

***Discrepancies in the Pluralistic Façade: Interrogating the Promise of Multiculturalism in Canada***

by Thomas Tri, CNST 361

Multiculturalism is a source of Canadian pride and integral to the fabric of Canadian identity. In a 2016 poll conducted by Nanos Research, alongside Canada's strong stance on equality, equity, and social justice, and peacekeeping, Canadians are also proud of their reputation of multiculturalism and diversity.<sup>1</sup> Canada is known for being one of the first countries in the world to legislate multiculturalism alongside the ongoing welcoming of immigrants.<sup>2</sup> According to the 2021 Canadian census, almost 1 in 4 people in Canada are immigrants, with most coming for economic reasons.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, the nation's diverse nature is unique to the developed world, but does that necessarily entail a society of racial harmony? Within the framework of Canada's multiculturalism, the experiences of the most marginalized, particularly racialized and religious minorities, are not adequately addressed, as evidenced by widespread occurrences of hate crimes, systemic discrimination, and marginalization. This paper will examine how multiculturalism became enshrined into law, how it evolved over time, how myths have minimized racial issues, the disparities between multiculturalism in law and its implementation, and how politicians have utilized multiculturalism to advance contemporary neoliberal policies. Although the establishment of multiculturalism in Canadian society has embraced notions of diversity and tolerance, such ideas reinforce an image of a benevolent Canada, perpetuating myths that dismiss systemic issues and pursue a neoliberal agenda.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Exploring Canadian values: Values Survey Summary," Nanos Research, accessed March 23, 2023. <https://www.nanos.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2016-918-values-populated-report-w-tabs-r.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ratna Ghosh, "Multiculturalism in a comparative perspective: Australia, Canada and India," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2018): 15-36.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, *Immigration, place of birth, and citizenship – 2021 Census promotional material*, last modified 2022, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/census/census-engagement/community-supporter/immigration>.

This paper will define multiculturalism as a “demographic fact (the presence of cultural diversity in the Canadian population); multiculturalism as an ideology (the general desirability among Canadians for maintaining and sharing this diversity); and as a public policy (governmental orientation and action towards this fact).”<sup>4</sup> Multiculturalism as an ideology will be more commonly referred to in this paper. Multiculturalism as an ideological framework includes the notions of diversity, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination, respect for others, respect for human dignity, inclusivity, and participation.<sup>5</sup> The three realms of multiculturalism as a demographic fact, ideology, and public policy can overlap and influence each other.<sup>6</sup>

Enshrining multiculturalism as a public policy was unprecedented and significant. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's government introduced the Multiculturalism Act in 1971 to promote ethnic diversity.<sup>7</sup> During parliament, Pierre Trudeau announced that this policy aimed to "assure the cultural freedom of Canadians" and to "break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies."<sup>8</sup> A host of factors contributed to the creation of the Act. The Act stemmed from the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which initially did not consider other ethnic groups besides French and English speakers.<sup>9</sup> However, ethnic groups such as Germans, Italians, and Japanese Canadians exerted pressure towards the government to recognize their contributions to Canada, shaping the development of the Act.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> John Berry, “Research on multiculturalism in Canada,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37, no. 6 (2013): 663-75.

<sup>5</sup> Gregory Ritchie, “Learning multiculturalism: In the neoliberal context,” *Adult Education for Inclusion and Diversity*, 344, 2017; Barbara Perry, “Disrupting the mantra of multiculturalism: Hate crime in Canada,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 13 (2015): 1637-54.

<sup>6</sup> Perry, “Disrupting the mantra,” 1644; Berry, “Research on multiculturalism,” 665.

<sup>7</sup> Thanu Pillay, “Decentering the myth of Canadian multiculturalism: A post-structural feminist analysis,” in *Decolonizing global citizenship education*, (2015): 69-80.

<sup>8</sup> Library and Archives Canada. Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Debates, 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, Volume 8 8545-8548, Appendix, 8580-8585. October 8, 1971. <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-multiculturalism-policy-1971>.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Wood, and Leah Gilbert, “Multiculturalism in Canada: Accidental discourse, alternative vision, urban practice,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 3 (2005): 679-91.

<sup>10</sup> Wood and Gilbert, “Multiculturalism in Canada,” 680.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a rapid change in demographics which brought diversity to the forefront of national attention.<sup>11</sup> During this time, there was significant activism surrounding social and cultural rights, marked by the emergence of a new wave of racially diverse immigrants, increased tension between the settler nations of Britain and France, and a growing Indigenous autonomy movement.<sup>12</sup> This period was characterized by Canada's commitment to recognizing human rights and ending discrimination.<sup>13</sup> Lastly, there was a major political agenda in developing the act. Because the Liberals had an eroding traditional voting base in Quebec due to the separatist movement, they aimed to appeal the law to ethnic minorities in hopes of gaining votes.<sup>14</sup> The Act was also met with opposition from Quebec's government which had concerns about dismissing Canada's bilingual foundation and Quebec's distinct culture.<sup>15</sup> Despite this initial opposition, the policy was written into the Constitution in 1983 and later passed and reinforced in 1988 by parliament.<sup>16</sup>

The public policy of multiculturalism has enjoyed broad support across Canada, spanning various political parties, and has had a beneficial influence on racial relations in the country. After 30 years since its formal introduction, multiculturalism has evolved, resulting in noticeable inclusion and equity within key institutions such as the workforce, justice system, and education.<sup>17</sup> The Multiculturalism Act has cemented a growing consensus about positive

---

<sup>11</sup> Perry, "Disrupting the mantra," 1644; Berry, "Research on multiculturalism," 669.

<sup>12</sup> Evelyn Lee, and Mireille Johnstone, "Lest We Forget: Politics of Multiculturalism in Canada Revisited during COVID-19," *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (2021): 671-85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205211000116>.

<sup>13</sup> Lee and Johnstone, "Lest We Forget," 671-85.

<sup>14</sup> Shara Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 5, no. 1 (1997): 33-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24674516>.

<sup>15</sup> Trygve Ugland, "The Quebec Charter of Values: A Solution in Search of Problems?" *Journal of Eastern Townships Studies*, no. 42 (2014): 11-21; Emre Peker, "Situating the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec's contention for sovereignty," *Arc* 45 (2017): 1-21.

<sup>16</sup> Lloyd Wong and Shibao Guo, "Revisiting multiculturalism in Canada: An introduction," in *Revisiting multiculturalism in Canada*, (2015): 1-14.

<sup>17</sup> Perry, "Disrupting the mantra," 1637-54.

attitudes toward immigration in Canada.<sup>18</sup> According to a recent survey by Environics Institute for Survey Research, seven out of ten Canadians are supportive of the current immigration levels, which is the highest majority recorded in Environics surveys in forty-five years.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, there is public support for welcoming refugees from major world conflicts such as in Ukraine and Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> In most Canadian political parties, Canadians unanimously agree on the need for immigrants. This was demonstrated when six Conservative party leader candidates were asked about immigration in a debate, in which all agreed on the economic value that immigrants bring to Canada.<sup>21</sup> Conversely, anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiments are more commonly affiliated with conservative ideology worldwide such as in Western Europe<sup>22</sup> and the United States.<sup>23</sup> Pro-immigration sentiments go hand-in-hand with multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is often perceived as a challenge for many other nations but Canada embraces it, contributing to a sense of national unity.<sup>24</sup> This widespread belief is entrenched in the nation's identity as demonstrated through a survey by the Environics Institute for Survey Research in which 64% of Canadians saw multiculturalism as a symbol of Canadian identity.<sup>25</sup> In addition,

---

<sup>18</sup> Will Kymlicka, "The current state of multiculturalism in Canada and research themes on Canadian multiculturalism 2008-2010," *desLibris*, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> "Canadian public opinion about immigration and refugees," *Environics Institute for Survey Research*, accessed March 20, 2023. [https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada---fall-2022---immigration-refugees/focus-canada-fall-2022---canadian-public-opinion-about-immigration-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=b31e22c9\\_2](https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada---fall-2022---immigration-refugees/focus-canada-fall-2022---canadian-public-opinion-about-immigration-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=b31e22c9_2).

<sup>20</sup> "Canadian public opinion," *Environics Institute for Survey Research*.

<sup>21</sup> Global News, "Conservative Party leadership candidates participate in 1st official English debate | full," YouTube video, March 27, 2023. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H91TVF0wSk&ab\\_channel=GlobalNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H91TVF0wSk&ab_channel=GlobalNews).

<sup>22</sup> James Dennison and Andrew Geddes, "A Rising Tide? The Salience of Immigration and the Rise of Anti-Immigration Political Parties in Western Europe," *The Political Quarterly* 90 (2019): 107-16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12620>.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Pettigrew, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ, "WHO OPPOSES IMMIGRATION?: Comparing German with North American Findings," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 4, no. 1 (2007): 19-39, doi:10.1017/S1742058X07070038.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Ng and Irene Bloemraad, "A SWOT analysis of multiculturalism in Canada, Europe, Mauritius, and South Korea," *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 6 (2015): 619-36; Will Kymlicka, "The Precarious Resilience of Multiculturalism in Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 51, no. 1 (2021): 122-42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2021.1878544>.

<sup>25</sup> "Canadian public opinion," Environics Institute for Survey Research.

71% of Canadians are in favour of multiculturalism, placing it as a core Canadian value.<sup>26</sup> This phenomenon is in contrast with native-born people in other countries, who are more likely to adopt a nationalistic identity, leading to anti-immigrant sentiments.<sup>27</sup> Overall, it can be argued that multiculturalism can lead to the promotion of cultural tolerance, thus fostering the inclusion of ethnic minorities.<sup>28</sup> Lastly, multiculturalism has contributed to the integration process of immigrants.<sup>29</sup> In terms of political integration, immigrants in Canada are more likely to become citizens in comparison to other Western democracies.<sup>30</sup> For instance, this can be demonstrated through Canada's parliament which has more foreign-born citizens than in any other country.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the phenomenon of ghettoization, wherein immigrants reside in areas characterized by high poverty rates and social isolation, is less common in Canada when compared to the United States and Europe.<sup>32</sup> This further demonstrates the level of integration of immigrants in Canada. Multiculturalism has a wide range of positive impacts from the acceptance of immigrants and refugees to the Canadian pride in multiculturalism.

Although the Multiculturalism Act laid the framework for a vision of an inclusive Canada, its guarantee of equity was limited. The Multiculturalism Act is not the sole legislation regarding multiculturalism but the ideology of multiculturalism can also be applied to other laws and policies such as the Charter of Rights and Freedom (1982) and the Employment Equity Act (1986).<sup>33</sup> These legislations are evident in their underlying values. For instance, the Multiculturalism Act aimed "to promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and

---

<sup>26</sup> "Canadian public opinion," Environics Institute for Survey Research.

<sup>27</sup> Kymlicka, "Precarious Resilience," 122-42.

<sup>28</sup> Ng and Bloemraad, "A SWOT analysis," 620.

<sup>29</sup> Kymlicka, "The current state of multiculturalism."

<sup>30</sup> Kymlicka, "The current state of multiculturalism."

<sup>31</sup> Ghosh, "Multiculturalism in a comparative perspective," 20.

<sup>32</sup> Kymlicka, "The current state of multiculturalism."

<sup>33</sup> Perry, "Disrupting the mantra," 1637-54.

communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation.”<sup>34</sup> In theory, these legislations aim to provide fair treatment to all people regardless of whether they are citizens, residents, or visitors.<sup>35</sup> However, there is a discrepancy when multiculturalism is presented in practice. For instance, the existence of hate crimes challenges the very notions of human dignity and inclusion which are values that fall under the ideology of multiculturalism.<sup>36</sup> From 2020 to 2021, there has been an increase in hate crimes: 6% in race, 67% in religion, and 64% in sexual orientation.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes was observed during the height of the pandemic.<sup>38</sup> Current racial disparities still massively exist in Canada. For instance, there are drastic health gaps between Indigenous Canadians and their counterparts.<sup>39</sup> Black Canadians also face systemic discrimination from institutions such as healthcare, education, employment, and housing.<sup>40</sup> Laws that have underlying tones of multiculturalism do not guarantee the protection of all groups, including religious minorities. Most notably, the passing of Bill 21 in Quebec is an apparent attack on multiculturalism. Bill 21, Quebec’s Act Respecting the Laicity of the State, seeks to ban all public servants, such as teachers, from wearing religious symbols.<sup>41</sup> The reasons behind this Bill include secularism (laïcité) which argues for the religious neutrality of states and

---

<sup>34</sup> Berry, “Research on multiculturalism,” 663-75.

<sup>35</sup> Perry, “Disrupting the mantra,” 1637-54.

<sup>36</sup> Perry, “Disrupting the mantra,” 1637-54.

<sup>37</sup> Statistics Canada, *Table 4 Police-reported hate-motivated crime, by detailed motivation, Canada, 2020 to 2021*, last modified 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220802/t004a-eng.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Shuang Chen and Chuang Wu, “#Stopasianhate: Understanding the global rise of anti-Asian racism from a transcultural communication perspective,” *Journal of Transcultural Communication* 1, no. 1 (2021): 5-19.

<sup>39</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, *Key Health Inequalities in Canada: A National Portrait – Executive Summary*, last modified 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/science-research-data/key-health-inequalities-canada-national-portrait-executive-summary.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, *Social determinants and inequities in health for Black Canadians: A Snapshot*, last modified 2020, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health/social-determinants-inequities-black-canadians-snapshot.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Lee and Johnstone, “Lest We Forget,” 671-85.

the separation of state from religion.<sup>42</sup> Many scholars have argued that this ban was deliberate and that it disproportionately affected Muslim women.<sup>43</sup> Although the Charter of Rights and Freedoms explicitly lists that “every individual is equal before and under the law... without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability,”<sup>44</sup> loopholes remain, such as the notwithstanding clause that allowed Quebec to get around the law.<sup>45</sup> Thus, legal structures in place that espouse multiculturalism do not guarantee equal protection nor equitable outcomes for all. There is an apparent discrepancy between multiculturalism in theory and practice.

The creation of myths about multiculturalism has dismissed systemic issues through projecting an image of Canada as a place free of racial issues. A myth is a constructed narrative by dominant groups that creates a national image at the expense of a comprehensive view of history.<sup>46</sup> Specifically, these myths “sanitize” histories, selecting aspects that are more desirable for the nation’s image.<sup>47</sup> Myths can be weaponized by political elites to obscure policy and reinforce certain practices and institutions, potentially leading to an expression in public opinion.<sup>48</sup> A common myth in Canada is the idea of a tolerant nation, one that is welcoming of

---

<sup>42</sup> Monica Patrick et al., “Religion and Secularism: Four Myths and Bill 21,” *Research and Studies on Race Relations in Canada* 30, 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Patrick et al., “Religion and Secularism.”

<sup>44</sup> Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, s 7, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c11.

<sup>45</sup> Stephanie Taylor, “Conservatives clarify opposition to Quebec's Bill 21 following vote for notwithstanding clause,” *Global News*, February 15, 2023. <https://globalnews.ca/news/9486660/conservatives-clarify-opposition-to-quebecs-bill-21-following-vote-for-notwithstanding-clause/#:~:text=The%20notwithstanding%20clause%20is%20a,of%20up%20to%20five%20years>.

<sup>46</sup> Lighton Midzain-Gobin and Howard A. Smith, “Debunking the Myth of Canada as a Non-Colonial Power,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 50, no. 4 (2020): 479-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2020.1849329>; Gérard Bouchard, “National myths: An overview,” in *National Myths*, 290–311, *Routledge*, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203097113-24>.

<sup>47</sup> Midzain-Gobin and Smith, “Debunking the Myth,” 479-97.

<sup>48</sup> Midzain-Gobin and Smith, “Debunking the Myth,” 479-97.

ethnic and cultural diversity.<sup>49</sup> Such a myth can conceal the pervasiveness of racism, discrimination, and prejudice that still exists in contemporary society.<sup>50</sup> It can overlook the current power relations between dominant and subordinate groups.<sup>51</sup> For instance, when discussing the legacy of residential schools, a common sentiment expressed is the idea that this was a problem of “the past”<sup>52</sup> or part of Canada’s “unfortunate events.”<sup>53</sup> Perpetuating these narratives undermine the history of mistreatment against Indigenous Canadians.<sup>54</sup> Other sentiments are expressed by politicians which contribute to the downplaying of systemic racism. For instance, Doug Ford, the Ontario Premier, argued that Canada does not have the same systemic problems that the United States has, and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith contended that the unvaccinated were the “most discriminated-against group”<sup>55</sup> in her life.<sup>56</sup> Such statements demonstrate the lack of consideration for systemic problems. Additionally, Midzain-Gobin & Smith posit that this common need to distinguish oneself from Americans, as exhibited by Doug Ford, contributes to the construction of these myths.<sup>57</sup> These beliefs are also evident when two-thirds of Canadians believe that Canada is not a racist country.<sup>58</sup> One may believe it as willful ignorance but this is also a symptom of deeply perpetuated myths that create a misleading image

---

<sup>49</sup> Himani Bannerji, “On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of ‘Canada.’” *Canadian Scholars' Press and Women's Press*, 2000.

<sup>50</sup> Pillay, “Decentering the myth,” 69-80.

<sup>51</sup> Bannerji, “On the Dark Side”; Midzain-Gobin and Smith, “Debunking the Myth,” 479-97.

<sup>52</sup> Midzain-Gobin and Smith, “Debunking the Myth,” 480.

<sup>53</sup> Chelsea Vowel, “Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada, chapter 3,” *Portage & Main Press*, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Vowel, “Indigenous Writes”; Kathryn Montgomery, “‘A better place to live’: School history textbooks, nationalist fantasies, and the incarcerating banality of white supremacy,” in *Talking Truth, Confronting Power: Discourse, Power, and Resistance Series* 6 (83-98): 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Ana Melgar and Houssein M. Nassar, “Danielle Smith calls unvaccinated ‘most discriminated-against group’ in her lifetime,” *CityNews*, October 11, 2022. <https://calgary.citynews.ca/2022/10/11/danielle-smith-unvaccinated-alberta/>.

<sup>56</sup> Meera Estrada, “Commentary: Yes, there is systemic racism in Canada - our history is filled with it - national,” *Global News*. April 2, 2023, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7029694/canada-systemic-racism/>.

<sup>57</sup> Midzain-Gobin and Smith, “Debunking the Myth,” 479-97.

<sup>58</sup> “Diversity and Racism in Canada: Competing views deeply divide country along gender, generational lines,” Angus Reid Institute, accessed March 31, 2023, <https://angusreid.org/diversity-racism-canada/>.

of Canada. Not only are politicians complicit in perpetuating such myths but the education system has a role as well.<sup>59</sup> Textbooks have been instrumental in maintaining these myths about a tolerant Canada.<sup>60</sup> By omitting a complete view of history, Canada is constructed to be a utopia, grounded in moral goodness.<sup>61</sup> This further obscures Canada's involvement in ongoing injustices.<sup>62</sup> Canada has rapidly progressed in its racial relations but that does not entail a perfect society for all.

Multiculturalism and neoliberalism can go hand in hand in Canada's policies. Those in power, particularly the government, deliberately use myths to further a neoliberal agenda in policies. One notable myth about multiculturalism is the claim of racial equity and that Canada provides a decent quality of life for all.<sup>63</sup> All in Canada, not merely Canadian citizens, have supported such a myth. For instance, one of the many reasons that immigrants come to Canada include "enjoying a high quality of life."<sup>64</sup> These reasons are further enhanced when the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada uses deliberate rhetoric like how diversity is Canada's "strength" in order to attract "global talent."<sup>65</sup> It is apparent how such a myth has been marketed within Canada's immigration policies to encourage immigration. Multicultural neoliberalism has a role in forcing immigrants to assimilate into a pluralistic ideal which minimizes accommodating for differences.<sup>66</sup> Multicultural neoliberalism describes the

---

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997.

<sup>60</sup> Francis, "National Dreams"; Montgomery, "A better place to live," 83-98.

<sup>61</sup> Montgomery, "A better place to live," 83-98.

<sup>62</sup> Montgomery, "A better place to live," 83-98.

<sup>63</sup> John Simpson Carol E. James, and Jacqui Mack, "Multiculturalism, colonialism, and racialization: Conceptual starting points," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 33, no. 4 (2011): 285-305.

<sup>64</sup> René Houle and Grant Schellenberg, "New immigrants' assessments of their life in Canada," *Statistics Canada Analytical Branch Studies* 322 (2010).

<sup>65</sup> Rina Bhuyan, Kyong Yoon, and Leticia Valmadrid, "Family Reunification as an Earned Right: A Framing Analysis of Migrant Workers' Pathways to Neoliberal Multicultural Citizenship in Canada," *New Political Science* 42, no. 4 (2020): 558-77. doi:10.1080/07393148.2020.1840198.

<sup>66</sup> Janet Root et al., "Discounting immigrant families: Neoliberalism and the framing of Canadian immigration policy change," *Ryerson Centre for Immigration & Settlement (RCIS) No. 7*, 2014, 1-19.

“reconfiguration” of Canada’s immigrant population towards a more “neoliberal orientation” in which the responsibility of government in the integration process of immigrants is minimized.<sup>67</sup> Hence, newcomers are given the onus to integrate into a new society without being provided adequate support.<sup>68</sup> Neoliberalism can also take precedence over multicultural ideals.<sup>69</sup> This is demonstrated through the work programs that temporarily encourage migrants to fill labour shortages but are barred from family reunification and lack equal access to social and health benefits.<sup>70</sup> Despite the encouragement of migration in the country, it runs contradictory to multicultural values of inclusion and fairness.<sup>71</sup> Lastly, the framing of multiculturalism in Canada has espoused neoliberal values where diversity is seen as an economic benefit.<sup>72</sup> Canada has leveraged their multicultural status to attract foreign investors, boasting about their multilingual workers and inclusive hiring practices.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, immigration has been viewed through a market and capital lens in contrast to earlier humanitarian reasons.<sup>74</sup> Such a phenomenon is aligned with multiculturalism because the diverse ethnic backgrounds that immigrants bring carry “commercial value” which aids free trade policies.<sup>75</sup> All in all, the interplay between multiculturalism and neoliberalism are well-crafted ideologies that can further harm people.

Undoubtedly, multiculturalism has been a valuable tool in Canadian society to embrace marginalized groups; however, it has also been weaponized to maintain myths, neglect systemic

---

<sup>67</sup> Root et al., “Discounting immigrant families,” 1-19.

<sup>68</sup> Root et al., “Discounting immigrant families,” 1-19.

<sup>69</sup> Bhuyan, “Family Reunification,” 558-77.

<sup>70</sup> Bhuyan, “Family Reunification,” 558-77; Root et al., “Discounting immigrant families,” 1-19.

<sup>71</sup> Perry, “Disrupting the Mantra,” 1637-54.

<sup>72</sup> Kymlicka, “The Precarious Resilience,” 122-42.

<sup>73</sup> Bhuyan, “Family Reunification,” 558-77; Root et al., “Discounting immigrant families,” 1-19.

<sup>74</sup> Bhuyan, “Family Reunification,” 558-77; Root et al., “Discounting immigrant families,” 1-19.; Ritchie, “Learning Multiculturalism,” 344.

<sup>75</sup> Root et al., “Discounting immigrant families,” 6.

problems, and advance a neoliberal agenda. As evidenced, multiculturalism has played a pivotal role in the integration of newcomers, fostering a sense of celebration for ethnic diversity.

Moreover, enacting multiculturalism in Canada marked a monumental moment for all, consequently fostering a national identity grounded in ideals of equity and fairness.

However, Canadian society has not perfectly reflected multiculturalism, as evidenced by racial disparities and the prevalence of hate crimes. Likewise, such multicultural ideals about equity and fairness can mask neoliberalism in immigration policies. Overall, the existence of multiculturalism is complex and multifaceted. It is critical to continually critique multiculturalism while simultaneously appreciating its role in racial progress.

Bibliography

- Angus Reid. "Diversity and Racism in Canada: Competing views deeply divide country along gender, generational lines" Accessed March 31, 2023. <https://angusreid.org/diversity-racism-canada/>
- Bannerji, Himani. "On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of 'Canada.'" *Canadian Scholars' Press and Women's Press*, 2000.
- Berry, John W. "Research on multiculturalism in Canada." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37, no. 6 (2013): 663-75.
- Bhuyan, Rina, Kyong Yoon, and Leticia Valmadrid. "Family Reunification as an Earned Right: A Framing Analysis of Migrant Workers' Pathways to Neoliberal Multicultural Citizenship in Canada." *New Political Science* 42, no. 4 (2020): 558-77.  
doi:10.1080/07393148.2020.1840198.
- Bouchard, Gérard. "National myths: An overview." In *National Myths*, 290–311. *Routledge*, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203097113-24>.
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, s 7, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c11.
- Chen, Shuang, and Chuang Wu. "#Stopasianhate: Understanding the global rise of anti-Asian racism from a transcultural communication perspective." *Journal of Transcultural Communication* 1, no. 1 (2021): 5-19.
- Dennison, James, and Andrew Geddes. "A Rising Tide? The Salience of Immigration and the Rise of Anti-Immigration Political Parties in Western Europe." *The Political Quarterly* 90 (2019): 107-16. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1111/1467-923X.12620>.

EnviroNics Institute for Survey Research. "Canadian public opinion about immigration and refugees." Accessed March 20, 2023. [https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada---fall-2022---immigration-refugees/focus-canada-fall-2022---canadian-public-opinion-about-immigration-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=b31e22c9\\_2](https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada---fall-2022---immigration-refugees/focus-canada-fall-2022---canadian-public-opinion-about-immigration-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=b31e22c9_2).

Estrada, Meera. "Commentary: Yes, there is systemic racism in Canada - our history is filled with it - national." *Global News*. April 2, 2023.  
<https://globalnews.ca/news/7029694/canada-systemic-racism/>

Francis, Daniel. *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997.

Ghosh, Ratna. "Multiculturalism in a comparative perspective: Australia, Canada and India." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2018): 15-36.

Ghosh, Ratna. "The Liberating Potential of Multiculturalism in Canada: Ideals and Realities." *Canadian Issues* (2011).

Global News. "Conservative Party leadership candidates participate in 1st official English debate full." YouTube video. March 27, 2023.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H91TVF0wSk&ab\\_channel=GlobalNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H91TVF0wSk&ab_channel=GlobalNews).

Houle, René, and Grant Schellenberg. "New immigrants' assessments of their life in Canada." *Statistics Canada Analytical Branch Studies* 322 (2010).

Kymlicka, Will. "The current state of multiculturalism in Canada and research themes on Canadian multiculturalism 2008-2010." *desLibris*, 2010.

- . “The Precarious Resilience of Multiculturalism in Canada.” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 51, no. 1 (2021): 122-42.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2021.1878544>.
- Lee, Evelyn, and Mireille Johnstone. “Lest We Forget: Politics of Multiculturalism in Canada Revisited during COVID-19.” *Critical Sociology* 47, no. 4-5 (2021): 671-85.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205211000116>.
- Library and Archives Canada. Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Debates, 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, Volume 8 8545-8548, Appendix, 8580-5. October 8, 1971.  
<https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-multiculturalism-policy-1971>.
- Melgar, Ana, and Houssein M. Nassar. “Danielle Smith calls unvaccinated 'most discriminated-against group' in her lifetime.” *CityNews*, October 11, 2022.  
<https://calgary.citynews.ca/2022/10/11/danielle-smith-unvaccinated-alberta/>.
- Midzain-Gobin, Lighton, and Howard A. Smith. “Debunking the Myth of Canada as a Non-Colonial Power.” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 50, no. 4 (2020): 479-97.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2020.1849329>.
- Montgomery, Kathryn. “A better place to live’: School history textbooks, nationalist fantasies, and the incarcerating banality of white supremacy.” In *Talking truth, confronting power: Discourse power, resistance* 6, (2008): 83-98.
- Nanos Research. “Exploring Canadian values: Values Survey Summary.” 2016. Accessed March 23, 2023. <https://www.nanos.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2016-918-values-populated-report-w-tabs-r.pdf>.
- Ng, Edward, and Irene Bloemraad. “A SWOT analysis of multiculturalism in Canada, Europe, Mauritius, and South Korea.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 6 (2015): 619-36.

- Peker, Emre. "Situating the reasonable accommodation debates in Quebec's contention for sovereignty." *Arc* 45 (2017): 1-21.
- Patrick, Monica, Winnie A. Chan, Hicham Tiflati, and Erin Reid. "Religion and Secularism: Four Myths and Bill 21." *Research and Studies on Race Relations in Canada* 30, 2021.
- Pettigrew, Thomas, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ. "WHO OPPOSES IMMIGRATION?: Comparing German with North American Findings." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 4, no. 1 (2007): 19-39. doi:10.1017/S1742058X07070038.
- Perry, Barbara. "Disrupting the mantra of multiculturalism: Hate crime in Canada." *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 13 (2015): 1637-54.
- Pillay, Thanu. "Decentring the myth of Canadian multiculturalism: A post-structural feminist analysis." In *Decolonizing global citizenship education* (2015): 69-80.
- Public Health Agency of Canada. *Social determinants and inequities in health for Black Canadians: A Snapshot*. 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health/social-determinants-inequities-black-canadians-snapshot.html>.
- . *Key Health Inequalities in Canada: A National Portrait – Executive Summary*. 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/science-research-data/key-health-inequalities-canada-national-portrait-executive-summary.html>.
- Ritchie, Gregory. "Learning multiculturalism: In the neoliberal context." *Adult Education for Inclusion and Diversity* 344, 2017.
- Root, Janet, Emily Gates-Gasse, Jennifer Shields, and Harald Bauder. "Discounting Immigrant Families: Neoliberalism and the Framing of Canadian Immigration Policy Change." *Ryerson Centre for Immigration & Settlement (RCIS)* No. 7, (2014): 1-19.

Simpson, John S., Carol E. James, and Jacqui Mack. "Multiculturalism, colonialism, and racialization: Conceptual starting points." *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 33, no. 4 (2011): 285-305.

Statistics Canada. *Immigration, place of birth, and citizenship – 2021 Census promotional material*. 2022. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/census/census-engagement/community-supporter/immigration>.

———. *Table 4 Police-reported hate-motivated crime, by detailed motivation, Canada, 2020 to 2021*. 2022. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220802/t004a-eng.htm>.

Taylor, Stephanie. "Conservatives clarify opposition to Quebec's Bill 21 following vote for notwithstanding clause." *Global News*, February 15, 2023. <https://globalnews.ca/news/9486660/conservatives-clarify-opposition-to-quebecs-bill-21-following-vote-for-notwithstanding-clause/#:~:text=The%20notwithstanding%20clause%20is%20a,of%20up%20to%20five%20years>.

Ugland, Trygve. "The Quebec Charter of Values: A Solution in Search of Problems?" *Journal of Eastern Townships Studies*, no. 42 (2014): 11-21.

Vowel, Chelsea. "Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada, chapter 3." *Portage & Main Press*, 2016.

Wayland, Shara V. "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada." *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 5, no. 1 (1997): 33–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24674516>.

Wood, Patricia K., and Leah Gilbert. "Multiculturalism in Canada: Accidental discourse, alternative vision, urban practice." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 3 (2005): 679-91.

Wong, Lloyd, and Shibao Guo. "Revisiting multiculturalism in Canada: An introduction." In *Revisiting multiculturalism in Canada*, (2015): 1-14.