic and cultural diversity, linguistic duality and Indigenous culture has dropped since 2013. The largest drop was seen for gender equality, where 36% of Canadians agreed to a great degree that it was a shared value in 2020, compared to nearly half (47%) a decade earlier. A similar drop was evident for the shared value of ethnic and cultural diversity (30% versus 41% in 2013).

Perhaps these decreases reflect the ongoing challenges in Canadian society. There are indications of differential treatment and opportunity. Discrimination against racialized groups in Canadian society has been increasing. For instance, a higher percentage of Black Canadians experienced discrimination in 2019 compared to 2014 (46% versus 28%).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, experiences of discrimination were more prevalent among Indigenous people in 2019 (33%) than they were in 2014 (23%).

And the pandemic appears to have further exacerbated these issues. Discrimination based on race and ethnicity increased since the start of the pandemic, particularly against Asian groups.<sup>6</sup> Also coinciding with the start of the pandemic, police-reported hate crimes have been increasing over the past few years, with the largest increase between 2019 and 2020 (37% increase), including hate crimes based on race or ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.<sup>7</sup>

Having a balanced view of our country and our national identity – both the good and the bad – is critical moving forward as a country. No doubt there are challenges to social cohesion that we must tackle in order to survive and thrive as a country. Indeed, this need will be ever-growing, as we will increasingly rely on immigrants and their full integration into our knowledge-based labour market, in the face of an aging population and the corresponding demands on our social systems. Correspondingly, we will need to reverse the downward trend in immigrants' propensity to become Canadian citizens.<sup>8</sup> Doing so, will ensure that new Canadians and their progeny stay and succeed in Canada for generations to come.

So, what is the answer to the big question of Canadian identity? It is conceivably a combination of intersecting identities living alongside one

5 Cotter, A. 2022 (February). "Experiences of discrimination among the Black and Indigenous populations in Canada, 2019" *Juristat*. Catalogue no. 85-002-X. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00002-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00002-eng.htm)

6 Statistics Canada. 2022 (March). "Discrimination before and since the start of the pandemic", *Infographics*. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022021-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022021-eng.htm)

7 Wang, J. H. and G. Moreau. "Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2020", *Juristat*. Catalogue no. 85-002-X. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm)

8 Hou, F. and G. Picot. 2019. "Trends in Citizenship Rate Among New Immigrants to Canada", *Economic Insights*. Catalogue no. 11-626-X. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2019015-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2019015-eng.htm)

another in relative harmony, guided by a common set of values. At the same time, Canadians do not have their heads in the sand. They know there are areas of improvement, but on a personal level, they appear ready and willing to ensure that what makes us Canadian remains intact, now and into the future.

# ARE WE THERE YET? 40 YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

WENDY CUKIER

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Dr. Wendy Cukier is one of Canada's leading experts in disruptive technologies, innovation processes and diversity. She has written more than 200 papers on technology, innovation and management and is coauthor of the bestseller *Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership from Java to Jurassic Park*. She is the Founder of Ryerson University's Diversity Institute, which she founded in 1999 and has led projects aimed at promoting the participation and advancement of underrepresented groups. Dr. Cukier has assisted organizations in becoming more inclusive through innovative programs such as DiversityLeads funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, which tracks the progress, impediments and evidenced-based strategies for promoting diversity in organizations.

Dr. Cukier holds an MA and MBA from the University of Toronto, a PhD from the Schulich School of Business, York University. She has also received an honorary doctorate from Laval University in medicine, dentistry and nursing and an honorary Doctor of Laws from Concordia University.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Employment Equity Act*, established in 1986, requires employers of federally regulated

organizations with at least 100 employees and federal contractors to identify and address employment barriers for employees from four "designated groups": women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with

disabilities, and members of visible minorities,<sup>1</sup> although the terms have been updated to “racialized people” and Indigenous peoples recognizing shifting norms.<sup>2</sup> The Act also requires disclosure of policies, but reporting and monitoring of the policies is uneven.<sup>3</sup>

## PROGRESS AND SHORTCOMINGS – IMPACT

The effects of the *Employment Equity Act* have been the subject of some debate. There is evidence that it has led to greater attention to setting targets, tracking representation, and developing equity, diversity and inclusion strategies and as a result sectors subject to the Act tend to have higher representation of designated groups throughout the organization and in leadership roles than sectors not subject to the Act. For example, the Prosperity Project’s 2023 Annual Report Card on Gender Diversity

and Leadership<sup>4</sup> found that women had higher representation in leadership roles in the finance and insurance and transportation and warehousing sectors (industries that are subject to the *Employment Equity Act*) compared to the manufacturing sector (which is not subject to the *Employment Equity Act*) (See Table 1).

At the same time, there is evidence that representation is improving but not at the senior most roles; that wage gaps are diminishing but remain, particularly for people with intersectional identities and there are still issues with occupational segregation, with access to resources and services and many of the enablers of generational wealth.<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10</sup> Under-representation is even more pronounced for racialized women. For example, In Toronto, where there are more racialized women than non-racialized women in the general population,

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- 1 Employment Equity Act, SC 1995, c 44. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401>
  - 2 National Research Council Canada. (2023, April 27). *Employment Equity Annual Report 2021–2022*. Government of Canada. <https://nrc.canada.ca/en/corporate/planning-reporting/employment-equity-annual-report-2021-2022>
  - 3 Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2022). *Employment Equity Act Review Report: What we heard*. Public Service Alliance of Canada. [https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview_en_0.pdf)
  - 4 The Prosperity Project. (2023). *2023 Annual Report Card on Gender Diversity and Leadership*. The Prosperity Project. [https://blog.canadianprosperityproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TPP\\_ARC\\_2023\\_EN.pdf](https://blog.canadianprosperityproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TPP_ARC_2023_EN.pdf)
  - 5 England, K. (2014). Chapter 4. Women, intersectionality, and employment equity. In Agocs, C. (Ed.), *Employment equity in Canada: The legacy of the abella report* (pp. 71–98). University of Toronto Press.
  - 6 Rioux, M. & Patton, L. (2014). Chapter 6. *Employment equity and disability: Moving forward to achieve employment integration and fulfill promises of inclusion and participation*. In Agocs, C. (Ed.), *Employment equity in Canada: The legacy of the abella report* (pp. 133–155). University of Toronto Press.
  - 7 Devillard, S., Bonin, G., Madgavkar, A., Krishnan, M., Pan, T., Zhang, H., & Ng, M. (2019). *Women matter. The present and future of women at work in Canada*. McKinsey Company. [www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20present%20and%20future%20of%20women%20at%20work%20in%20canada/the-present-and-future-of-women-at-work-in-canada-vf.pdf](http://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20present%20and%20future%20of%20women%20at%20work%20in%20canada/the-present-and-future-of-women-at-work-in-canada-vf.pdf)
  - 8 Canadian Women’s Foundation. (2021). *Resetting Normal: Gender, Intersectionality and Leadership*. Canadian Women’s Foundation. <https://canadianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Resetting-Normal-Gender-Intersectionality-and-Leadership-Report-Final-EN.pdf>
  - 9 UN Women. (2020). *COVID-19 and Women’s Leadership: From an Effective Response to Building Back Better*. UN Women. [www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Policy-brief-COVID-19-and-womens-leadership-en.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Policy-brief-COVID-19-and-womens-leadership-en.pdf)
  - 10 Ng, E., Sultana, A., Wilson, K., Blanchette, S., & Wijesingha, R. (2021). *Building inclusive workplaces*. Public Policy Forum, Diversity Institute, Future Skills Centre. <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/building-inclusive-workplaces>



**TABLE 1. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES ACROSS INDUSTRIES IN CANADA.**

	FINANCES & INSURANCE	MANUFACTURING	MINING, QUARRYING, OIL & GAS EXTRACTION, AND SERVICES	RETAIL TRADE	TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING	UTILITIES
Board Roles	39%	36%	23%	32%	49%	44%
Executive Officer Roles	35%	25%	18%	33%	34%	37%
Senior Management Roles	42%	20%	31%	47%	37%	42%

Source: The Prosperity Project. (2023). *2023 Annual Report Card on Gender Diversity and Leadership*. The Prosperity Project. [https://blog.canadianprosperityproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TPP\\_ARC\\_2023\\_EN.pdf](https://blog.canadianprosperityproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TPP_ARC_2023_EN.pdf).

non-racialized women outnumber racialized women in corporate leadership roles by a ratio of 12:1.<sup>11</sup>

A key indicator of employment equity is the attainment rate, which corresponds to the extent to which the representation of a certain group meets or exceeds the labour market availability (LMA). For example, if the representation of a designated group is below its LMA, the attainment rate will be less than 100%, which indicates the existence of barriers to employment and the need to implement corrective measures. Progress is made when the gap between representation and LMA is narrowed (i.e., when the attainment rate approaches 100%) or when representation equals or exceeds the LMA (i.e. when the attainment rate is equal to or greater than 100 %). However, what is known

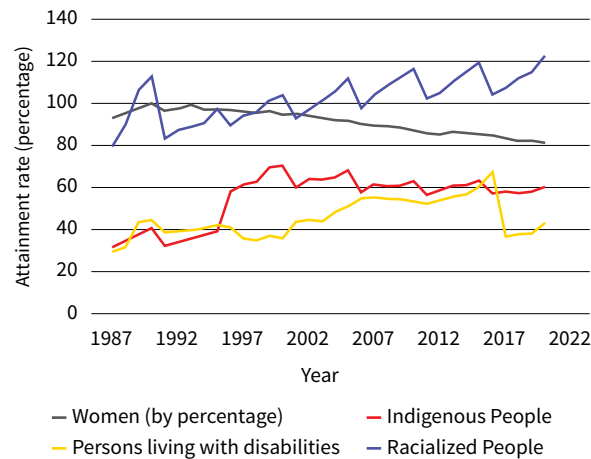
so far is that the attainment rate of the four designated employment equity groups in the federally regulated private sector (FRPS) at the national level has fluctuated from 1987 to 2020 (see Figure 1). While it has trended upward over this time period for Indigenous peoples, racialized people, and persons living with disabilities, indicating positive developments in employment equity in the FRPS since 1986, it has dropped, especially for women during COVID-19.

A significant gap in the Act also lies in the current definition of “members of visible minorities” who are considered “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”<sup>12</sup> According to the 2021 Canadian Census, 26.5% of Canada’s population are visible

11 Cukier, W., Latif, R, Atputharajah, A., Parameswaran, H., & Hon, H. (2020). *Diversity Leads - Diverse Representation in Leadership: A Review of Eight Canadian Cities*. Diversity Institute. [www.torontomu.ca/diversity/reports/DiversityLeads\\_2020\\_Canada.pdf](http://www.torontomu.ca/diversity/reports/DiversityLeads_2020_Canada.pdf)

12 Employment Equity Act, SC 1995, c 44. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/>

**FIGURE 1. ATTAINMENT RATES FOR DESIGNATED CANADIAN EMPLOYMENT EQUITY GROUPS FROM 1987 TO 2020.**



Source: Employment and Social Development Canada. (2022, August 13). Employment Equity Act: Annual Report 2021. [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2021-annual.html#chart1](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2021-annual.html#chart1).

minorities,<sup>13</sup> which includes South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese people, among other groups. This broad categorization of “visible minority” in the Act masks the significant

differences between these groups in terms of demographics, employment, income, and discrimination. For example, there is a significant difference in the recruitment process of Black applicants in the labour market, such as, in terms of applicant success rate in organizational screening, assessment and appointment – all of which adds to the fact that no other visible minorities experiences the same level of attrition (e.g., job application to the appointment stage for Black applicants drops from 10.3% to 6.6%).<sup>14</sup> Besides, there is evidence that suggests that anti-Black racism exists as reports suggest that Black employees over the age of 15 experience unfair discrimination within workplaces.<sup>15</sup>

## DEFINITIONS

Criticism of the *Employment Equity Act* has highlighted its failure to update legal definitions of designated groups to reflect current social norms. For example, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination deemed the use of the term “visible minority” as contravening the aims and objectives of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>16</sup> The category obscures significant differences in the experiences of different groups within the category – for example those who

13 Statistics Canada. (2022, November 26). *Visible minority and population group by generation status: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts*. Statistics Canada. <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810032401-eng>

14 Public Service Commission of Canada. (n.d.). *Audit of Employment Equity Representation in Recruitment*. Public Service Commission of Canada. [www.canada.ca/content/dam/psc-cfp/documents/publications/audit-ee/audit-ee-eng.pdf](http://www.canada.ca/content/dam/psc-cfp/documents/publications/audit-ee/audit-ee-eng.pdf)

15 Statistics Canada. (2020). *Canada's Black Population: Education, labour and resilience*. Statistics Canada. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2020002-eng.pdf?st=KDHjG178](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2020002-eng.pdf?st=KDHjG178)

16 Edwards, S. (2011, July 5). Canada ready to spar with UN over 'visible minorities.' *National Post*. <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canada-ready-to-spar-with-un-over-visible-minorities>

identify as Chinese versus Black, a risk recognized when the Act was written.<sup>17</sup> In addition, reporting under the *Employment Equity Act* considers Indigenous peoples as one group rather than taking a more nuanced distinctions-based approach that recognizes First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit as distinct, rights-bearing communities with their own histories.<sup>18</sup> The Act also does not include 2SLGBTQ+ people even though they earn lower incomes and are more likely to experience discrimination on the job and encounter barriers in finding and advancing in employment, compared to heterosexual individuals.<sup>19</sup>

Until recently, disaggregated data for racialized and Indigenous individuals employed in federal public administration was only available through census data every five years.<sup>20</sup> However, in 2020, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat provided disaggregated data (e.g. employment and income statistics for intersectional groups) related to the diversity of the public service as part of its annual

*Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada* report.<sup>21,22</sup>

Definitions must be updated so that categories of equity-deserving groups can be more precise and inclusive to effectively address systemic inequalities.<sup>23</sup>

## MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Critics note that the Act has failed to address implementation of an effective monitoring and enforcement capability and sanctions for organizations' failure to implement employment equity.<sup>24</sup> While companies report there are no consequences if they fail to show progress. For example, a recent survey by The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) conducted to advise the Task Force on the *Employment Equity Act* Review found that more than 70% of employees displayed a lack of awareness as to what initiatives the employer had in place to promote employment equity in the workplace,

17 Taylor, P.S. (2022, February 19). It's Time to Abolish the Absurd (and Slightly Racist) Concept of "Visible Minorities." *C2C Journal*. <https://c2cjournal.ca/2022/02/its-time-to-abolish-the-absurd-and-slightly-racist-concept-of-visible-minorities/>

18 Department of Justice Canada. (2021, September 1). *Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples*. Government of Canada. [www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csjs-jc/principles-principes.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csjs-jc/principles-principes.html)

19 Statistics Canada. (2022, October 4). *Labour and economic characteristics of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Canada*. Statistics Canada. [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-28-0001/2022001/article/00003-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-28-0001/2022001/article/00003-eng.htm)

20 Griffith A. (2020). *What new disaggregated data tells us about federal public service diversity*. Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2020/what-new-disaggregated-data-tells-us-about-federal-public-service-diversity>

21 Griffith A. (2020). *What new disaggregated data tells us about federal public service diversity*. Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2020/what-new-disaggregated-data-tells-us-about-federal-public-service-diversity>

22 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (March 30, 2023). *Employment equity in the public service of Canada for fiscal year 2021 to 2022*. Government of Canada. [www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/employment-equity-annual-reports/employment-equity-public-service-canada-2021-2022.html#toc-5](http://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/employment-equity-annual-reports/employment-equity-public-service-canada-2021-2022.html#toc-5)

23 Boisvert, N. (2021, July 14). For the first time in decades, major changes are coming to Canada's workplace equity laws. *CBC News*. [www.cbc.ca/news/politics/employment-equity-task-force-1.6103132](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/employment-equity-task-force-1.6103132)

24 Agocs, C. (2002). Canada's employment equity legislation and policy, 1987–2000: The gap between policy and practice. *International Journal of Manpower*, 23(3), 256–276. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720210432220>

and almost 25% were not sure if those initiatives existed.<sup>25</sup> In terms of representation, only 41.3% of racialized respondents felt that their workplaces were representative of racialized workers. The survey also found that Indigenous peoples (33.59%) and persons living with disabilities (34.09%) had low representation.<sup>26</sup> PSAC therefore recommends addressing these shortcomings as well as aligning the Act with other acts such as the Accessible Canada Act and the Financial Administration Act to ensure that all legislation reinforces and supports one another.<sup>27</sup>

The Act has also been critiqued along with other “comply or explain” models for allowing organizations to set targets rather than establishing quotas.<sup>28</sup>

## THE WAY FORWARD

Recognizing the need to address these issues, the Government of Canada has established the *Employment Equity Act* Review Task Force to engage with stakeholders to determine how the

Act could be modernized to include more equity-deserving groups. However, it remains to be seen how the Act will be formulated upon completion of the review and to what extent individuals from other equity-deserving groups such as those with intersecting identities will be considered.

The *Employment Equity Act* should continue to build on its strengths.<sup>29</sup> For example, in 2021, the Pay Equity Act introduced pay gap reporting measurements to address the pay gaps that still exist for all four designated groups.<sup>30</sup> Despite its effects being restricted to a small share of working Canadians, the earning gap faced by women, for example, will likely be reduced.<sup>31,32</sup>

Ensuring companies subject to the Act have effective strategies is also key. Work to develop comprehensive standards and guidelines in support of the 50-30 Challenge may help. The Challenge brings together more than 2000 businesses, and diversity organizations, to increase representation in workplaces by achieving gender parity (50%

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25 Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2022). *Employment Equity Act Review Report: What we heard*. Public Service Alliance of Canada. [https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview_en_0.pdf)

26 Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2022). *Employment Equity Act Review Report: What we heard*. Public Service Alliance of Canada. [https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview_en_0.pdf)

27 Public Service Alliance of Canada. (2022). *Employment Equity Act Review Report: What we heard*. Public Service Alliance of Canada. [https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://psacunion.ca/sites/psac/files/2022-psac-employmentequityactreview_en_0.pdf)

28 Ofraht, N., & Cukier, W. (2021). *Moving Forward: Advancing Diversity on Boards and in Senior Management in the Canadian Financial Sector*. Diversity Institute. Internal Report.

29 Employment and Social Development Canada. (2021). *Employment Equity Act - Annual report 2021*. Government of Canada. [www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2021-annual/EEAR-2021-Report-PDF-3357-EN.pdf](http://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2021-annual/EEAR-2021-Report-PDF-3357-EN.pdf)

30 Employment and Social Development Canada. (2021). *Employment Equity Act - Annual report 2021*. Government of Canada. [www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2021-annual/EEAR-2021-Report-PDF-3357-EN.pdf](http://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/corporate/portfolio/labour/programs/employment-equity/reports/2021-annual/EEAR-2021-Report-PDF-3357-EN.pdf)

31 Pay Equity Act, S.C., c. 27. (2018). <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/P-4.2/>

32 Boisvert, N. (2021, July 11). Canadian women make 89 cents for every dollar men earn: Can new federal legislation narrow that gap? *CBC News*. [www.cbc.ca/news/politics/pay-equity-legislation-1.6097263](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/pay-equity-legislation-1.6097263)

women and/or non-binary people) in board leadership and having 30% of their board leadership and/or senior management from equity-deserving groups.<sup>33</sup> As Canada continues to embrace its diversity, systemic barriers must be addressed and overcome to create equity and to achieve economic benefits for all Canadians.<sup>34</sup>

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Though the *Employment Equity Act* has helped strengthen the position of women, Indigenous

Peoples, persons living with disabilities, and racialized people since its implementation in 1986, employment barriers for many Canadians remain. Yet, there are significant opportunities to improve employment equity, educate and build awareness on addressing stereotypes, address misperception on equity-deserving groups, and mitigate conscious and unconscious biases to promote workplace diversity and inclusion into the Canadian labour force.

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33 Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2023, May 4). *The 50–30 Challenge: Your diversity advantage*. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/50-30-challenge-your-diversity-advantage>

34 Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2023, May 4). *The 50–30 Challenge: Your diversity advantage*. Government of Canada. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/50-30-challenge-your-diversity-advantage>