Jeffrey G. Reitz

The Sociology of Multiculturalism: Empirical Data vs. Philosophical Debate

September 19, 2013  2:00~4:00pm
Room 108N Munk School of Global Affairs
1 Devonshire Place University of Toronto

**ABSTRACT:** Understanding multiculturalism in Canada includes three sociologically interesting aspects: (1) multicultural policies and their impact on the successful integration of minorities in society, (2) multicultural theory and the empirical validity of its underlying assumptions about human behaviour, and (3) 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 distinctly "multicultural" policies appear to be very small. (2) Evidence on the behavioral theory of multiculturalism is mixed. (3) 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.

In other words, popular support for multiculturalism in Canada represents 'political capital' allowing policy makers a considerable degree of freedom in developing and adapting immigration policies. Some hypotheses are put forward in this regard. The full implications depend greatly on what Canadians in general think multiculturalism means. Evidence suggests that the meaning of multiculturalism is not the same for the average Canadian as it is for political theorists or philosophers. 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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**Upcoming events in the Harney Lecture Series (Fall Term)**

- **November 9, 2013**
  - Patrick Simon, Director of Research, National Institute of Demographic Studies, Paris
  - *Ethnic Diversity in France: the Trajectories and Origins Survey*

- **November 28, 2013**
  - Scott Wortley, Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto
  - *Racial Profiling by the Toronto Police*

**LOCATION:** Room 108N Munk School of Global Affairs
**TIME:** 2-4pm

**Contact:** ethnic.studies@utoronto.ca
**Website:** munkschool.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies