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Legitimizing Neoliberalism Rather than Equality: Canadian Multiculturalism in the Current Reality of North America

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that the multiculturalism policy and its implicit link to immigration policy have been instrumental in redefining a Canadian imaginary in the 1970s and early 1980s. Criticism of multiculturalism has ranged from a conservative perspective believing that the policy is divisive and has gone too far, to a postcolonial critique emphasizing that the policy has not gone far enough to de-marginalize non-white Canadians' experiences. Adding to this wide ranging criticism, this article suggests that in the last two decades, multiculturalism has abandoned its perceived inclusionary framework in favor of a commodification paradigm. Multiculturalism was championed as a competitive advantage in the discussion of North American free trade and integration. Following the events of September 11, 2001, multiculturalism has been simultaneously framed as a security risk and a casualty. In the new North American reality of economic integration and security cooperation, multiculturalism and immigration policies have been co-opted into a neoliberal rationality, legitimizing security and prosperity rather than diversity and equality.

Key words: multiculturalism, national identity, national unity, immigration policy, Canada-U.S. relations, continental integration, security agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian policy of multiculturalism has existed for almost four decades.¹ Two generations have now grown up with and within it, and sometimes can only with difficulty imagine that Canada was once not considered a multicultural nation. Outside of Canada, after its vast geographical size, multiculturalism is probably the country's best known image. Yet for others, the official status of multiculturalism may have been either a motivating factor to seek a better life in Canada or a legitimization of their immigrant experiences in Canada. In recent years, multiculturalism policy has become a predominant discourse of Canadian national culture. Multiculturalism fosters a new Canadian identity based on an ensemble of different cultures and on the specificity of each group, making it possible for people to maintain their own cultural practices and allegiances to their countries of origin while embracing and contributing to a redefined Canadian identity. But as people of diverse origins could identify themselves as Canadian, it became even more difficult for all Canadians to define what constitutes Canadianness because of the plurality of their historical and contemporary experiences, affiliations, and particularly strong regional allegiances that have long challenged the unitary expectations of the nation-state. Yet, multiculturalism as a national cultural project consolidated a new and more inclusionary Canadian national identity.²

This article argues that the multiculturalism policy was quite successful in redefining a Canadian identity in the 1970s and early 1980s. Canada's policy of multiculturalism has been generally contested for both weakening national unity by encouraging immigrant and ethnic so-called "minorities" to maintain their own cultures or further marginalizing some cultural traditions and deflecting the discourses and claims for resistance and social justice (Bannerji, 2000).³ Adding to this wide ranging criticism,

¹ Multiculturalism is a concept used in reference to Canada's governmental policy, but also to the social reality of cultural diversity in the Canadian population, and to a philosophical ideal of cultural pluralism (Kallen, 1982). Himani Bannerji (2000) differentiates multiculturalism from above (policy) from multiculturalism from below (socio-demographic diversity and ideal that prompted the policy). That point is also made by James Tully (1995) when he argues that cultural diversity has always existed but has not been recognized as such by dominant powers.

² Given the social diversity of Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic coasts, it is difficult and indeed misleading to speak of Canadian identity in the singular. Social differences and inequalities duly noted here, Canadian identity is used here in reference to the identity of a political community. As Parekh (2000: 231) argues, "[T]he shared view of national identity has a particularly important role in a multicultural society because of its greater need to cultivate a common sense of belonging among its diverse communities."

³ The language of multiculturalism in Canada profoundly contradicts the idea and ideal that no one group should take precedence over any other (Drache, 2004). Bannerji (2000: 111) has argued that the discourse of multiculturalism "is concocted through ruling relations and the practical administration of a supposed reconciliation of 'difference'". The minority/majority framework illustrating the relations between dominated (ethnicized) group and dominant group (the so-called "founding nation groups": British and French) is still

this article suggests that perceptions of multiculturalism changed in the last two decades, quietly transforming from a predominantly inclusionary language to a commodification debate emphasizing competition, individual responsibility, and contribution. Multiculturalism became a competitive advantage in the discussion of North American free trade and integration and has been seen as a security risk since the events of September 11, 2001. In recent years, multiculturalism and immigration policies have also been increasingly affected by security measures and the concomitant erosion of rights. This article examines the new pressures of continental integration, policy harmonization, and the security agenda on multiculturalism in the context of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism here refers to a set of economic policies that have enabled a globalized economy by maximizing competition and free trade through economic deregulation, elimination of tariffs, and other market-friendly policies. Economic liberalism has sought to minimize interference from political institutions and to challenge welfarism (Larner, 2000). I argue that in the current North American reality of economic integration and security cooperation, multiculturalism and immigration policies have been co-opted into a neoliberal rationality legitimizing security and prosperity rather than diversity and equality.

CHARTING THE UNEXPECTED

Adopted in 1971, the policy of multiculturalism signified Canada's normative recognition of its socio-cultural pluralism characterized by the diversification of immigration, self-determination claims by Aboriginal groups, and the rise of Québécois nationalism in the 1960s.⁴ The policy of multiculturalism coincided with the liberalization of Canada's immigration policy as a way to end the de facto White Canada immigration policy. Census figures of 1961 indicate that 85 percent of immigrants came from Europe (of which, 34 percent came from the United Kingdom), 10 percent from the United States, and the remaining 5 percent were of different non-European

generally used and reflects the inequalities between groups. Expressions such as "ethnic" and "immigrant" encode a similar "us" and "them" relationship. Combining ethnic or immigrant with minority/minoritization accentuates difference and otherness. Ethnicity is a power relation and comes to designate non-dominant. Dominant groups are also "ethnic" but their power over other groups often "de-ethnicized" them. "Immigrant" describes a person not born in Canada but the term is often used to also describe second and third generations. In the multicultural language, "ethnocultural" becomes the favorite term to describe "ethnic" or "immigrant" groups of different cultures. All these concepts are politically-contested, but for purposes of fluidity, I chose not to put them in quotation marks in the text. I have completely avoided the use of "visible minorities", an official category describing non-white people and emphasizing both a sense of difference and peculiarity (Bannerji, 1993).

⁴ Antecedents to the policy can be traced back to the nationalist claims of the 1930s and the post-World War II programs designed to unite Canadians in war times (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002).

origins. The new Immigration Regulations of 1962 were to abolish the overtly discriminatory selection and admission criteria for prospective immigrants. No longer would immigrants be denied admission based on their nationality, ethnic group, occupation, lifestyle, climatic unsuitability, or perceived inability to assimilate in Canadian society.⁵ While the new regulations were to open the immigration process to non-European immigrants, existing European immigrants retained the right to sponsor family members insuring a relative flow of white immigration for years to come.

The introduction of an official policy of multiculturalism by the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1971 was the unexpected result of a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism established in 1963 to assess the state of French-English relations throughout Canada.⁶ The commission's public consultations revealed that other ethnic groups, predominantly White Europeans of non-French and non-British descent,⁷ objected to the bicultural-bilingual model. Thus, the commission's original mandate to assess cultural dualism soon uncovered a far more complex multicultural reality and growing concerns around issues of acculturation, linguistic diversity, and cultural heritage. The commission's final report, released in 1969, recommended that Canada officially value its multiculturalism and multilingualism. However, with the adoption of the 1969 Official Languages Act formalizing English and French bilingualism in Canada, the Trudeau government instituted a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.⁸

⁵ The abolition of discriminatory criteria for selection and admission in immigration policy was linked to the Canadian Bill of Rights enacted in 1960. The Bill of Rights provided fundamental civil and political rights for all Canadians—and therefore to future Canadians. The Bill of Rights was subsequently replaced in 1982 by the more comprehensive and constitutionally enshrined Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

⁶ In the early 1960s, proponents of Quebec's *révolution tranquille* (quiet revolution) requested the creation of an independent federal commission to assess the subordination of the Francophone "minority" to the Anglophone "majority". The Royal Commission of Inquiry on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Commission Royale d'Enquête sur le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme) was established on July 19, 1963, to conduct a series of regional meetings across Canada in order to directly gather the pulse of French-English relations on issues such as language, education, labor, media, among other topics. Additionally, the commission had the mandate to assess the extent of bilingualism in the federal administration, and the opportunities for Canadians to become bilingual in English and French.

⁷ "Ethnic" groups are usually understood in Canada as groups of non-British, non-French or non-Aboriginal origin. Such groups are also referred to as "immigrant" groups, "minority" groups or "ethnocultural" groups. British and French groups are also "ethnic" and "immigrant" but their majority status have historically dominated their relations with other groups, including Aboriginal peoples.

⁸ Canada's de facto bilingualism has been predominantly geographically concentrated in Montreal, in the national capital of Ottawa and in some regional pockets (Northern Ontario, Eastern Townships and Manitoba). Only the province of New Brunswick is officially bilingual. However, it is important to recognize that already in the 1970s, there were numerous pockets of non-official bilingualism (English or French and Italian, German, Ukrainian, Mandarin, Punjabi, Arabic, Urdu, Tagalog, or Tamil, among many others) pretty much all over the country and notably in major Canadian cities.

Revised in 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act emphasized legislative reform for equal opportunity and equal protection of all groups.⁹ The policy's main interest went from reproducing cultural traditions (folklore activities and heritage languages) in the 1970s to promoting institutional reform in order to alleviate racism and systemic discrimination experienced by many ethnic and immigrant groups. In its new legislative form, multiculturalism was redefined as an attribute of Canadian society and identity, as a means of development, participation and inclusion, as a model of social interaction, and as a medium of communication (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988). It then became the official policy of the Canadian government to promote the full and equitable participation of individual and communities of all origins in shaping all aspects of Canadian society and to foster the appreciation of Canada's diverse cultures. A new emphasis on individual rather than collective rights sought to inculcate an attachment to Canada as a whole through identity, participation, equality, and justice (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002).

MULTICULTURAL CRITICISM

Will Kymlicka (1998: 58), one of the most prolific scholars and defenders of the merits of Canadian multiculturalism, writes:

Multiculturalism has provided a useful organizing principle around which to debate the changing terms of integration of immigrant groups. It affirms a few clear principles regarding the renunciation of both racial exclusion and coercive assimilation, and focuses attention on an important set of issues regarding the kinds of mutual adaptations involved in immigration. It helps us debate what we can expect from immigrants in terms of their integration into mainstream society, and what immigrants can expect from us in terms of accommodation of their ethnocultural identities.

This is the dominant discourse of the multiculturalism policy that is routinely and internationally cited as the successful example of peaceful social coexistence and political recognition of diversity. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of words like integration, adaptation and accommodation, which have become part of the natural-

⁹ The Multiculturalism Act of 1988 is anchored in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (see Sections 15 and 27), and officially linked to the Immigration Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act, the Hate Crime provision in the Criminal Code, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (as stated in the preamble of the Multiculturalism Act, 1988).

ized political language of multiculturalism, Kymlicka's assessment of the Canadian policy points to three basic problems.

First, multiculturalism in Canada has been articulated around national and ethnocultural differences linked to immigration. Although not mutually exclusive, other expressions of diversity (e.g. gender, sexuality, language, status, or other cultural differences) are rarely included in the discourse of multiculturalism. The result has been that some groups are, in the popular multicultural jargon, to be "accommodated, tolerated or celebrated" more than others. Second, multiculturalism as a policy can be attached to Canada as a whole but in practice, immigration has concentrated in the particular major urban areas of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Hence, many cities and regions in Canada could be described as predominantly "mono-cultural." Third, while the policy of multiculturalism created a more inclusive discourse for ethnic and immigrant groups, it still assumes the presence of a dominant group. This assumption is based on the persistence of Canada's "two-founding-nations" model putting groups of British and French origins in a privileged position. That multiculturalism nowadays recognizes that expectations of immigrants and the host society are mutually negotiable (yet predominantly fixed by the latter) is an admission of the persistence of such a framework (Razack, 2002; Bannerji, 2000). In many white settler's societies (such as Canada, Australia, and the United States), sharing similar colonial history, the predominant national discourse privileges the idea that people of European descent are the original citizens and obliterates any reference to the racist dissemination of indigenous people and labor exploitation of people of color (Razack, 2002; Bennett, 1998). Not surprisingly, multiculturalism has had very little appeal for Aboriginal people and Québécois. Multiculturalism relegated both groups to "equal" rather than "special" status with other non-English cultural groups (Bannerji, 2000; Kymlicka, 1995).

After 500 years of repression throughout which every possible means of destruction and assimilation has been deployed by administrators, missionaries, and educators, Aboriginal peoples find the concept of multiculturalism quite suspect and irrelevant (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002). Preceding any form of Canadian government, Aboriginal peoples were characterized by a great diversity of cultures and practices.¹⁰ Aboriginals were not only excluded from Canada's "two-founding-nations" paradigm; they were consistently trapped between the French and English

¹⁰ Aboriginal peoples in Canada include First Nations (52 nations speaking different languages and living in more than 610 communities), Métis (persons of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry living in various provinces), and Inuit people (living in Arctic Canada). According to the 2001 census, Aboriginal people represented a little more than 3 percent of Canada's total population. This includes approximately 600 000 First Nations, 290 000 Métis and 45,000 Inuit people.

divide. Canada's colonial constitutional regime, and more specifically the multiculturalism policy, failed to recognize Aboriginal cultures, forms of self-government, and languages. Multiculturalism has been unconcerned by indigenous land claims, treaty rights, and self-determination. Its sole consequence has been to further marginalize indigenous claims by legitimizing colonial and immigrant experiences.

At a time when Quebec was attempting to redefine itself as a modern and distinct society, the policy of multiculturalism appeared as an attempt to relegate Quebec's historical status of "founding group" to that of one ethnic group among others. Partly as a reaction to a federal multiculturalism policy and partly because it better suited its socio-political particularities, Quebec developed its own policy of interculturalism in the late 1980s. The ideological assumption of interculturalism is that diversity is not only something that should be recognized by a host society but instead it is something that will transform both newcomers and their new society (Juteau, 2002). This position implies the reciprocal recognition of various cultural contributions (as in multiculturalism) but also seeks the social convergence of these groups toward the development of a shared civic identity. In Quebec, the French language is held up as the medium of convergence of Quebec's pluralism (which contrasts with the unquestioned view of English as "a neutral 'medium of communication'" in the rest of Canada (Angus, 1997: 25).¹¹ But opposition between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism has been described as a false debate (Pietrantonio, Juteau and McAndrews, 1996). Both positions promote a mutual effort of rapprochement emphasizing social values over cultural characteristics, and institutional mechanisms for equality over symbolic promotion of diversity. While both systems offer a definite attempt to move from a cultural paradigm to a more civic and social paradigm, both institutional models fall short in providing the necessary changes in their dominant traditions and institutions for intercultural claims and struggles against cultural imperialism (Tully, 1995; Helly, 1993; Pietrantonio, Juteau and McAndrews, 1996).

Immigrant and ethnic groups have been generally more supportive of the multiculturalism policy (and its bilingual framework).¹² In their views, multiculturalism had symbolically acknowledged the importance of immigration and the diversity of immigrant experiences and contributions in Canada. The policy initially created a legitimizing space where immigrant and ethnic groups could pursue demands for inclusion and access to state resources. Ethnic organizations sought to protect this newly defined political space by demanding that it be enshrined in the Constitution.

¹¹ The status of English as the dominant national (continental and international) language was never questioned, even though the policy of multiculturalism operated in a bilingual framework (Angus, 1997).

¹² According to Bannerji (2000), some immigrants have come to embrace their "multiculturalized" status because it means to be integrated, successful, and unproblematic.

The inclusion of Section 15 on equality rights and Section 27 on Canada's multicultural heritage in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 thus appears as the highlight of the policy (Abu-Laban and Nieguth, 2000). Any further attempts to expand and secure multiculturalism in constitutional politics (notably in the Meech Lake Accord in 1987 and the Charlottetown Accord in 1992) were unsuccessful.¹³

By late 1980s, the ascendancy of neoliberalism and the demise of the welfare state challenged the foundations of multiculturalism and led to its 1988 revision. Those discontented with the workings of the multiculturalism policy around the maintenance and enhancement of cultural practices, or what has been called the "song and dance affairs," were seen as encouraging stereotyping (Bissoondath, 1994). The 1988 law reasserted the role of multiculturalism in fighting discrimination and promoting citizenship. This shift also marked a transition from collective to individual rights. By the early 1990s, financial support for multiculturalism activities had decreased considerably.¹⁴ A report of the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future (known also as the Spicer Commission) released in 1991 recommended that federal funding for multiculturalism activities be given only for immigrant orientation, instances of racial discrimination, and promotion of equality. In 1993, the outgoing Conservative government disbanded the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and transferred it to a newly created Department of Public Security, but the incoming Liberal government rapidly shifted multiculturalism to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

These changes in multiculturalism programs occurred at the time when the diversification of immigration started to become significant. By the 1980s, Asia had replaced Europe as the primary source for immigration. In the 1990s, the three top sending countries were China (11 percent), India (9 percent), and the Philippines (7 percent). This diversification of Canadian immigration and growing flows of refugees brought biological and cultural differences that appeared more challenging to "accommodate" in the dominant society. But the neoliberal shift in the multiculturalism policy promoting individual rights and responsibilities was about to impose new

¹³ In 1987, former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney met with provincial ministers in Meech Lake to secure Quebec's consent to the newly patriated constitution. The Quebec government (then led by Robert Bourassa) presented five conditions to the accord: the recognition of Quebec as a "distinct society"; veto for Quebec in any future constitutional amendment, greater provincial powers in immigration; federal compensation in provincial programs, and input for Supreme Court nominations. The accord was rejected. In 1992, these constitutional issues were defeated in a national referendum known as the Charlottetown Accord.

¹⁴ Funding for multiculturalism has been dwindling over the years. Competition between ethnic organizations accentuated concerns about representativity and "authenticity" of activities of some groups. After all, ethnic organizations are not internally homogenous. Interests of ethnic organizations vary along gender and class lines, age, status, period of arrivals, etc.

rules of self-sufficiency. Multiculturalism as “productive” diversity rather than a coexistence framework became more attractive in the 1990s global and neoliberal climate of global competitiveness, markets, and trade (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002).

MULTICULTURALISM AS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The revised Multiculturalism Act (1988) was passed in the climate of an important national event: the signing of the 1989 bilateral Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which would be followed by the 1994 trilateral North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).¹⁵ For Canada, these economic policies represented an important neoliberal step toward embracing a globalized economy by maximizing competition and free trade through economic deregulation, elimination of tariffs, and other market-friendly policies.¹⁶ Thompson and Randall (2002: 282) have argued that “free trade was one of the most significant policy issues in the life of the Canadian nation.” The new neoliberal market reality not only prioritized states’ relationships with economic actors but also redefined new relations between state and citizenry. For one thing, the focus on continental integration and global competitiveness conveniently deflected political attention from the constitutional debates and welfare services. Cutbacks in programs, new delivery approaches, and a greater emphasis on individual self-sufficiency were part of a new prevalent market mentality. The neoliberal assault on liberal welfarism and democratic values did not necessarily mean the end of programs or services, but rather transformed them by instilling in them new rationalities of economic efficiency and individual freedom.

The emphasis on individual responsibility and the concomitant shift of national discourse from inclusion to contribution imposed a new understanding of multiculturalism and immigration. Although immigration has long –if not always– been dominated by discourses of market needs for labor and entrepreneurialism, Canada reaffirmed its commitment to attracting and admitting economic immigrants with its points established in 1967, reaffirmed in 1994, and made more stringent in 2001. This orientation was defended by the need for national economic development and global competitiveness, but it can also be seen as a way to privilege highly-skilled workers in order to maximize individual contributions and integration. Canadian

¹⁵ I recognize the absence of Mexico in this paper. I also recognize that trilateral North American agreements have been de facto bilateral agreements, i.e., Canada-U.S. and U.S.-Mexico agreements.

¹⁶ The biggest concern –and yet an incentive– related to economic integration was, not surprisingly, the unequal power and asymmetrical nature of economic interdependence between Canada and the United States, something experienced by Mexico as well in its relations with the U.S.

immigration's emphasis on skills served as the basis for a new perception and representation of multiculturalism and new terms of integration. Well-educated professionals are more likely to speak or learn English or French, and thus are deemed likely to integrate more easily into Canadian society. The economic immigrant, seen as the ideal immigrant to Canada, is more likely to be self-sufficient and therefore will not make demands on social programs. However, many economic or independent immigrants once admitted in Canada have faced the non-recognition of their foreign credentials or the dismissal of their foreign work experience. As a result, Bauder (2003) argued, de-skilled newcomers are excluded from the upper segments of the labor market, and forced to take jobs outside their professions, most likely joining the ranks of the disadvantaged. In such cases, multiculturalism exists at the expense of newcomers' deception, discrimination and exploitation –the exact processes that the policy was established to eliminate.

Another contradiction of this policy is that Canada has actually not been able to attract or retain the best qualified immigrants who often choose to go to the United States given the higher wages, lower taxes, and better growth potentials (Li, 2003). According to Li, Canada's policy of immigrant selection has been reactive and myopic given the limited supply of "desirable" immigrants qualified to move into the upper levels of economic globalization. Canada's problem of retaining skilled residents and newcomers, or the so-called brain drain, is often decried as the result of a limited capacity to compete with the United States (Li, 2003: 182). The bottom line is that immigration has to benefit the national economy so as to not create any economic or social tensions with existing citizens. The reality is that many immigrants are economically and politically penalized by national policies before they can even settle into a new life. Exploited economically by global forces and excluded politically by national policies, numerous immigrants are "integrated" into the marginalized ranks of the new society. Immigration, particularly non-white immigration, is quickly perceived as "bringing too many cultural and social changes... creating too many adjustment problems in social relations as well as putting strains on housing, schools, transportation, and other areas" (Li, 2003: 143) when in fact these areas were already in a profound state of crisis. Immigrants are therefore forced into the existing areas of "democratic deficits" of their new society, while they continue to be described as a challenge and a disruption to national cohesion (Anderson, 2002).

The Multiculturalism Act (1988) and its direct references to valuing diversity for its invaluable resources in the shaping of the future of Canada quickly extended to business interests in the 1990s. The new business language of "selling diversity" (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002), with its emphasis on markets, efficiency, competitiveness, and individualism, was central in the re-articulation of multiculturalism

both domestically and internationally. In promoting cultural particularism, multiculturalism has involved the commodification of ethnic diversity (i.e., ethnic food, art, cultural productions) and the consolidation of ethnic entrepreneurialism at the local level. According to Abu-Laban and Gabriel (2002: 12) the “skills, talents, ethnic backgrounds of men and women are commodified, marketed and billed as trade-enhancing.” Thus, meritocracy enters the discussion, and the burden of becoming a “successful immigrant” or “contributing citizen” (i.e., producer/consumer) is completely shifted to individuals regardless of the conditions of the political economy.

Canada prides itself on the competitive advantage offered by skilled individuals of different backgrounds (Canadian Heritage, 2004). This competitive advantage is expressed specifically by immigrants’ connections to their home countries and the numerous languages spoken providing a base to improve international relations and facilitating international business and trade. The economic benefits of multiculturalism were clearly stated by former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in a 1986 speech appropriately called “Multiculturalism Means Business.” Linking multiculturalism to the expansion of export markets, Mulroney (quoted in Mitchell, 1993) says:

We, as a nation, need to grasp the opportunity afforded to us by our multicultural identity, to cement our prosperity with trade and investment links the world over and with a renewed entrepreneurial spirit at home... In a competitive world, we all know that technology, productivity, quality, marketing, and price determine export success. But our multicultural nature gives us an edge in selling to that world.

The idea of multiculturalism as a market incentive to attract global capital and investments and to strengthen trading links with other nation-states has become a dominant economic and political discourse. More than 15 years after Mulroney’s speech, former Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (2003) endorsed a similar message:

We have long understood the central contribution that our multiculturalism policy has made to the cultural and social fabric of Canadian society. But we have also discovered that our combined immigration and multiculturalism policies have provided comparative advantages in an increasingly globalized society.

But the idea of immigration and multiculturalism as a global competitive advantage was not just advanced by Canadian politicians. The Canadian Council of Chief Executives, a powerful corporate lobby group that led the development and promotion of both FTA and NAFTA and continues to push for further economic integration

and a common security perimeter, has championed the corporate multicultural credo.

Canada's vibrant multicultural communities could become not just a competitive advantage, but our unique selling proposition within the global market for talent. Given the way global corporations have been evolving, we suggested that Canada could establish itself as the one place where the multicultural talent pool of tomorrow's multinationals could all feel at home, a place where highly skilled people from anywhere in the world would feel comfortable settling down with their families.

Canada's openness to the world has been the key to our prosperity for generations. Our openness to free trade within North America has paid huge dividends over the past two decades, and left us better prepared for the challenges of global competition. Openness to greater labor mobility within Canada and internationally has the potential to multiply these gains in the context of today's global economic evolution –if we have the courage to seize the opportunity and if we prepare ourselves to make the most of it (Stewart-Patterson, 2006).

From a corporate perspective, multiculturalism has been quite instrumental in redefining Canadian identity, but not necessarily through its intended channel of "shaping a more harmonious and egalitarian society in which there was a more equitable distribution of social services" (Thompson and Randall, 2002: 287). The language of multiculturalism as a corporate incentive became so dominant that even the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, a non-partisan coalition of national ethnocultural umbrella organizations, agrees that "[m]ore than just being a way to preserve exotic foods and colourful dances, multiculturalism becomes a tool which this country can use to develop a decisive competitive advantage in the global marketplace" (Cipywnyk, 1996). Yet, in practice, corporate multiculturalism has not been without tensions.

In August 1987, *Maclean's* (English Canada's largest news magazine) featured Hong Kong investor and real estate developer Li Ka-Shing as the epitome of the successful immigrant rising from refugee to multi-billionaire. Li and other Hong Kong investors have been important players in the global economy and particularly in Vancouver's real estate development industry. Rapid urban development in the commercial and residential areas of Vancouver by wealthy Hong Kong immigrants has, however, generated both anger and antagonism. Contentions between old and new residents ranged from the soaring price of real estate to the razing of Victorian houses and gardens and the perceived destruction of neighborhoods' character (i.e. White Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity). Rapid transformation of Vancouver by Hong

Kong investors raised fears and tested people's commitment to multiculturalism. Yet, these investors qualified under Canada's investor-immigrant entry rules by committing an investment of \$250 000 (currently Can\$400 000) and, in return, being granted permanent residence status. Immigration and multiculturalism were used to smooth resistance of transnational movement of capital and to justify the economic boost of Hong Kong investments in Canada (Mitchell, 2004). The major problem of corporate multiculturalism is that immigrants are expected to be an active part of the economy without, however, fully becoming a part of the national polity because of suspicion or discrimination (Samers, 2003).

MULTICULTURALISM AS SECURITY RISK

Following the events of 9/11, media and politicians in the United States hastily believed that some plane hijackers crossed the border from Canada. Although such accusations were quickly refuted, they reflected how Canada was perceived as a hotspot for terrorism and international criminality.¹⁷ As a response to the attacks, the Bush administration implemented a series of domestic laws to fight terrorism and urge other countries to do so. Initial pressures on Canada focused on immigration (and by extension, multiculturalism) policy which critics perceived as too liberal, lax, lenient, and tolerant, thus, as a security risk. Canada was far more preoccupied with the slowdown in the movement of goods over the border: long lines of transport trucks and considerable delays in border crossings were translating into substantial economic losses. As the national preoccupation with the border changed from a commerce-first to a security-first border, balancing economic competitiveness and the security agenda, and simultaneously protecting its sovereignty, proved to be a challenging task for Canada.

Canada enacted its own anti-terrorism agenda composed of a series of laws, structures, and resources affected to fight terrorism and to protect the U.S.-Canada border. In October 2001, Canada's Department of Justice introduced its first ever national security policy centered on the Anti-Terrorism Act. Anti-terrorism measures were implemented to strengthen investigation, prosecution, and prevention of terrorist activities at home and abroad. Canada also organized its security measures

¹⁷ The allegations were built on the case of Ahmed Ressay, an Algerian man living in Montreal since 1994, who was arrested in December 1999 as he attempted to cross the U.S.-Canadian border (at Port Angeles in Washington) with explosives intended to blow up the Los Angeles International Airport. After his arrest, Ressay reportedly helped U.S. authorities identify people with alleged links to Al-Qaeda and provided information about training camps in Afghanistan where he had trained in 1998 (PBS Frontline, 2007).

around the creation of a new Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (now Public Safety Canada), officially established in 2003. The new department became responsible for policy development on all matters of national security, including emergency management, policing, and law enforcement, corrections and conditional releases, and crime prevention.¹⁸ Initially modelled after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the department endorses a larger definition of national security to include natural, industrial, and technological disasters.

Canada's new anti-terrorism policy was particularly concerned with U.S.-Canadian trade and multiculturalism. The measures of the Anti-Terrorism Act sought to target people and activities posing a threat to national security while also preventing the "Canada-U.S. border from being held hostage by terrorists and impacting on the Canadian economy" (Department of Justice, 2001b). In a news brief, the Department of Justice makes it clear that the new act has some ramifications for multiculturalism:

This is a struggle against terrorism, and not against any one community, group, or faith. Diversity is one of Canada's greatest strengths, and the Government of Canada is taking steps to protect it. Measures will be included in the bill to address the root causes of hatred and to ensure Canadian values of equality, tolerance, and fairness are affirmed in the wake of the September 11 attacks (Department of Justice, 2001b).¹⁹

Multiculturalism also found its way into the creation of a Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security (in 2004) within the Public Safety Department as a way to keep policymakers aware of the impact of national security of Canada's diverse society. The roundtable is comprised of members of different ethnocultural and religious communities from across Canada (but incidentally none from the two largest Muslim communities in Toronto and Montreal). The role of the roundtable is to provide advice to the Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Safety on the promotion and protection of civil order, mutual respect, and common understanding. As cited in "Securing Our Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy," the roundtable is expected to "be a partnership with all communities to work to ensure that there

¹⁸ The Department of Public Safety works collaboratively with five agencies: Canada Border Services Agency, Canadian Security Intelligence Services, Correctional Service of Canada, National Parole Board, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

¹⁹ These measures of the Anti-Terrorism Act include "amending the Criminal Code to eliminate online hate propaganda and create a new offence of mischief against places of religious worship or religious property; [and] amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to clarify that the prohibition against spreading repeated hate messages by telephone communications includes all telecommunications technologies" (Department of Justice 2001b).

is zero tolerance for terrorism or crimes of hate in Canada" (Privy Council Office, 2004: 2). Although this advisory roundtable is an important symbolic gesture in the structure of the new national security policy, many human rights and civil liberties activists fear the impact on citizens of increased police powers in preventive arrests and investigative hearings, particularly in terms of racial or religious profiling.

Citizens, immigrants, and refugees of Muslim countries have been indiscriminately perceived as a security risk in the post 9/11 climate. Racial and religious profiling (of Arab or Muslim males or even of Arab and Muslim-looking males) by the authorities (and at times by the public) has linked multiculturalism and national security, and immigration law is often used in justifying such actions. Multiculturalism which sought to unify and legitimize diversity and difference has been therefore exposed to the reconfigurations of cultural and political discrimination via immigration regulation (from investigative detention powers all the way to the use of security certificates for non-citizens suspected of being a national threat).²⁰ Project Thread in Toronto exemplifies racial profiling and investigative detention abuse. In the summer of 2003, 23 Muslim men studying in Canada were arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on the suspicion of belonging to an alleged Al Qaeda sleeper cell (Shephard and Virma, 2003). The men were detained under section 58 (1) (C) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act based on "reasonable suspicion that they are inadmissible on grounds of security" (Roach, 2006). In less than two weeks, what started out as a sensational terrorism case rapidly devolved into simple immigration offences. However, some men were detained for months while others were subsequently deported on student visa offences. The RCMP apparently chose the name "Thread" because the men were connected by a common thread: all were Muslim, all but one was from Pakistan, and all were enrolled at some point at the Ottawa Business College of Toronto, a fraudulent business taking students' money and not providing courses (Project Threadbare, 2006).

There is also the case of Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian who was detained by U.S. officials in September 2002 in New York, during a stop-over from Tunis to Montreal. Despite his Canadian passport, Arar was deported to Syria where he was regularly tortured for almost a year before being released in October 2003. Arar has never been charged with any offence in Canada, the U.S. or Syria. A Commission of

²⁰ Five Muslim men suspected of involvement with terrorism have been detained in Canada under security certificate. The Egyptians Mohammad Majhoud and Mahmoud Jaballah have been detained since June 2000 and August 2001, respectively. Syrian Hassan Almrei has been detained since October 2001. The Algerians Mohammed Harkat and Adil Charkaoui have been detained since December 2002 and February 2003, respectively. Charkaoui was also released on strict conditions in February 2005. Harkat was released in May 2006 (Roach, 2006).

Inquiry was established in February 2004 to investigate and report on the actions of Canadian officials in relation to Maher Arar. In its final report released in September 2006, Commissioner Dennis O'Connor found no evidence linking Arar to terrorist activity but concluded that the RCMP has provided false information to U.S. authorities. He states:

The RCMP provided American authorities with information about Mr. Arar that was inaccurate, portrayed him in an unfairly negative fashion and overstated his importance in the RCMP investigation... [Although] [t]here is no evidence that Canadian officials participated or acquiesced in the American authorities' decision to detain Mr. Arar or remove him to Syria... It is very likely that, in making the decision to detain and remove Mr. Arar, American authorities relied on information about Mr. Arar provided by the RCMP (Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar, 2006: 13-14).

Information sharing and coordination between Canada and the U.S. did not occur overnight. Canada has been working on revisions of its immigration and refugee policy since 1997. This work allowed Canada to move swiftly in 2001 with both the adoption of a new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the signing of the U.S.-Canada Smart Border Declaration. By adopting this act, Canada sought to reaffirm some existing provisions such as strengthening efforts to attract skilled workers by introducing a new selection grid for economic immigrants (initially raising the passing mark from 67 to 75 but finally lowering it to 70). The act expanded the definition of family reunification, streamlined the admission process but strengthened sponsorship obligations. It also introduced severe penalties (life in prison) for human smuggling and trafficking and streamlined the refugee determination process (by introducing front-end security screening, clearer grounds for deportation, limited judicial review to delay removal, and suspension of claims for refugees charged with serious crimes). This immigration reform was clearly influenced by security discourses and the discourse of illegal immigration as a threat prevailing in the U.S. As expressed by then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Elinor Caplan, "By saying 'no' more quickly to people who would abuse our rules, we are able to say 'yes' more often to the immigrants and refugees Canada will need to grow and prosper in the years ahead" (*Migration News*, 2001).

Parallel to immigration reform, Canada had also been at work on a "Smart Border Action Plan" prior to 9/11. Signed by the authorities of Washington and Ottawa in December 2001, the Smart Border Declaration and its associated 30-point action plan sought to enhance the security of the U.S.-Canadian border while insuring the flow of goods and people and also protecting infrastructure and greater information

sharing and enforcement coordination. More specifically, the declaration agreed to expand joint border enforcement, to coordinate visa policies, to develop common standards of biometry, and to augment data sharing and intelligence. Interestingly, the Smart Border Declaration did not come from 9/11 related pressures of policy harmonization (Welsh, 2004). Instead, Canada developed the plan out of its interest in economic and trade integration by implementing technological improvement and pre-clearance programs to which some security actions were added.

The Smart Border Declaration was, however, accompanied by another contentious document. The Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement proposed a series of measures to more effectively manage the flow of refugee claimants between the two countries. Under the provisions of the Safe Third Country Agreement, refugees who have come to the United States but were denied entry will no longer be able to claim refugee status in Canada (at land border crossings). This agreement also virtually closed the Canadian land border to asylum seekers, many of whom found themselves in a vulnerable position in the United States. The result of new procedures and security checks was a 50-percent drop in border claims between 2004 and 2005 (Molina, 2006). According to Sharma (2003), this kind of border control is not just about security; it is also about restricting access of immigrants/refugees to permanent status and its associated benefits. This view is congruent with the prevalence of guest worker programs allowing Mexicans to work for a specific period of time in the U.S. and Canada. And perhaps more ironically, the Safe Third Country Agreement is reminiscent of Canada's shameful 1908 immigration regulation denying admission to immigrants unless they arrived by "continuous journey" from their country of birth or nationality.²¹ The policy of continuous journey was implicitly implemented to deflect Asian immigrants and to ensure White-only immigration (Buchignani, 1985).

CONCLUSION: RECLAIMING MULTICULTURALISM

The policy of multiculturalism has been and is still a work in progress. Despite its attempts to provide a firmer legislative basis for multiculturalism, the policy remains

²¹ The continuous journey policy was used to deny admission to 376 Punjabi Indians aboard the Komagatu Maru in 1908 (Buchignani, 1985). The chartered Japanese steamer had traveled from Hong Kong to Vancouver via Shanghai and Yokohama. All men were British subjects and many were veterans of the British Indian Army. They believed that it was their right as British subjects to settle anywhere in the Empire. Their arrival was met with much antagonism by Canadian officials and public. The ship was held for two months in Vancouver Harbor before being returned. This notorious incident has been the object of an excellent film entitled *Continuous Journey* by documentary filmmaker Ali Kazimi (2004, 87 minutes). It is also the topic of the forthcoming film *Exclusion* by internationally acclaimed director Deepa Mehta.

an elusive commitment to equality without direct enforceable rights or concrete institutional structures. Its specific language of recognition, promotion, appreciation, enhancement, and tolerance provided a new discourse for Canadian society but was quickly appropriated by political and economic actors and naturalized into competitiveness and security agendas. The latest round of continental agreements, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America signed in March 2005, represents the consolidation and intensification of economic and security cooperation, notably on border and immigration controls.

Multiculturalism and immigration policies have been caught between the contradictions of tightening and even militarizing the borders for security concerns while maintaining its economic and commercial openness. The links between immigration and multiculturalism on the one hand, and economic development and security on the other, are felt most deeply in the privileging of a certain class of economic immigrants who, given their corporate positions, can better navigate mobility restrictions, and consequently the marginalization of low-skilled or de-skilled immigrants for whom immigration requirements, racial profiling, detentions, and deportations were established by the new security legislative regime. In these neoliberal regimes stimulating suspicion and nativism, multiculturalism and security are definitely at odds. While multiculturalism has been perceived as a security risk, the new security agenda is also a risk for multiculturalism. As Ken Roach (2006: 32) states, "The greatest threat of terrorism in the post 9/11 era is to social cohesion".

The new challenges of immigration and security regulation are not a reason to completely abandon multiculturalism—especially not with the rising conservative backlash and restrictionist nativism.²² But this policy has its ideological and operational limits. The new challenges offer an opportunity to renew our commitment to multiculturalism, the sort of multiculturalism that is not conflated in and by official political discourse but rather expressed in everyday political rights of participation, equality, and justice for all. The biggest challenge of all for Canadian multiculturalism is to bridge the gap between the official multiculturalism that is increasingly used to obscure immigration debates and the on-the-ground multiculturalism that gives the former its social salience and its political relevance. Here the experiences, constructions, and negotiations of il/legality of Mexican migrants in the United States might

²² For example, since the Conservative government of Stephen Harper took office in 2005, more money and resources have been spent on immigration enforcement. The Canadian government seems to have adopted U.S.-style enforcement policies and strategies by targeting particular groups (Portuguese and Latin Americans) for deportation (or removal). This has led to the mobilization of immigrants and immigration activists who, even though in smaller numbers than their U.S. counterparts, have been committed to denouncing unfair laws and demanding rights for all migrants (see No One Is Illegal, 2006).

become the most useful hemispherical discourse to redefine the inclusion/exclusion of borders and societies and to resolve the contradictions between economic and political processes of globalization that are evidenced in neoliberal regimes.

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