

**MULTICULTURALISM POLICIES AND POPULAR MULTICULTURALISM
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADIAN IMMIGRATION**

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Abstract: Understanding the impact of multiculturalism in Canada requires a distinction between aspects: (1) multicultural policies and their impact on the successful integration of minorities in society, and (2) popular multiculturalism as a feature of national identity, and the broader impact on the politics of immigration in Canada. Key empirical issues posed by each aspect are identified and assessed. (1) The impacts of distinctively "multicultural" policies appear to be very small. (2) Popular support for "multiculturalism" as a feature of Canadian national identity is strong, and appears to serve as a key political resource underpinning immigration policy as a national development tool. It represents 'political capital' allowing policy makers a considerable degree of freedom in developing and adapting immigration and settlement policies. Implications depend in part on the meaning of multiculturalism for the average Canadian; evidence is presented on this point. Implications of Canadian multiculturalism experience for future policy in Canada and in other immigration countries are examined in light of these conclusions.

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MULTICULTURALISM POLICIES AND POPULAR MULTICULTURALISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADIAN IMMIGRATION¹

In assessing the impact of multiculturalism in Canada, two aspects should be distinguished. One is the impact of distinctive multiculturalism policies announced and implemented by governments and the allegedly positive or negative impacts these policies may have on minority group members and their communities. The other is the impact of popular support for multiculturalism, as the idea is understood by the general public. Impacts of public opinion may extend beyond support for multicultural policies to encompass all policies related to immigration, including preferences for numbers of immigrants and policies and programs providing all manner of assistance for immigrants to integrate into society. These two aspects of the impact of multiculturalism are quite different, as are their dynamics. They are not necessarily equally significant.

Multiculturalism policies are a compelling topic. For one thing, the distinctive underlying principles, most importantly the recognition and support for minority cultures, are important philosophical questions in a liberal democracy. Many regard them as fundamental for Canadian political culture and, in fact, for Western political culture generally. Some argue that recognition and support for minority cultures reinforces equality and in this way helps integrate minorities into the mainstream.² Those on the left worry that recognition and support for minorities leads to increased marginality, exacerbating minority disadvantage.³ Those on the right counter that such recognition is a form of reverse discrimination, disadvantaging the mainstream. Are there reasonable limits to the accommodation of various cultures, and if so what are they?

The following discussion argues that in the Canadian case, evidence suggests that the most important impacts actually arise from widespread popular support for “multiculturalism” as

a symbol which is formally undefined, but which stands in a general way for progressive views on ethno-cultural and racial diversity. Popular multiculturalism is an important social and political fact in Canada, but its impact depends on what it means to most people. This is an empirical question, of course, and one cannot assume a declaration of support for any particular set of principles. The celebration of “multicultural Canada” as a popular ideal is not a mandate for governments to undertake any particular efforts in support of minority cultures; nor do governments see it that way. Instead, in the general population, support for multiculturalism seems to be an expression of good will toward the entire subject of diversity and immigration. Popular multiculturalism creates a positive political environment for the development of Canada’s expansionist immigration policy and helps immigrants to integrate into the economy and society. In short, support for *multiculturalism represents social capital playing an important role in the development of Canadian immigration*. It constitutes a resource enabling policy-makers to develop programs to assist immigrant integration and to address emerging problems affecting immigrants.

The effect of popular multiculturalism as social capital in the development of Canadian immigration is important. Canadians seek relatively high levels of immigration, and they welcome immigrants. Since 1990, well over five million new immigrants have been admitted, mostly members of visible minorities. Toronto alone welcomes nearly 100,000 new immigrants each year. Immigration is a key part of Canada’s overall nation-building strategy. So there is a lot at stake here. Compared to others, we have more to gain from bringing immigrants into the mainstream—and more to lose if we fail.

The relative success that Canada has had in integrating immigrants owes much to the careful selection of immigrants and to efforts to support their integration into the mainstream:

instruction in an official language, settlement services, and assistance in acquiring citizenship. Direct effects of the distinctively multicultural component of policy on these outcomes, positive or negative, appear to be quite limited, if not entirely negligible.

To understand the role of popular multiculturalism, we must consider how public opinion, as a form of social capital, influences the direction of immigration policy-making. Does the positive environment created by popular support for multiculturalism improve the quality of policy-making in the area of immigration by providing scope for more open and frank public discussion, or does it restrict that discussion? Does it improve or reduce public accountability for immigration policy? In addition, understanding the impact of Canadian multiculturalism as social capital sheds light on the applicability of multiculturalism in other countries.

The following discussion reviews evidence on both aspects of the impact of multiculturalism in Canada. It first considers the distinctive impacts of Canadian multiculturalism policy; it compares the Canadian immigration experience with that of other countries not espousing multicultural policies, especially the United States. The conclusion it reaches based on the available evidence is that the impact of multiculturalism policy *per se* has been small to non-existent. It then turns to a consideration of public support for multiculturalism in Canada, and its implications for policy-making. The evidence suggests that this impact may be much larger and more significant, particularly with respect to the expansionist immigration policy and support for the integration of immigrants, including language learning and citizenship acquisition.

IMPACT OF CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM POLICIES ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

The debate over multiculturalism policy evokes divergent and strongly argued views. In the minds of the critics of multiculturalism, almost anything that goes wrong in minority communities can be blamed on multiculturalism. They argue that recognizing and celebrating diversity not only encourages minorities to maintain anti-democratic or sexist cultures and extraneous political agendas in Canada; it also exempts them from criticism based on mainstream values. Incompetence is excused, crimes are condoned, and terrorist threats are ignored, all because multiculturalism makes people fear that criticism of minority groups, or even individual group members, will attract accusations of racism. Negative features of minority cultures flourish. In this vein, former British Columbia Premier Ujjal Dosanjh blames multiculturalism for helping promote Sikh extremism; in his view, it has been distorted and used to make the claim that “anything anyone believes—no matter how ridiculous and outrageous it might be, is okay and acceptable in the name of diversity.”⁴

On the other side, almost anything that goes right in minority communities can be, and has been, credited to multiculturalism. Its proponents claim that by recognizing and supporting minority cultures, multiculturalism promotes social inclusion and helps integrate minorities into the mainstream. Whether it is minority businesses being successful, minority kids doing well in school, or even Ujjal Dosanjh becoming the first South Asian immigrant premier of BC—all these are possible because multiculturalism encourages a sense of belonging among minorities and the confidence to realize their full potential in a diverse society. Citing such positive experiences, Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka, internationally renowned theoretician of multiculturalism and its recognition of minority cultures, announced in his 1998 book, *Finding*

Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada, “The multiculturalism program is working.”⁵

The international context has influenced this Canadian debate only slightly. The initial international reception of Canada’s multiculturalism was quite warm. A multiculturalism policy was adopted in 1978 by Australia, and in the 1980s and 1990s by a number of European countries, including the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In 1997, an international consensus was proclaimed by American sociologist Nathan Glazer in his book *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*.⁶ But if there was an international consensus, it was upended by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the war on terror and various related events, including the 2004 Madrid bombing, the murder of film maker Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, more bombings in London, and widespread disturbances in Maghreb communities in France. Suspicion focused on Muslim immigrants generally, fuelled by criticism of Islamic attitudes toward women, as symbolized by headscarves and veils. Doubts were raised about the whole idea of support for minority cultures. US and British academic critics including Brian Barry, Samuel Huntington, and Amartya Sen⁷ added weight to the backlash. In 2007, a column in *The Economist* said of multiculturalism that “almost everyone now agrees it has failed.”⁸ Francis Fukuyama even blamed Canada for exporting an ideology promoting violence.⁹

Through all this, the Canadian public and their governments have stuck with multiculturalism. They think multiculturalism is basically a good idea. But does multiculturalism really “work” in Canada?

It is generally acknowledged that, on a comparative basis and up until now, Canada’s immigration program has been a success story. Canada takes large numbers of immigrants, and despite problems related to employment and evidence of racial barriers, compared to other

countries there appears to be a relatively smooth integration of immigrants into the mainstream. Immigrants have not only contributed significantly to the development of the economy, they have become an integral part of the Canadian community, and their social and cultural contributions are frequently celebrated.

Can any part of Canada's success be attributed to its embrace of multiculturalism, and the key principles underlying the policy? To examine this issue empirically, we need a definition of what Canadian multiculturalism policy actually is. The initial policy as introduced by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1971¹⁰ stated that the main objective was to assure "the cultural freedom" of Canadians. It offered "assistance" to cultural groups who demonstrated a need and expressed a desire to contribute to Canada, promising help for immigrants to overcome inequality, engage with other groups, and learn an official language.

What is distinctively "multicultural" in this Canadian policy is the promise of assistance to cultural groups. In fact, recognition of and support for minority ethnic cultures are the hallmarks of Canadian multiculturalism. Without these, the other features would appear to be reflective of conventional settlement programs and measures to encourage equal opportunity. A country which adopted only a program of mainstream language instruction for immigrants would not be considered to have a "multiculturalism" policy. The same applies to equal opportunity provisions. Canada had equal opportunity policies for many years, and these cannot be considered "multicultural" in their orientation. For example, fair employment practices legislation was introduced at the provincial level over the period 1951 (in Ontario) to 1964 (in Quebec) and at the federal level, including the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.¹¹

Elaborations of Canadian multicultural policy have retained the original emphasis on recognition of and support for minority cultures. For example, the inclusion of multiculturalism in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms focuses on the right to maintain cultural heritage.¹² The Multiculturalism Act of 1985 adds the obligation for the government to report annually to Parliament, but again without changing the essential thrust. The same is true of multicultural policies adopted at provincial and municipal levels of government, in many community organizations, and in school curricula.

Some other possible “multicultural” policies are not well-established in Canada. Kymlicka points this out, identifying 13 policies and programs “often discussed under the rubric of ‘multiculturalism’ in the public debate.”¹³ Some are essentially cultural-support policies, including funding for ethnic cultural festivals and ethnic studies programs, heritage language courses in schools, and revisions of educational curricula to give greater recognition to the historical and cultural contributions of minorities. Others are human rights guarantees which pre-date multiculturalism. Kymlicka also lists “affirmative action programs,” but while these are multicultural in the sense that they emphasize the rights of groups, they lack wide application or support in Canada. Affirmative action exists as formal policy in the Employment Equity Act adopted in 1986, but this applies only to federally regulated employers who represent less than ten percent of workers. And although “visible minorities” are included in the Act as a target group, policy enforcement has been directed at equality for women. Elsewhere, employment equity has been rejected. It was enacted briefly by the NDP government in Ontario, but resoundingly repealed and rejected by a Conservative government as a “racial quota” and has not been discussed seriously since, in Ontario or in any other province.

It is noteworthy that policies aimed directly at integrating immigrants, such as instruction in the language of the host society, settlement services, assistance finding work, and promotion of citizenship acquisition are not normally included as part of multiculturalism. None of these are included on Kymlicka's list, and for good reason. They are policies one might expect to find in a jurisdiction promoting a "melting pot" (i.e., American) philosophy and rapid assimilation for immigrants. As noted earlier, in the original Trudeau formulation of multiculturalism, efforts such as promoting instruction in an official language was included, thus emphasizing that multiculturalism is not opposed to integration of immigrants in the mainstream. But they are not in themselves distinctively multicultural policies.

An important empirical focus for assessments of the impact of multiculturalism in Canada is comparison of immigrant integration in Canada with that in other countries without a multiculturalism policy. For example, Will Kymlicka's statement that "multiculturalism is working" in Canada is based on observations he believes show that "immigrant groups integrate more quickly and more effectively today than they did before the adoption of multiculturalism policy, and they do so more successfully in Canada than in any other country that does not have such a policy."¹⁴ He adds: "Whether we examine the trends within Canada since 1971, or compare Canada with other countries, the conclusion is the same: multiculturalism is working."¹⁵ Although in his 2007 book *Multicultural Odysseys*, in which he surveys international experiences with multiculturalism, Kymlicka observes less confidently that "we cannot simply declare [Canadian] multiculturalism to be either a 'success' or a failure,"¹⁶ in more recent writings he again states that multicultural policies in Canada are having "a positive effect."¹⁷ He goes so far as to claim: "Canadian multiculturalism has enhanced the political participation, equal opportunity and social acceptance of immigrants."¹⁸

Of course, in making cross-national comparisons of immigrant integration, the effect of factors other than multiculturalism policies must be recognized. These include the characteristics of immigrants themselves and immigrant settlement policies. This is particularly important for the case of Canada, because Canada's immigrant selection system which is designed to pick those with the best chances for successful integration is as well-known as its multiculturalism policy. Furthermore, Canada makes important investments in direct immigrant integration policies, which as we have seen, are not an integral part of multiculturalism. To attribute all differences between Canada and other countries to multiculturalism is unwarranted.

The most obvious point of international comparisons is with the United States, since Canadian multiculturalism is frequently contrasted with the American "melting pot," which in reality is merely *laissez faire*. Simply stated, the US government has no policies related to recognition of and support for minority cultures.

Although it is common to observe that immigration is a far more divisive issue in the United States than in Canada, and that immigrants in the US are less integrated and have lower incomes, on average, than those in Canada, this is influenced by the fact that the many immigrants to the US from Mexico have quite low levels of education on average. Canada does not have a comparable immigration stream, largely due to its geographic isolation from relatively poor countries such as Mexico. When "fair" comparisons are made between Canada and the US, focusing on similar groups of immigrants—for instance, highly educated immigrants from China, India, or the Caribbean—any differences due to Canadian multiculturalism are quite small. . My own study of this question co-authored with Raymond Breton concluded that:

... comparison of the Canadian mosaic and the American melting pot reveals that the differences between them are not overwhelming. ... The differences appear to be limited

to specific aspects of relations among ethnic groups in the two countries, and these differences do not add up to major differences between them in the overall pattern of relations. Furthermore, where there are differences, they are much more likely to characterize the attitudes of the majority group toward minorities rather than either their behaviour or the experiences of the minorities themselves.¹⁹

Rates of economic and social integration for comparable immigrants are virtually identical in the two countries. Nearly all other indicators of immigrant integration, including residential patterns, social equality, economic opportunity, and mobility, show no consistent or pronounced differences between the two countries.

Consider the question of economic opportunity. Comparisons of economic success for Canada's immigrants with similar populations in the United States show little or no difference. Apart from the Mexicans, the US has many immigrants from sources similar to those most prominent in Canada: namely, Chinese, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Afro-Caribbean. Immigrants from these origins, and taking account of education and other personal human capital attributes, show no consistent differences between the two countries.²⁰

The lack of Canadian/US differences in economic outcomes specifically for the case of black immigrants has attracted some attention from US researchers. Attewell, Kasinitz and Dunn compare the earnings of blacks in Canada and the US, based on 2001 Canadian census data and a pooled sample from the US Census Bureau's American Social and Economic Survey for the years 2001-2006. They find that blacks generally have lower incomes in the US than in Canada, but this difference disappears when the focus is on black immigrants specifically: "Canada and the US are not so different in terms of the mechanisms generating racial income inequality."²¹ It is worth quoting their conclusion at length:

Disaggregating by generation and by controlling for differences in education and region and number of earners in the household, the pattern of racial inequality in the US and Canada converges. For example, after controls, the black-white income gap for the third generation is very close in the US (18 percent) and in Canada (17 percent) and the black-white wage gaps are similar. So Canada and the US are not so different in terms of the mechanisms generating racial income inequality.²²

They find this interesting, given that the different historical and institutional contexts affecting race relations in the two countries might have been expected to produce more negative outcomes in the US. They make no mention of a positive impact of multiculturalism in Canada.

As evidence of better economic outcomes for immigrants in Canada, Kymlicka points to the children of immigrants. He cites the 2006 OECD study of the educational performance of the children of immigrants and minorities across 17 OECD nations, based on tests of academic achievement, and notes that those in Canada “outperform” those in “any other Western democracy,” even after the economic background of the immigrants is taken into account.²³ However, in the OECD findings, the country which is a close second in the rankings of 17 countries is the United States, and third is Australia. In fact, the key finding is that the traditional countries of immigration—with or without multiculturalism policies—outperform the European countries which generally lack institutional experience integrating immigrants.²⁴

Furthermore, in its examination of policies to assist the children of immigrants, the OECD study emphasizes the importance of policies to ensure instruction in the mainstream languages. This implies efforts supporting the mainstream culture rather than minority cultures, pointing away from issues of multiculturalism. The OECD study nowhere mentions

multiculturalism and expresses scepticism on some related issues such as the importance of minority language learning to general academic achievement.²⁵ Kymlicka creates a different impression when he states that “the massive OECD study that established Canada’s comparative advantage in educating immigrant students emphasized that a crucial factor in this success was the presence of policies to address issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in the school population, policies that, in the Canadian context, have emerged under the rubric of multiculturalism.”²⁶ However, these are policies of provincial governments which focus on support for mainstream language learning. If they are stronger because of some link to the “rubric” of multiculturalism, I argue it is rooted not in a philosophical commitment to support for minority cultures, but in the broad public support for efforts to assist immigrants, which is part of the “social capital” effects of multiculturalism to which I return later.

Shifting to the broader differences in overall educational, occupational, and income success for the children of immigrants in Canada, the US, and Australia, specifically comparing Chinese, South Asians, and (for the US and Canada) blacks shows very similar results.²⁷ Second-generation Asian success is common to all three countries. Immigrant offspring in all three countries experience “consistent upward inter-generational mobility,”²⁸ and, in fact, the rates of intergenerational mobility for the children of immigrants in the US are higher than in Canada or Australia. Any effects of multiculturalism in these patterns are so small as to be negligible.

Higher rates of inter-group marriage in Canada are sometimes cited as showing greater inclusiveness, but recent studies reveal this difference as more a result of demographics and opportunity than of preferences possibly arising from multiculturalism. Evidence of higher rates of citizenship acquisition for immigrants in Canada than the US indicates that Canadian government funding of ethnic community organizations is important, as Irene Bloemraad has

shown in her excellent study.²⁹ However, her evidence suggests that government funding plays a role because of programs directed at encouraging citizenship acquisition, and that while multiculturalism policies seem to provide the impetus for such funding in the case of Canada, there is nothing about multiculturalism's principle of support for ethnic cultures that is essential to such support for citizenship acquisition.³⁰ As mentioned above, this is an activity one might expect in any country which seeks immigrants and encourages their integration into the mainstream, and does not reflect an emphasis on minority cultural recognition or support.

Some useful research compares countries with and without multicultural policies, but the few existing studies show little effect either way. One of these shows multiculturalism policies in 21 countries have little relation to the strength of the welfare state.³¹ While this undermines critics' claim of divisiveness, it does not support proponents' claims of enhanced cohesion. Rather, it indicates that multiculturalism has little effect one way or the other.

Another way to ferret out the effects of multicultural recognition of and support for minority cultures might be to compare Quebec with the rest of Canada, as Quebec policy does not embrace multiculturalism by name and is symbolically different. In Quebec, ambivalence toward multiculturalism has resulted in a provincial policy of "inter-culturalism." More specifically, the re-emergence of national identity in Quebec during the 1960s raised issues of culture and language, eliminating traditional assimilationism as an option. When multiculturalism was chosen as a Canadian policy instead of biculturalism to accommodate immigrant groups, many Quebecers felt their interests had been downgraded. While there is a debate on whether there is a significant difference between "multiculturalism" and "inter-culturalism," Quebec policy prioritizes support for the French language and culture over the language and culture of any immigrant group. Even so, results from Statistics Canada's 2002

Ethnic Diversity Survey suggest that Quebec's use of a different word makes no practical difference to immigrant integration. Apparently, governments may support diversity without mentioning multiculturalism.

One could ask what might happen if multiculturalism actually had the effect of reinforcing minority cultures. How would processes of integration be affected? Research based on the Ethnic Diversity Survey indicates that residence in enclaves helps immigrants feel at home, but tends to isolate them. In other words, persistent diversity both promotes and slows the process of integration, depending on different aspects of that process.³²The processes in particular religious communities, such as Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, are little different and are mainly related to visible minority status rather than religious beliefs.³³ In fact, among visible minorities, the religious groups with the lowest levels of successful integration are the Protestants (many of whom are black).

Overall, the evidence points to the conclusion that any direct impact of the Canadian policy to recognize and support minority cultures through a policy of multiculturalism on the integration of immigrants in Canada is quite small, possibly diverse, and most likely negligible. This is an important conclusion for both sides in the debate over multiculturalism's recognition of and support for minority cultures. Both positions are refuted by the evidence. The effects, whether positive or negative, are simply very small. However, this does not mean that the multicultural policy is a failure—far from it. Politically, multiculturalism is successful in Canada. It enjoys widespread support and has emerged as a feature of the national identity. The next section explores the effects of this popular multiculturalism.

POPULAR MULTICULTURALISM AS SOCIAL CAPITAL SUPPORTING IMMIGRATION

Simply stated, multiculturalism is popular in Canada. In the public debate, the pro side won long ago. Most Canadians think that multiculturalism is a good idea. The policy received all-party approval from the moment it was introduced, and successive opinion polls have shown solid majorities backing it. Many see it as part of the national identity. Pollster Michael Adams³⁴ asked Canadians in 1985 what made them most proud about Canada and found multiculturalism on the list at tenth. When he asked again in 2006, it had climbed to second place. In 2010, Focus Canada respondents were asked: “How important is the following for the Canadian identity?” One of the 13 items included was multiculturalism. Fully 86 percent of Focus Canada respondents felt that multiculturalism was either very important or at least somewhat important to the national identity. Compared to other important national symbols, multiculturalism was behind national parks, health care, the flag, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, all rated as very or somewhat important by over 90 percent, about the same level as the national anthem, Canadian literature and music, and the RCMP, between 80 and 89 percent, but ahead of hockey and bilingualism, the national capital, the CBC, and the Queen, which were rated as very or somewhat important by less than 80 percent.³⁵ Multiculturalism seems well-established as a distinctive feature representing the country.

What do most Canadians mean by “multiculturalism”? And what behaviour follows from support for that concept, however defined?

It seems likely that the meaning of multiculturalism has evolved significantly over time. As mentioned above, the initial significance of multiculturalism was in the context of policy to accommodate Canada’s English-French linguistic duality. The enduring presence of two national

groups, neither of which could expect to assimilate the other, required the acceptance and institutionalization of diversity in Canadian society to prevent its dissolution. Since that time, as Breton suggests, multiculturalism had a singular place in the process of nation-building for Canada following World War II.³⁶ The declining position of Britain and the rise of the US created a shifting political environment for Canada, and new symbols of national identity were a response. As the policy developed, Canadian multiculturalism became viewed by many as a proud point of distinction from the neighbouring Americans and their “melting pot” policy. Reflecting on public opinion, Canadian pollster Michael Adams describes multiculturalism as “a national aspiration at the very core of Canadian idealism.”³⁷ Using the US as the point of reference, he asserts, “It’s the Canadian Dream.”³⁸

Interestingly, popular multiculturalism in Canada does not reflect an unusually strong sentiment favouring recognition of and support for minority cultures, the most distinctive tenet of multicultural policies. In fact, public opinion data show it would be a mistake to assume that support for multiculturalism translates into any particular set of ideas on minority cultural recognition. Despite support for multiculturalism, for most Canadians, the priority is for immigrants to integrate fully into the mainstream of society. They are concerned that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values, and they worry about the implications.

In the Focus Canada survey³⁹ respondents were asked whether or not they agreed that “Ethnic groups should try as much as possible to blend into Canadian society and not form a separate community.” Nationally, an overwhelming 80.0 percent agree with this statement, with 51.3 percent agreeing “strongly.” The percentages are even higher in Quebec, 90.4 percent, but they are strong also in the rest of Canada, at 76.6 percent. In addition, a clear majority of

Canadians—68.4 percent—agree that “there are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values,” with 40.3 percent saying they “strongly agree.”

In recent years, Muslim immigrants have been a focus of concern about social and cultural integration. Accordingly, the Focus Canada survey asked, “Do you think most Muslims coming to our country today want to adopt Canadian customs and way of life or do you think they want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society?” A majority, 55.3 percent, feel Muslims “want to be distinct,” while only 27.9 percent think they want to adopt Canadian customs (3.3 percent think they want to do both; 13.4 percent do not express an opinion). Another question asked about a potential ban on wearing of headscarves in public places, including schools; respondents are about equally divided on whether such a ban is a good or bad idea: a slightly greater proportion think it is a good idea, 47.6 percent, compared to 43.9 percent who think the opposite.⁴⁰

Generally, concern about the cultural integration of immigrants does not vary markedly by region. However, controversies regarding Muslims are particularly notable in Quebec, and this is reflected in the Focus Canada results. In Quebec, 60.4 percent think Muslims want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society, compared to 53.7 percent who feel this way in the rest of Canada. And in Quebec, 66.0 percent think banning headscarves worn by Muslim women in public places is a good idea, compared to 41.5 percent in the rest of Canada.

In public opinion, support for cultural retention among Canadians is not necessarily greater than in the US, an indication that support for minority cultures is not a distinctive feature of popular multiculturalism in Canada. A survey conducted by Decima Research in 1989 shows that substantial majorities of both Canadians and Americans support the idea of immigrant “blending,” and that without multiculturalism, Americans support immigrant cultural retention

more often than Canadians.⁴¹ Respondents were asked, “What do you think is better for Canada, for new immigrants to be encouraged to maintain their distinct culture and ways, or to change their distinct culture and ways to blend into the larger society?” Only 34 percent of Canadians at the time favoured the maintenance of “distinct cultures and ways.” Meanwhile, a parallel survey shows that the percentage of Americans favouring the maintenance of “distinct cultures and ways” is higher than in Canada, at 47 percent, though still not a majority.

The Canadian emphasis on immigrant integration found by the Decima polls goes back at least to the 1970s when the multicultural policy was introduced. A national survey conducted in 1976,⁴² when the majority of immigrants were of European background, showed that although most Canadians accepted cultural retention by minorities, the emphasis was on cultural maintenance that did not affect mainstream society in a significant way.⁴³ From the 1970s to the present time, Canadians have definitely favoured the idea of immigrants becoming an integral part of mainstream society.

While the two viewpoints—support for multiculturalism and support for immigrant “blending”—are different, they are, of course, not necessarily contradictory. In principle, they may even be consistent, since multiculturalism in Canada was always intended to accomplish the goal of integration of minorities into the mainstream. Nevertheless, the issue has caused confusion. A *National Post* article on the November 2010 Angus Reid poll⁴⁴ reports that more than half, 54 percent, think Canada should be a “melting pot” rather than a “mosaic.” The article argues that the public has repudiated multiculturalism, even though the poll finds that a majority, 55 percent, think multiculturalism is good for Canada, while only 30 percent think it is bad. The author suggests that Canadians are confused and “have no idea” what multiculturalism actually is.⁴⁵ In effect, Canadians do not see multiculturalism as favouring support for minority cultures.

In interpreting such poll results, care should be taken to consider the actual meaning of the questions. First of all, the questions do not provide respondents with a definition of either multiculturalism or terms such as melting pot, mosaic, blending, separate communities, and so on. They are simply asked to select from the choices presented and are free to apply any meaning to any of them. Second, and more significantly, when questions present respondents with a binary choice between opposites such as melting pot versus a mosaic, or blending versus separate communities, supporters of multiculturalism may have difficulty, because it is precisely this binary choice that multiculturalism is intended to overcome: it offers the potential for both integration and cultural maintenance. So faced with what might be viewed as a philosophically inappropriate request to choose between them, many come down on the side of blending. Such a response does not necessarily imply a demand for complete immigrant assimilation or a repudiation of multiculturalism (though for some it may mean this). Third, note that the desire for immigrant “blending” refers to the outcomes people would like to see; support for multiculturalism influences the criteria people bring to the assessment of whether immigrant integration is working. The criteria may be less exacting for supporters of multiculturalism than for others. In sum, support for multiculturalism may be consistent with an emphasis on blending, if the latter is understood to include a degree of minority cultural maintenance. What is clear is that Canadians support *both* multiculturalism *and* immigrant integration into the mainstream society.

What, then, does multiculturalism mean? In public opinion data, the link between support for multiculturalism and support for high levels of immigration in Canada is very strong. In addition, support for immigration is widely distributed across the country. Data from an Environics Focus Canada survey conducted in November 2010 show majority support in every

major region, with somewhat higher support in Eastern Canada (62.5 percent), Quebec (61.8 percent), and the Prairies (62.8 percent) than in Ontario (53.5 percent), Alberta (54.4 percent), and British Columbia (57.4 percent). The data also show a majority favours immigration in the major cities with very high immigration (Toronto, 60.3 percent; Montreal, 62.7 percent; Vancouver, 56.4 percent).⁴⁶

Further, the data indicate that support for multiculturalism reinforces support for immigration. Those respondents who cite the importance of multiculturalism are significantly more likely to support immigration. Of those who feel that multiculturalism is “very important” to the national identity (more than a majority, 56.4 percent), 67.7 percent support existing levels of immigration, compared to 49.6 percent among the smaller group who find it “somewhat important,” and only 41.8 percent among the even smaller group (11.8 percent) who find it unimportant. The correlation analysis in Table 1 (column 1) shows the positive relation between support for multiculturalism and support for immigration ($r = 0.33$).

In short, findings from public opinion and other survey research suggest that for most Canadians, support for multiculturalism is an expression of support for the idea of Canada as a country committed to immigration and its benefits. Those who endorse multiculturalism also tend to support high levels of immigration. They are likely to view multiculturalism as expression of their welcoming approach toward immigrants, which they believe distinguishes them from their American neighbours. At the same time, most Canadians give priority to the integration of immigrants into mainstream society, and in this respect, they do not differ substantially from Americans. In other words, popular multiculturalism is a pro-immigration ideology.

Further analysis helps clarify the relation between support for multiculturalism, support for immigration, and attitudes to immigrant cultures. The results suggest that multiculturalism bolsters support for immigration by fostering a more open or flexible standard for assessing immigrant integration, leading to immigrants more often being seen as meeting that standard.⁴⁷ When all the immigrant-specific social items are considered, including both multiculturalism and the perceptions of immigrants, all have smaller coefficients representing unique effects. This indicates that their impacts are inter-related. Multiculturalism appears to moderate the impact of the desire for blending and to alleviate concerns about whether it is occurring.

Support for multiculturalism is also related to attitudes towards the United States and in this way are linked to questions of Canadian national identity. Regarding multiculturalism, Canadian discourse makes frequent reference to a presumed contrast between the Canadian cultural mosaic and the American melting pot, and Canadian pride in multiculturalism may be reinforced by its role in defining Canadian identity vis-à-vis the United States. Could national pride play a role in support for multiculturalism, thereby reinforcing a pro-immigration point of view? This appears to be the case, since supporters of multiculturalism are more likely to express a general preference for the Canadian lifestyle over the American.

Multiculturalists more often prefer the Canadian quality of life. Of those who state that multiculturalism is “very important” to the national identity, the proportion preferring Canadian to American life is 95.4 percent, whereas for those who feel that multiculturalism is not at all important, the figure drops to 83.1 percent.⁴⁸ Those who support gun control and a ban on capital punishment also tend to prefer the Canadian quality of life. These patterns have implications for immigration attitudes, since the survey results show a small but significant relation between pride in the Canadian quality of life and support for immigration.⁴⁹

This analysis provides a number of insights into the relationship between general social attitudes, multiculturalism, and support for immigration. To some extent, social attitudes influence perceptions of immigration. At the same time, some social items have significant effects on their own. Those who believe the crime rate is decreasing, those who support same-sex marriage, and those who prefer Canadian lifestyles over American ones are more likely to support immigration, regardless of their immigration-specific beliefs. These effects are something of a surprise. It may be that these items reflect a general level of comfort with social change and personal security, leading to an easier acceptance of immigration and its impact on Canadian society.

Overall, popular multiculturalism in Canada is strongly associated with welcoming immigrants as part of the Canadian identity and is part of what it means to be Canadian. Whether this affects actual behaviour toward immigrants in the community is an interesting (albeit unanswered) question, but the evidence suggests that it definitely supports immigration policy.⁵⁰ Perhaps surprisingly, however, multiculturalism's official recognition of and support for minority cultures does not appear to be salient in the popular version of multiculturalism.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF MULTICULTURALISM ON IMMIGRATION IN CANADA

The preceding review of social science evidence suggests that multiculturalism has significance for Canada's immigration program mainly because of the role popular multiculturalism plays in supporting policies on immigration and immigrant integration.

While recognition of and support for minority cultures seem key to the philosophical justification of multiculturalism, however, any directly related policies appear to have little effect

“on the ground,” either positive or negative. Moreover, although Canada and the US are widely perceived to be different (multiculturalism versus the melting pot), any differences between the two countries in the integration of similar groups of immigrants are quite small, and probably due to Canadian programs supporting language learning, citizenship acquisition, and other requirements for participation in the mainstream culture, not to programs recognizing and supporting minority cultures. This is not surprising, given the small size of the cultural support aspect of the multiculturalism program, which represents only a few million dollars annually.

The most significant fact about Canadian immigration, compared to other countries, is the scale of national commitment to immigration, the extent of public support, and the success of immigrants in integrating into society.⁵¹ Multiculturalism plays a part in this, but not mainly because of any unusual level of Canadian public commitment to the idea of recognizing and supporting minority cultures, or the importance of this principle in helping immigrants to integrate. Rather, for most Canadians, celebrating multiculturalism as a national ideal reflects their enthusiasm for immigration and its cultural and economic benefits. It is in this way that Canada’s multiculturalism plays a role in the national immigration experience and its comparative success.

It is important to underscore that while popular multiculturalism reinforces support for immigration as a national project, evidence indicates that it does not materially influence barriers to the social and economic integration of immigrant minorities in the community. Although support for immigration is comparatively high in Canada, this reflects not only openness to diversity but also a strong belief in the economic benefits of immigration. The evidence reviewed here suggests that the prevalence of discrimination in employment against blacks and other visible minorities, for example, occurs in Canada to roughly the same extent as it does in

other countries such as the United States without multicultural policies, but with perhaps different traditions supporting diversity.

If the impact of popular multiculturalism is primarily as social capital supporting immigration policy, then it would be useful to know more about the underlying processes. Obviously this support is helpful to policy-makers. For one thing, the impact on public support for immigration provides a strong incentive to maintain the multicultural themes in popular discourse. For another, if resources are required to address certain problems of immigration, support for multiculturalism may make such resource allocations less controversial.

At the same time, support for multiculturalism may shield immigration policy from necessary criticism. What is “necessary” is a political judgement, but consider the question of immigration levels. It was once a basic feature of immigration policy in Canada to adjust immigration levels in response to labour market demand, an idea affecting thinking about immigration levels in most countries. However, in recent years, Canadians have not routinely made labour-market adjustments. Beginning with the recession of the early 1990s, immigration levels have been kept at a constant level, even when unemployment rates are high. Some may be reluctant to suggest reducing those levels, if maintaining high immigration is seen as a national duty. Or it may be that higher levels of immigration should be considered, but are rejected based on the belief that once established, such increases may be difficult to reverse. The point is that the multiculturalism basis for immigration policy may render some aspects of the policy difficult to review in public debate, if they are perceived to carry implications for national identity.

The role of multiculturalism as social capital in support of immigration may be difficult to transfer to other countries, and in any case the key Canadian contribution is support for large scale skilled immigration. Questions of the transferability of multiculturalism to other countries

are often based on the principle of the recognition of minority groups and their cultures. However, this aspect actually has had little impact in the Canadian case. Other countries seeking to find best practices in the development of immigrant integration strategies might as well look to language training, support for citizenship, and other settlement policies pursued in Canada and in other countries. Furthermore, if the role of popular multiculturalism in Canada reflects unique features of Canadian history—the French-English divide and the relation of Canada to the US—the establishment of multiculturalism in other countries seems unlikely. In the end, Canada’s experience in immigration may only have meaning for those willing to undertake a program of carefully planned mass immigration as a strategy of national development, as this is a distinguishing feature of Canadian policy and the basis for Canada’s success.

NOTES

¹ This paper draws from two previous papers, “Getting past ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ our debate over multiculturalism needs more nuance,” *Literary Review of Canada*, July/August 2010; “Pro-immigration Canada: Social and Economic Roots of Popular Views,” IRPP Study No. 20 (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, October 2011).

² Kymlicka, Will, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³ Bissoondath, Neil, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, revised edition (Toronto: Penguin, 2002); Putnam, Robert, “E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century – The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture,” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30, no. 2 (2007): 137-174.

⁴ *Globe and Mail*, “‘Distorted’ multiculturalism to blame for rise in Sikh extremism, Dosanjh says,” 21 April 2010.

⁵ Kymlicka, Will, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22.

⁶ Glazer, Nathan, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁷ See Barry, Brian, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Harvard University Press, 2001); Huntington, Samuel, *Who We Are: Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Sen, Amartya, “Two Confusions, and Counting,” *Globe and Mail*, 6 August 2006; Sen, Amartya, “The Uses and Abuses of Multiculturalism: Chile and Liberty,” *The New Republic*, 27 February 2006; Schlesinger, Arthur, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992).

⁸ *The Economist*, “In praise of multiculturalism: Almost everyone now agrees that it has failed. Has it really?” (Bagehot), 14 June, 2007.

⁹ Fukuyama, Frances, “Identity and migration,” *Prospect*, 25 February 2007.

¹⁰ Canada, Parliament of, House of Commons Debates, Third Session, Twenty-eighth Parliament, vol. 8, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, October 1971), 8545-6.

¹¹ See Manzer, Ronald, *Public Policies and Political Development in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

¹² Section 27 states: “This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.” See Canadian Charter

of Rights and Freedoms, Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, at http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/charter/CHART_E.PDF (accessed 30 June 2012).

¹³ Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way*, 42.

¹⁴ Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way*, 8.

¹⁵ Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way*, 22.

¹⁶ Kymlicka, Will, *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 165.

¹⁷ Kymlicka, Will, "Multiculturalism in Normative Theory and in Social Science," *Ethnicities* 11, no.1 (2011): 8.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See Reitz, Jeffrey, and Breton, Raymond, *The Illusion of Difference: Realities of Ethnicity in Canada and the United States* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1994), p. 125.

²⁰ Reitz and Breton review earnings analyses for these immigrant groups and replicate these analyses in a direct comparison of immigrant earnings in 1980/81 census data for black and Chinese immigrants in the two countries. See Reitz and Breton, *Illusion*, 101-124.

²¹ Attewell, Paul, Kasinitz, Philip, and Dunn, Kathleen, "Black Canadians and Black Americans: Racial Income Inequality in Comparative Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 3 (2010): 15.

²² Attewell, Kasinitz, and Dunn, "Black Canadians and Black Americans," 14-15.

²³ See Kymlicka Will, "Testing the Liberal Multiculturalist Hypothesis: Normative Theories and Social Science Evidence." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 43, no.2 (2010): 257–271.

²⁴Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Where Immigrant Students Succeed: A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement in PISA* (Paris: OECD, 2006), 67; also Table 3.5, 200-201.

²⁵Ibid, 145-146.

²⁶ Kymlicka, "Liberal Multiculturalist Hypothesis," 262.

²⁷ See Reitz, Jeffrey G., Zhang, Heather, and Hawkins, Naoko Shiva, "Comparisons of the Success of Racial Minority Immigrant Offspring in the United States, Canada and Australia," *Social Science Research* 40 (2011): 1051–1066.

²⁸ Reitz, Zhang, and Hawkins, "Comparisons," 1064.

²⁹See Bloemraad, Irene, *Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2007).

³⁰ Summarizing her findings, Bloemraad states that "the [ethnic] community's ability and interest in promoting political integration [i.e. citizenship] relies heavily on symbolic and material support of government as provided by policies such as multiculturalism and newcomer settlement" (Bloemraad, *Becoming a Citizen*, p. 232; see also pp. 171ff, for the presentation of the findings themselves).

³¹See Banting, Keith, Kymlicka, Will, Johnston, Richard, and Soroka, Stuart, "Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State? An Empirical Analysis," in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Advanced Democracies*, ed. Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, 49-91 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³² Reitz, Jeffrey G., "Assessing Multiculturalism as a Behavioural Theory," *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion, Potentials and Challenges of Diversity*, in J. Reitz, R. Breton, K.K. Dion and K.L. Dion, 1-45 (New York: Springer, 2009).

³³ Reitz, J., R. Banerjee, M. Phan and J. Thompson, “Race, Religion and the Social Integration of New Religious Minorities in Canada,” *International Migration Review* 43, no.4 (Winter 2009): 695-726.

³⁴ See Adams, Michael, *Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007).

³⁵ Reitz, Jeffrey G., “Pro-immigration Canada: Social and Economic Roots of Popular Views,” IRPP Study No. 20 (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, October 2011).

³⁶ Breton, Raymond, “Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation-Building,” in *The Politics of Gender, Ethnicity and Language in Canada*, ed. A. Cairns and C. Williams, 27-66 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

³⁷ Adams, *Unlikely Utopia*, 41.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Reitz, “Pro-immigration Canada,” 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 15-16.

⁴¹ Reitz and Breton, *Illusion*, 27-28.

⁴² Berry, J., Kalin, R., and Taylor, D.M., *Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977).

⁴³ See the summary and discussion by Reitz, Jeffrey G., “Immigrants, Their Descendants and the Cohesion of Canada,” in *Cultural Boundaries and the Cohesion of Canada*, by R. Breton, J. Reitz and V. Valentine, 383-384 (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980).

⁴⁴ Angus Reid Inc., “Canadians Endorse Multiculturalism, But Pick Melting Pot Over Mosaic,” Poll released 8 November 2010, at <http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/43492/canadians-endorse-multiculturalism-but-pick-melting-pot-over-mosaic/> (accessed 30 June 2012).

⁴⁵*National Post*, “Multiculturalism Gets a Swift Kick,” 13 November 2010.

⁴⁶See Reitz, “Pro-immigration Canada,” 11.

⁴⁷See *ibid*, 17.

⁴⁸Reitz, “Pro-immigration Canada,” 18.

⁴⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁰ Data from public opinion surveys show that immigration is seen as an important economic strategy as well. In fact, multiculturalism and belief in the economic benefits of immigration are the twin pillars of popular support for immigration; see Reitz, “Pro-immigration Canada.”

⁵¹German Marshall Fund of the United States, *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* (German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010), at http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files_mf//galleries/ct_publication_attachments/TTImmigration_2010_final.pdf (accessed 30 June 2012).