

Université de Montréal

The Politics of Multiculturalism Reform in Canada:  
Institutions, Ideas and Public Agendas

par  
Paolo Prosperi

Science politique  
Faculté des Arts et des Sciences

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Université de Montréal  
Faculté des études supérieures

Cette thèse intitulée :

The Politics of Multiculturalism Reform in Canada : Institutions, Ideas and Public  
Agendas

Présentée par :

Paolo Prosperi

a été évaluée par un jury composé des personnes suivantes :

Robert Dalpé  
Président-rapporteur

Jane Jenson  
Directrice de recherche

Danielle Juteau  
Membre du jury

Leslie A. Pal  
Examinateur externe

Suzanne Lalonde  
Représentante du doyen de la FES

## RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse examine la dynamique de la réforme politique au Canada ainsi que la gestion de sa diversité ethnoculturelle. Elle questionne les particularités des changements aux programmes multiculturels fédéraux et comment ceux-ci sont potentiellement perçus durant une période de réforme institutionnelle. Cette thèse offre, en réponse, l'argument que les institutions publiques servent de véhicule pour ajuster les définitions d'intégration et pour diriger notre compréhension de la notion de notre responsabilité sociale en tant que citoyen et citoyenne. Cette perspective s'attarde plus particulièrement sur le rôle des idées comme déterminant important dans la décision politique. Elle souligne, dans cet optique, les deux rôles de la politique canadienne sur le plan institutionnel : celui de médiateur ou facteur d'influence face aux questions d'intérêts politiques et celui d'organisateur d'idées. À partir de ces prémices, au lieu de traiter les idées et les intérêts comme deux notions distinctes, nous explorons comment ces deux notions interagissent dans un contexte institutionnel afin d'expliquer les changements politiques et la continuité.

Notre étude identifie trois périodes de changement de régime : les années 70, les années 80 et les années 90. Dans chacune de ces trois décennies, les débats et luttes au sein du gouvernement canadien ont donné lieu à d'importants ajustements et pratiques institutionnels. Ces événements sont analysés comme des cas d'apprentissage politique où l'état génère une nouvelle compréhension des problèmes et des ressources mobilisées pour l'administration. Tout au cours de ces trois périodes, nous voyons une continuité évidente dans le rôle focal des joueurs gouvernementaux dans l'établissement des termes et définitions d'une intégration ethnoculturelle. Cependant, vers le milieu des années 80,

le consensus entre plusieurs de ces acteurs s'est dégradé. Plutôt, on posait des questions concernant les demandes potentiellement déstabilisantes envers les droits de représentation et d'ethnoculturalisme dans des sociétés multinationales. Durant les années 90, un certain consensus intellectuel sous la forme d'un néolibéralisme jumelé à un mouvement critique croissant vis-à-vis du multiculturalisme comme conséquence du débat de l'unité nationale, ont incité le gouvernement à établir un nouveau modèle politique.

**Mots clés:** multiculturalisme; diversité ethnoculturelle; citoyenneté; néolibéralisme; unité nationale; institutionnalisme historique

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the dynamics of policy reform and the management of ethnocultural diversity in Canada. It asks how changes to the Government of Canada's multiculturalism program can be understood throughout periods of institutional reform and program rationalisation. In offering an answer, this thesis argues that public institutions serve as a vehicle for adjusting the terms of integration as well as contributing to our understanding of citizenship. This perspective pays particular attention to the role of ideas as an important determinant in policy making. At the same time, it highlights the institutional setting of Canadian politics that mediates conflicting interests and structures the flow of ideas. As such, rather than treating ideas and interests as separate and unrelated variables, this thesis explores how the two interact within an institutional context to explain both policy change and continuity.

Our analysis is primarily policy centred, looking at the relationship between state and society to grasp the historical and organisational factors that shape policy decisions. In our examination of multiculturalism we identify three periods of policy change: the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. In each of these decades the debates and struggles in the Canadian polity resulted in significant institutional adjustments and practices. These events are analyzed as instances of policy learning, wherein the state generated new understanding of problems and mobilized resources for administration. Across three decades of change, we find substantial continuity in the central role played by state actors in establishing the terms of ethnocultural integration. However, by the mid 1980s the consensus among many of these same state actors had broken down. In its place, questions arose about the potentially destabilizing demands for ethnocultural and

representation rights in multinational societies. We find these concerns to have served as vital adjuncts in the wider debate over state support for cultural diversity. By the 1990s, sufficient intellectual consensus in the form of neo-liberalism coupled with the growing criticism towards multiculturalism as a consequence of the national unity debate guided state action towards a new policy model.

**Keywords:** multiculturalism; ethnocultural diversity; citizenship; neo-liberalism; national unity; historical-institutionalism



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## CHAPTER 1

### Managing Diversity: Institutions, Ideas and Public Agendas

#### *Introduction*

Many countries in the world today share a concern about social cohesion and the ways that diverse communities live together. Occasionally there is fear that heterogeneity will produce intractable problems and that the institutional practices designed to mitigate them may only exacerbate difficulties.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, there is also the awareness that public institutions are key to conflict management and that an appropriate response to diversity can contribute to increased social cohesion through recognition practices and by promoting feelings of belonging.<sup>2</sup> Given such conflicting views, finding morally defensible and politically viable answers to the issues (or) concerns to which diversity gives rise is one of the greatest challenges facing democracies.<sup>3</sup> Doing so goes well beyond a philosophical task. It also requires serious analytic attention to what institutions do, can do, and might do.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of this prospect see Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, eds. *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies* (London: OUP, 2006); and Avigail Eisenberg, "Equality, Trust, and Multiculturalism," in *Social Capital, Diversity, and the Welfare State*, eds. Fiona M. Kay and Richard Johnston (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Neil J. Smelser and Jeffrey C. Alexander, eds. *Diversity and Its Discontents: Cultural Conflict and Common Ground in Contemporary American Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Ayelet Shachar, "On Citizenship and Multicultural Vulnerability," *Political Theory* 28 (2000): 64-89.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Siobhan Harty and Michael Murphy, "Multinational Citizenship: Practical Implications of a Theoretical Model," in *Law and Citizenship*, ed. Law Commission of Canada (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Policy Research Initiative, "Immigration and Social Cohesion," *Horizons*, Volume 5, Number 2, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2002); Peter Berger, ed., *The Limits of Social Cohesion: Conflicts and Mediation in Pluralist Societies* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998); and Jane Jenson, "Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research," *Canadian Policy Research Networks*, Study No. F\03, 1998. In this last contribution the author suggests that the term social cohesion "is used to describe a process more than a condition or end state, while it is seen as involving a sense of commitment, and a desire or capacity to live together in some harmony", (Executive Summary, v).

<sup>3</sup> See Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (London: OUP, 1995).

This thesis explores the dynamics of policy reform and the management of ethnocultural diversity in Canada. It asks how changes to the Government of Canada's multiculturalism program can be understood throughout periods of institutional reform and program rationalisation. In offering an answer, this thesis argues that public institutions serve as a vehicle for adjusting the terms of integration as well as contributing to our understanding of citizenship. This perspective pays particular attention to the role of ideas as an important determinant in policy making. At the same time, it highlights the institutional setting of Canadian politics that mediates conflicting interests and structures the flow of ideas. As such, rather than treating ideas and interests as separate and unrelated variables, this thesis explores how the two interact within an institutional context to explain both policy change and continuity.<sup>4</sup>

During periods of contestation policy disputes are often marked by conflicting ideas about change derived from fundamental beliefs about politics and economics. These political and economic belief systems can redefine goals and offer prescriptions to individuals and groups seeking direction. In these terms, ideas help people to understand, define and formulate policy responses. Yet policy outcomes are the product of a more complex logic than the mechanical supplanting of one set of ideas by another. Ideas interact within specific institutional contexts to produce change. Policy outcomes and periods of contestation are also explained in this thesis by a range of causal factors that interact with ideas, including the organisation of political interests and influences of the socio-economic environment.

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<sup>4</sup> A useful reflection on the relationship between ideas, interests, and institutions can be found in Bruno Palier et Yves Surel « Les "trois I" et l'analyse de l'État en action », *Revue Française de Science Politique*, vol 55, no 1, 2005; and John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy," *Annual Review of Sociology* (2002) 28: 21-38.

Our analysis is therefore primarily policy centred, looking at the relationship between state and society to grasp the historical and organisational factors that shape policy decisions. We investigate these matters through an examination of the federal policy of multiculturalism's development, with particular emphasis on periods of significant change or reform. We identify three periods of policy change: the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. In each of these decades the debates and struggles in the Canadian polity as well as an altered international environment resulted in significant institutional adjustments and practices. These events are analyzed as instances of policy learning, wherein the state generated new understanding of problems and mobilized resources for administration.<sup>5</sup>

Drawing from a historical-institutionalist approach to policy analysis, this study highlights the ways in which state institutions reconcile conflicts of value and recognise the contribution of citizens.<sup>6</sup> As a theoretical approach, this historical-institutionalist approach parallels theories of state-society relations in the social sciences where historical dynamics and institutional structures figure prominently in accounts of policy change.<sup>7</sup> This way of interpreting policy change privileges the institutional context within which political struggles are undertaken. However, this approach argues that individual

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<sup>5</sup> The idea of policy learning is discussed by Hugh Heclo, "Ideas, Interests, Institutions", in *The Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches & Interpretations*, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and C. Jillson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> On this approach see especially Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science," in *Political Science: State of The Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (New York, NY and Washington, D.C.: Norton and American Political Science Association, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, the recent effort to classify forms of change in Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen, "Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Institutional Analysis*, eds. Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen (Oxford: OUP, 2005).

decisions are a product of institutional settings, understood within a much larger frame of reference. It presents an interpretation of policy outcomes as the result not only of different legal, administrative, and political structures, but through an optic that includes a wider range of state and societal institutions that shape how political actors define and act upon their interests.

The rest of this chapter introduces the main historical narrative on multiculturalism reform with two introductory discussions and one organizational section. The first discussion presents the argument of the thesis in its short form. The second investigates theoretical issues about state-society relations and public institutions, reviewing existing approaches to the fundamental issues of state intervention and ethnocultural policy. In relation to these theories, we then introduce our own framework for analysis using concepts derived from the historical-institutionalist literature and the field of policy analysis. The final section sets out the organisation of the thesis with a brief description and historical timeline followed by the remaining chapters.

### ***1.1 The Argument in Brief***

By most accounts, the last twenty years have been a period of profound change in Canadian politics. Through an ambitious program of market liberalisation and state retrenchment, the federal government set out to alter the way in which public agencies performed, paid for, and provided public services.<sup>8</sup> Rooted in arguments about the extent and expense of the modern state, this strategy was forged through intellectual debate and

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<sup>8</sup> As Neil Bradford notes generally, “initiatives were in place to transform federal social policy into market-reinforcing programs that became adjuncts to the defining policies of free trade and deficit reduction”. See *Commissioning Ideas: Canadian National Policy in Comparative Perspective* (Toronto: OUP, 1998), 8.

political struggle that stretched across two decades. By the early 1990s, this agenda pushed deficit and debt reduction, along with program rationalisation and institutional reform to the forefront of public policy discussions. Our analysis of the discourse and objectives associated with this strategy highlights the extent to which major policy agendas affect the course of public policy while reflecting fundamental decisions about the nature of state-society relations.

Since its inception in 1971, federal multicultural policy has represented a moral vision and a public philosophy about the priorities of the country and the form of cultural diversity. More than an abstract intellectual construct, multiculturalism spelled out the programmatic action and the specific instruments to be directed towards the pursuit of this vision. By linking vision and action, multiculturalism has been responsible for defining an accepted relationship between state and citizen. It would be misleading to suggest that this relationship was built solely upon multiculturalism, for the government's commitment to diversity and the idea of citizenship it supported were based on other policies and initiatives such as immigration, human rights and social justice. Yet it was multiculturalism more than any other which focused on advancing respect for cultural diversity that came to be identified as one of the central pillars of Canadian citizenship.

At a practical level, multiculturalism had been linked to citizenship through the efforts of the Secretary of State's Citizenship Branch, which in response to the national unity "crisis" in the 1960s had been given a mandate by the federal government to mobilise Canadian society on a broad participatory front.<sup>9</sup> While this helps explain

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<sup>9</sup> Those targeted to receive special funding were multicultural, official language minority, and women's groups. See Leslie A. Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada* (Montreal: MQUP, 1997).



multiculturalism's beginning as a public policy, it does not establish a theoretical understanding of how multiculturalism is connected to citizenship. To do so, we need to see citizenship as a system of inclusion and exclusion in which the state defines links and distinctions among citizens.<sup>10</sup> State institutions, as the basis of this system, are responsible for the recognition of different categories of citizens with particular rights and claims. Those citizens that are recognised, as in the case of ethnocultural communities through multiculturalism, enjoy more than a sense of belonging to a larger community – they enjoy a commitment on the part of the state to assist them in overcoming barriers to their full participation in Canadian society. A change in the character of public institutions therefore has consequences, both for the rights exercised by a range of citizens, and for their recognition as citizens by the state more generally.

In arguing that changes to multiculturalism have been linked to a broader debate over the nature of Canadian citizenship and to political forces seeking change, we begin by considering multiculturalism's role as part of the extension of citizenship rights that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. We then analyze the evolution of multiculturalism in Canada and begin to consider the shift in thinking about multiculturalism as an public institution that is associated with a program of market liberalization and state retrenchment.

In following the course of multiculturalism policy in Canada, we find that the most recent era has been distinguished by a shift from one policy paradigm to another, each deeply rooted in very different ideas about how the economy works and the

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<sup>10</sup> A discussion of the borders and boundaries of contemporary citizenship can be found in Jane Jenson, "Introduction: Thinking about Citizenship and Law in an Era of Change," in *Law and Citizenship*.

direction of social policy.<sup>11</sup> This shift, from an era of Keynesian economics towards a post-Keynesian and neo-liberal conception of economic development, constituted a major departure from pre-existing views about the role of the state and the obligations of government to its citizenry. Along with a host of other domestic economic and social policies this paradigmatic shift carried particular implications for multiculturalism. Paramount among these was a debate over the wisdom of state support for ethnocultural diversity. In conjunction with the constitutional deliberations of the 1980s and 1990s, this shift served to broaden calls for changes in the way the federal government both promoted and administered multiculturalism.

In interpreting the significance of this development, we argue that a narrow assessment of the criticisms surrounding multiculturalism has the potential to misrepresent the nature and extent of the motives underlying the examination of federal ethnocultural policy. We suggest that the efforts to rethink and restructure multiculturalism were drawn into a larger debate about the sources of unity in a diverse society and the nature of Canadian citizenship.<sup>12</sup>

Support for this argument is founded upon a definition of citizenship that extends beyond formal legal practices and obligations, to include an understanding of citizenship

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<sup>11</sup> On the subject of policy paradigms and state action see Peter A. Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Apr., 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Jane Jenson and Susan Phillips discuss changes to citizenship as the product of a historical shift in the triangular relationship among the state, the market and communities. See "Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*. 14: 111-35 (Fall 1996). While not implying that citizenship is devoid of any meaning when detached from the sovereign nation state, their work emphasises the discourse and practice of citizenship that individuals have as members of bounded communities. In this sense, it is different from the literature that looks at the evolution of a "post-national" citizenship discussed by Yasmeen Soysal in *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Post-national Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

as an expression of belonging to, or identification with a larger community.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, citizenship is more than simply a synonym for nationality. States construct the boundaries of their political community by recognising their own citizens, by defining who qualifies and under what terms their relationship to the state and their fellow citizens are to be managed. Recognition is often framed in terms of various institutional arrangements expressed as official state policy.

In Canada, among many other policy areas, this recognition has been reflected in the federal policy of multiculturalism. As an inclusionary model of integration, multiculturalism established that citizenship in Canada would be firmly rooted in the recognition of citizens with diverse origins, and that an integral part of this recognition would be based not on the extent or quality of one's participation, but on full membership in a political community. Accompanying the benefits of shared rights and freedoms, multiculturalism developed over the decades as an integral component of Canadian citizenship. This vision of a multicultural society reflected the idea that Canadians should recognise themselves in public institutions, and that they should expect a certain amount of uniformity between their private identities and the content of government policies.<sup>14</sup> In effect, multiculturalism entrenched an activist role on the part of the federal government to reflect and respond to Canada's diversity.

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Fulford asserts that: "As much as it is a legal fact created by legislation, citizenship is a metaphor: for most people, in most countries, it stands for a tangle of human connections, past and future, at the same time that it defines entitlements and responsibilities", See "A Post-Modern Dominion: The Changing Nature of Canadian Citizenship" in *The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship*, ed. William Kaplan (Montreal: MQUP, 1993), 104.

<sup>14</sup> On this point see Raymond Breton, "Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation Building" in *The Politics of Gender, Ethnicity, and Language in Canada*, eds. Alan Cairns and Cynthia Williams (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986). On the importance of state recognition of ethnic minorities see also Anna Elisabetta Galeotti, *Tolerance as Recognition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Across three decades of change, we find substantial continuity in the central role played by state actors in establishing the terms of ethnocultural integration.<sup>15</sup> However, by the mid 1980s the consensus among many of these same state actors had broken down.<sup>16</sup> In its place, questions arose about the potentially destabilizing demands for ethnocultural and representation rights in multinational societies. We find these concerns to have served as vital adjuncts in the wider debate over state support for cultural diversity. By the 1990s, sufficient intellectual consensus in the form of neo-liberalism coupled with the growing criticism towards multiculturalism as a consequence of the national unity debate guided state action towards a new policy model.<sup>17</sup>

The concluding chapter clarifies the importance of this trend and without imposing any artificial uniformity makes two statements about the interactive effects among public institutions and diversity. First, we suggest that ethnocultural policy is not purely instrumental. Institutional practices send signals to citizens about who they are and how they should behave. The state constructs the boundaries of its political community by recognising its own citizens, by defining who qualifies and under what terms their relationship to the state and their fellow citizens are to be managed. Second, by offering a perspective on the rise of neoliberalism and the difficult relationship between multiculturalism and national unity we suggest that the very definition of what is

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<sup>15</sup> See also Micheline Labelle et Daniel Salée, « La citoyenneté en question: l'État canadien face à l'immigration et la diversité nationale et culturelle », *Sociologie et sociétés*, vol. 31, n° 2, (1999), 125-144.

<sup>16</sup> See Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Daiva Stasiulis, "Ethnic Pluralism under Siege: Popular and Partisan Opposition to Multiculturalism," *Canadian Public Policy*, XVIII: 4 (1992), 365-386.

<sup>17</sup> In the related field of immigration another decade would pass, and only in the context of the new security concerns prompted by the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States before there would be a substantial revision to Canadian immigration policy. On the changes to immigration policy see Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, "Security, Immigration and Post-September 11 Canada," in *Reinventing Canada: Politics of the 21st Century*, eds. Janine Brodie and Linda Trimble (Toronto: Pearson, 2003).

Canadian was being debated. Explanations for policy change that limit their analytical focus to fiscal restraint fail to reveal the full extent of the pressures for reform.

Examining the legacies of the Mulroney and Chrétien governments clarifies this point. As the country restructured its economy the relationship between the state and its citizens, and in particular, the forms of legitimate representation, were being transformed. The legitimacy of state supported diversity was steadily losing ground to the notion that individuals can and should compete equally in the political marketplace. Moreover, and supporting an attack on multiculturalism, was the national unity question. By the early 1990s, a decade of consensus on the merits of multiculturalism was broken through a series of constitutional debates that characterized multiculturalism as a threat to national unity, rather than a way of sustaining it. In its place was an interpretation that viewed ethnicity as divisive and multiculturalism as secondary to the primary goal of stabilizing the Quebec-Canada relationship. Here, the reforms to multiculturalism signal that the assumptions underpinning Canadian governance have changed substantially from those of the late 1960s when multiculturalism was envisioned.

### ***1.2 Ethnocultural Diversity and State Intervention: A Framework for Analysis***

In broad terms, this study seeks to fill two lacunae in the literature on ethnocultural policy. First, it addresses a critical and under-studied dimension of Canadian ethnocultural diversity, the role of public institutions. While there is an increasing interest in the notion that pluralism and multiculturalism is a route for polyethnic and multinational states to follow, little attention has been paid to how policies and programmes that underpin the recognition of ethnocultural diversity affect social

cohesion.<sup>18</sup> As institutions, policies act to reshape political behaviour by providing a framework in which rules and norms become sources of information and meaning for citizens.<sup>19</sup> In most analyses of ethnocultural diversity in Canada, however, the function that government action itself may play in shaping ethnocultural policy remains largely unexplored. For example, much of the classic work on ethnoculturalism is philosophical and (or) addresses federalism. In the first category, Will Kymlicka's, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* and Charles Taylor's "The Politics of Recognition" stand out.<sup>20</sup> In the second group, Kenneth McRoberts' *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* and Alan C. Cairns' *Charter versus Federalism: The Dilemmas of Constitutional Reform* are among the more prominent instances.<sup>21</sup> Even the recent wide-ranging review of Canadian diversity by Abu-Laban and Gabriel spends more time on the outcomes of policies, in terms of their relationship to the post-911 environment, than on the institutions themselves.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Like discussions in related policy fields, however, more needs to be known about what mix of ethnocultural policies and institutions will help rather than hinder social solidarity. Canadian and international examples of this line of inquiry include, Will Kymlicka, *Finding our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: OUP, 1998); Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon, "The "Canadian Diversity Model": A Repertoire in Search of a Framework," *CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|19*, November 2001; Council of Europe, *Diversity and Cohesion: New Challenges for the Integration of Immigrants and Minorities* (July 2000); Benjamin Hempel, *Does Canada Compare? Social Cohesion and Cultural Policies in Australia, the United States and the European Union*. Prepared for the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Canada, (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory," *World Politics* 6 (1964), 677-715.

<sup>20</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*; Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (Don Mills, Ont.: OUP, 1997); and Alan C. Cairns, *Charter versus Federalism: The Dilemmas of Constitutional Reform* (Montreal: MQUP, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2002).

A second purpose of the study is to link the development of multicultural policy with the evolution of a discourse on Canadian citizenship.<sup>23</sup> Until recently, few academic works have focused on the fact that multiculturalism exists in a policy environment that has changed over time and which is currently being altered in search of the appropriate mechanisms for realizing policy goals and the appearance of new claims.

Although both tasks are complementary, the first moves this thesis in the direction of institutional analysis, uncovering the institutional practices that support ethnocultural diversity. The second task is a form of policy study, asking, in effect, what leads the state to action?<sup>24</sup> This involves weighing the influence of political ideas against a host of causal factors that contribute to the development of policy. It also entails recognition of how ideas and interests often meet head-on with political experience, and in so doing provide a mechanism for policy feedback, learning, and improvement. Unexpected or undesired policy outcomes often lead to reassessments of policy choices and potentially to a reconsideration of underlying principles.

A consideration of both ideas and institutional practices requires the formulation of a framework for analysis. Reviewing contemporary approaches to the study of state intervention and policy making can provide theoretical inspiration in these areas. A number of traditions can be distinguished in the literature on multiculturalism. Three will

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<sup>23</sup> One effort to do so is Kymlicka and Banting's research on the *effects* of multiculturalism for social citizenship. While important, their research question is quite different from that of this thesis. See "Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State?", in *Cultural Diversity Versus Economic Solidarity*, ed. Philippe Van Parijs (Brussels: Editions De Boeck Université, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> In thinking about public policy as a subject of inquiry, there is a distinction to be made between what might be called a "policy study" and "policy analysis". The former is often used to indicate a primarily descriptive attempt to understand the policy-making process, while that later is usually understood more narrowly to explain a prescriptive activity. In the literature, the conceptual distinction is rather vague, but as Pal points out, the central difference, even if they are often used interchangeably, is one of style. *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Scarborough: Nelson, 2001), 14.

be considered here: neo-Marxist, statist or state-centric and public choice.<sup>25</sup> Each approach envisions the state as autonomous but defines the mechanism of autonomy in a different way. Therefore, our discussion will focus on the theoretical reach of these models as it applies to our purpose of understanding the role of public institutions as a vehicle for managing ethnocultural diversity.

Theories of the state rooted in a neo-Marxist perspective are notable for their emphasis on state action as an expression of social-class relations. Policy outcomes in this view represent limited concessions made by the state to the working class to assure the viability of capitalism. While possessing a certain degree of autonomy, the state nevertheless acts in the overall interests of capital and can never wholly deviate from the requirement of reinforcing the prevailing distribution of power. In the formulation of ethnocultural policy, programs and practices are introduced to legitimize inequality and to conceal exploitation through the transmission of dominant ideologies. For example, Fleras and Elliott note that multiculturalism in Canada constitutes an ideology whose endorsement of diversity is widely accepted as intrinsic to Canada's collective image, and consequently an area in which the state can legitimately intervene.<sup>26</sup> Although there is an explicit commitment to diversity, a "tacit approval of the status quo is equally evident and

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<sup>25</sup> It is important to bear in mind that several separate branches of scholarship, including public choice, organization theory, and historical-institutionalism lay claim to the label neo-institutionalist. See Ellen M. Immergut, "The Theoretical Core of New Institutionalism," *Politics & Society*, 26:1 (March 1998), 5-34. Neo-institutionalism is therefore *not* a single model of politics with identical implications for the determination of policy. This is true notwithstanding the fact that all branches of neo-institutionalism may share a theoretical core about the value of institutions. For this reason alone, a public choice rationale for state behaviour can be considered separately from other "institutional" explanations.

<sup>26</sup> Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliott, *The Challenge of Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1992).



promoted".<sup>27</sup> This state function is seen as forestalling demands for more fundamental reform and highlights the role of ethnocultural policy as an instrument of social control.<sup>28</sup>

To the extent that state actors have at their disposal a combination of strategies, including physical coercion, ideological manipulation, and popular consensus, for legitimizing and reinforcing the existing socio-political order, neo-Marxist perspectives emphasize the latter two as being particularly significant in liberal democratic states.<sup>29</sup> The motivations for state intervention, however, are not solely designed to reinforce existing power relations. Neo-Marxists argue that state intervention serves both capitalists and the state itself, by minimising potential disruptions to the social order yet maximizing the orderly accumulation of capital.<sup>30</sup>

Statist writers in contrast argue for a more sophisticated understanding of autonomy in which state power is not linked in any obvious way to the structural requirements of capitalism. Leading theorists of this approach reject what they perceive to be deeply embedded society-centred assumptions of state autonomy that do not recognize that state as having an interest in maintaining its own power and which may lead it to act independently of or even against the wishes of the dominant classes.<sup>31</sup> Public

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>28</sup> This classic neo-Marxist critique of multiculturalism is summarized by Alan B. Anderson and James S. Frideres in chapter 14 of, *Ethnicity in Canada: Theoretical Perspectives* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981).

<sup>29</sup> See Daiva Stasiulis and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "Ethnic Minorities and the Politics of Limited Inclusion in Canada," in *Canadian Politics: An Introduction to the Discipline*, eds. Alain G. Gagnon and James P. Bickerton (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1990).

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Leo Driedger's concern with social stratification, power, status and inequality in *Multi-Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities* (Toronto: OUP, 1996).

<sup>31</sup> Leading figures of this view include Theda Skocpol, "Bring the State Back in: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in *Bringing The State Back In*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Eric A. Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For Nordlinger, a statist perspective

officials in any policy field are thought to translate their own preferences into authoritative action somewhat independent of economic groups or societal inclinations. The result is a policy process directed by the logic of the state itself.

While no explicitly shared research agenda has tied statist writers together, the result has been to re-inject the notion of state intervention as a plausible explanation for political and social change. To address the effects of state on society and to make clear outcomes of public policy, these authors suggest that states matter primarily because of their “organizational configurations” that make possible the raising of certain political issues and the exclusion of others.<sup>32</sup> This perspective encourages a view of politics as a reflection of state action; albeit one that does not reify the state as some single entity with limited purpose and consistent effects. In the same way, statist scholars concede that the fragmented nature of the sprawling liberal democratic state limits the capacity for coordinated action.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the dominant focus among advocates of this approach remains squarely with the independent influence of the state on political outcomes. In pushing the concept of autonomy much further than their Marxist counterparts, statist writers grant a determining role to state officials and bureaucratic traditions. On the subject of ethnocultural policy, they debate whether a strategy of ethnic inclusion and a focus on national identity is possible or even preferable. They do not, however, dispute the capacity of the state to manage an increasingly diverse, rights-conscious, and

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need not imply that the state has a greater impact upon society than society upon the state. But without minimizing the importance of societal actors and variables, the state can be accorded analytical priority.

<sup>32</sup> Skocpol, 21.

<sup>33</sup> Indeed, several authors argue that federalism poses limitations on the exercise of power. See Keith Banting, *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Montreal: MQUP, 1987); and Alan C. Cairns, "The Embedded State: State-Society Relations in Canada," in *State and Society: Canada in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Keith Banting, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

particularistic society. In this category one may include the critique of multiculturalism on the part of Quebec intellectuals who view the policy as undermining Quebec's claim to nationhood. This view, while stressing the adverse effects of multiculturalism on Quebec society does not reject the principle of state-sponsored diversity. It is the federal model based on multiculturalism that is rejected because it is viewed as incompatible with Quebec's own intervention in matters relating to culture and language.<sup>34</sup>

In English Canada, statist scholars such as Pal have argued that around the time the official policy of multiculturalism was adopted, the government sought to create multicultural advocacy organizations that would promote its own agenda.<sup>35</sup> This reflected in part the broader state mandate to mobilize Canadian society on a common participatory front. The federal government's discourse during this period linked the growth of a national identity to the realisation of equitable treatment of disadvantaged groups. While the range of issues addressed was not unlimited, advocacy groups were able, often with project grants from the federal departments, to have their interests known and to make their claims for equity.<sup>36</sup> Politicians and bureaucrats would justify their actions by arguing that such interests were inherently difficult to organize on their own.<sup>37</sup> Fledgling ethnic groups therefore required the active encouragement of the state.

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Guy Rocher, « Les ambiguïtés d'un Canada bilingue et biculturel » dans *Le Québec en mutation*, (Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, 1973); Micheline Labelle, « Le débat sur la culture ethnique, la culture nationale, et la culture civile: réflexions sur les enjeux de l'intégration des minorités ethniques au Québec, » Communication présentée au Colloque: « *Culture ethnique, culture civile et culture nationale*, » Congrès de L'ACFAS, Université de Sherbrooke (mai 1991); M. Labelle, F. Rocher, et G. Rocher, « Pluriethnicité, citoyenneté et intégration: de la souveraineté pour lever les obstacles et les ambiguïtés. » *Cahiers de recherche sociologique*, (1995) no 25, 213-245.

<sup>35</sup> Pal, *Interests of State*, 136-140.

<sup>36</sup> Jenson, "Fated to live in Interesting Times: Canada's Changing Citizenship Regimes," in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 30: 4 (1997), 627.

<sup>37</sup> Pal, *Interests of State*, 109.

The third major approach, public choice, also grants autonomy to the state but differs over the manner in which institutions shape the behaviour of societal and state actors. Public choice scholars proceed from the assumption that political actors are self-interested utility maximizers with fixed goals and preferences. Institutions and state structures figure into the equation by shaping the strategies chosen by political actors to realize their goals. As a theory, this approach applies the tools of economic analysis to non-market forms of allocations and as such provides a level of theorizing about decision-making processes. On this view, the principal concern is with understanding how and why certain state choices are made. Institutions, such as the rules that determine the constitutional division of powers in a federation, allow political choices to be made, but they do not allow every conceivable political choice to be considered.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, institutions do not determine actors' preferences, but they do affect individual and collective choices.

Public choice approaches pay particular attention to the relationship between state actors, voters, and the formulation of electoral platforms. Politicians are thought to enter a self-serving process of adopting policies that will secure their election, and, all other things being equal, will respond to those interests representing the largest number of voters. In this calculation, policy outcomes rest on the pre-given and unchanging motivations of state officials who are joined only by their desire to maximize career goals and expand program resources.<sup>39</sup> The state is not conceived as an institutional structure

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<sup>38</sup> Immergut, "The Normative Roots of New Institutionalism: Historical Institutionalism and Comparative Policy Studies," in *Theorieentwicklung in der Politikwissenschaft-eine Zwischenbilanz*, eds. Arthur Benz and Wolfgang Seibel (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997), 328-329.

<sup>39</sup> Bradford, *Commissioning Ideas*, 11.

embodying some principled conception of the public good. In accordance with this view, ethnocultural policy is not intended as a means by which groups can make their claims known to the state, but as a tool to covet electoral favour among ethnocultural minorities.

In Canada, both advocates and opponents of multiculturalism concede that the policy has helped rather than hindered support from ethnic voters for the architects of the policy, the federal Liberal party. Still others, however, point to the instrumental and veiled goal of the policy as a tool of former Prime Minister Trudeau's national unity strategy.<sup>40</sup> Several scholars maintain that a key incentive for multiculturalism was its utility in helping to undermine support for the "two nations" view of Canada – a view Trudeau found perilously consistent with Quebec's independence movement. From this perspective, a policy of cultural pluralism was significant not for what it offered as what it excluded and worked against, namely a bicultural definition of Canadian society.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, criticisms of multiculturalism as an electoral ploy or a tool to undermine Quebec nationalism, share a decidedly deterministic view of political behaviour that attributes collective or individual preferences to inferred interests.

Clearly, each of these theories views the state and policy making about ethnoculturalism somewhat differently. Public policy may be the result of rational choices based on the self-interested analysis of state actors, a reflection or consequence of state structures and processes, or as tool of social class relations. Each, however, believes that

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<sup>40</sup> See Raymond Breton's argument in "Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation-Building".

<sup>41</sup> McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, 124. For the author, contradictions inherent in the goals of cultural preservation and the enhancement of personal autonomy – hallmarks of the original policy, along with Trudeau's indifference to the policy more generally, demonstrate that multiculturalism was to serve as a foil to Quebec nationalism rather than a principled support and embracing of ethnocultural diversity. See also François Rocher and Micheline Labelle, "Debating Citizenship in Canada: The Collide of Two Nation-Building Project", in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, eds. Pierre Boyer, Linda Cardinal and David Headon (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 263-286.

public policy irrespective of its purpose is designed to deal with public problems. For neo-Marxists, political struggles are defined by class interests and thereby reinforce a system of class hegemony. Autonomy, albeit "relative", arises from the mix of institutional rules that are inevitably constrained to act in the interests of capital. Such a functionalist and reductionist approach to policy outcomes is problematic in that it stops short of viewing the modern state as structurally autonomous from civil society. In the absence of true autonomy, this approach has difficulty grasping the idea that state institutions are able to structure political struggle and influence policy outcomes. Without such insight the power of institutional variables to explain policy outcomes is frustrated.

Similarly, the rational choice model of strict rationality that assumes preferences are given and unchanging is often unsuitable for conceptualizing policy outcomes. Although rational choice scholars concede that institutions act to constrain self-interested behaviour, they fail to capture the dynamic character of institutional structure during periods of profound or turbulent policy change.<sup>42</sup> Such discontinuities imply that not simply the strategies but also the goals actors pursue are shaped by the institutional context they find themselves in. Moreover, because politics is often conducted in a complex institutional setting, individuals may be motivated by a mix of conflicting preferences and may privilege some interests at the expense of others. This leads to the conclusion that unless something is known about the context, broad assumptions about self-interested behaviour are misleading.<sup>43</sup> Conflicting interests and preferences should

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<sup>42</sup> Accounting for the unfolding of processes over time (or a temporal dimension) is a feature central preoccupation for many of the leading authors within the field of historical institutionalism and comparative historical analysis. See James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10-12.

therefore be understood as the product of historical constructions, as limits on human rationality and knowledge that can be redressed only by fully examining history. The centrality of institutional settings and the value of historical contexts demonstrate creative aspects of politics not captured by the rational choice perspective.

Viewed from this perspective, both neo-Marxism and rational choice fail to present a model of policy outcomes that grants a determining and independent role to institutional structures and configurations of power within the state. Moreover, neither approach succeeds in overcoming a conception of state-society relations that is essentially dualistic – where one sphere acts on the other to realize its goals. It is this failure that leads this study towards its understanding of institutional structures and policy change. Moving in this direction requires not only greater attention to the distribution of power within the state, but analytical focus on institutions as structures that shape the strategies and goals of political actors.<sup>44</sup> In this respect, much can be gleaned from the growing institutionalist literature.

As a school of thought, institutionalism has undergone somewhat of a renaissance in recent decades. Unlike the inter-war tradition of institutional studies that rarely went beyond a mere description of formal institutions, New Institutionalism, or neo-

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<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, "Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", in *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, eds. Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen and Frank Longstreth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9.

<sup>44</sup> As Paul Pierson explains, "Policies can, for example, provide resources that facilitate or impede participation. They may create framing effects that influence what actors see and what they don't, which issues attract attention and how they feel about those issues, who they see as their allies and opponents, as well as whether they feel that their grievances are legitimate and will be treated legitimate." "Public Policies as Institutions," in *Rethinking Political Institutions: The Art of the State*, eds. Ian Shapiro, Stephen Skowronek, and Daniel Galvin (New York University Press, 2006), 11. Pierson's focus on history is most closely associated with his work on path dependency, which stresses the constraining role of the past, in contrast to theories in which change is mainly seen as the outcome of deliberate action. See "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 94, 2, (2000), 251-267.

institutionalism as it is more widely known, has provided an important and increasingly popular starting point to investigate the inner workings of the state.<sup>45</sup> Its popularity may be explained in part by its theoretical reach as a broad fundamental approach that can be applied to a wide variety of empirical problems. Proponents of this approach share a general interest in analyzing the effects of rules and procedures for aggregating individual wishes into collective decisions. Unlike the behaviourist movement of the 1950s and 1960s that was chiefly concerned with observable behaviour as a basis for explaining political phenomena, neo-institutionalists reject individual psychology as the principal tool for political analysis.<sup>46</sup> Rather they seek to understand preference formation, political demands and policy outcomes by focusing on specific institutional settings.<sup>47</sup>

Within the neo-institutionalist tradition three broad but related branches have emerged: rational choice, sociological, and historical. Rational choice institutionalists argue that individuals and their strategic preferences ought to be the central concern of social science. Like public choice theorists more generally, rational choice institutionalists tend to assume that the overriding goal of politicians in liberal democracies is to ensure their election or re-election.<sup>48</sup> However, they differ significantly in that they view institutions as crucial for shaping the strategies chosen by political actors to realize their goals. In this respect, institutions serve to stabilize relationships

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<sup>45</sup> Leaving aside the interdisciplinary dispute as to what is "new" about neo-institutionalism, the neo-institutionalist literature has served as an important debate among social scientists who argue that fundamentally institutions matter, but disagree over the extent to which they matter.

<sup>46</sup> Immergut, "The Theoretical Core of New Institutionalism," 25.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Hall and R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44 (1996), 936-957.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas A. Koelble, "The New Institutionalism in Political Science and Sociology," *Comparative Politics* Vol. 27, No. 2 (Jan., 1995).



between political actors and to induce cooperative behaviour among self-interested individuals.

The second major school of neo-institutionalism, known as sociological institutionalism, presents a broad critique of rationality based on the presumption that inherent limits on cognition serve to constrain individual choice.<sup>49</sup> Here individuals are viewed as "embedded" in their socio-political environment, unable to calculate their preferences based on an ideal consideration of all possible choices.<sup>50</sup> Whether through the absence of adequate time, resources, or information, preferences are thought to result from the various routines and habitual behaviours that individuals adopt to overcome their cognitive limits.<sup>51</sup> In cases where institutional stability or stasis is the object of inquiry, this theoretical approach has served well as a tool for understanding public policy. Conceptually, however, sociological institutionalism has been less successful accounting for institutional change. The prevailing view among policy theorists in particular, is that theories that attempt to explain continuity as opposed to change and innovation are not always well suited to reveal the interplay between ideas, strategy and historical circumstance that result in new policy directions.<sup>52</sup>

In part, the third major school of institutionalism offers a remedy to this problem by focusing chiefly on institutions as independent variables that influence struggles over

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<sup>49</sup> Sociological institutionalism as a branch of scholarship also appears as Organization Theory. See Immergut, 14-16; and Campbell, "Where Do We Stand? Common Mechanisms in Organizations and Social Movements Research," in *Social Movements and Organization Theory*, eds. Gerald F. Davis, Doug McAdam, W. Richard Scott, and Mayer N. Zald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, eds. *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), 11.

<sup>51</sup> Immergut, 14-15.

<sup>52</sup> Bradford, 12.

power and policy. Historical institutionalists do not reject the concept of rationality altogether, rather they view self-interest as being problematical and focus on the capacity of institutions to actively shape politics. In this conception, individuals are not passive actors, yet they are bound by institutional arrangements that serve to guide their choices.<sup>53</sup>

Policy change for historical institutionalists has served as a focal point for understanding how struggles unfold among varying interests and ideas within particular institutional settings. Among the leading proponents of this approach, Peter Hall and Margaret Weir have devoted considerable attention to how institutional arrangements "condition" policy development and change.<sup>54</sup> They do so by examining the interaction of institutions and political processes across both countries and time. It is our contention that this approach can be revealing when applied to the study of Canada's policy of multiculturalism.

How may historical institutionalism help to illuminate the development and changing environment in which multiculturalism operates? We achieve this by addressing sources of institutional dynamism – understood as change or variability in the impact of institutions brought on by their interaction with their political environments.<sup>55</sup> This is

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<sup>53</sup> Margaret Weir, "Ideas and the Politics of Bounded Innovation," in Steinmo et al., *Structuring Politics*, 188-216.

<sup>54</sup> See Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France* (New York: OUP, 1986); Margaret Weir, "Ideas and the Politics of Bounded Innovation," and Margaret Weir and Theda Skocpol, "State Structures and the Possibilities for Keynesian Responses to the Great Depression in Sweden, Britain and the United States," in *Bringing The State Back In*, 107-163.

<sup>55</sup> Thelen and Steinmo, *Structuring Politics*, 16-17. See also the case made by André Lecours for historical-institutionalism as a theoretical insight into the politics of identity, "Theorizing Cultural Identities: Historical Institutionalism as a Challenge to the Culturalists," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 33: 3 (2000), 499-522.

accomplished in two ways, by focusing on how the policy has served to accommodate interests and filter politics in Canada, as well as how the policy has itself been mediated by the broader political context.

The historical institutionalist literature identifies several sources of institutional dynamism that describe situations in which institutions can produce different outcomes over time. In line with this trend, our focus is on examples of how the meaning and functioning of multiculturalism was transformed by changes in the socio-economic context or balance of power. To that effect, we are concerned with policy change, albeit within stable institutions. Change on the order of complete institutional breakdown or crisis – moments of dramatic change – are not the source of our theorizing.<sup>56</sup>

What we need at this point is a mid-level analysis paying close attention to institutional settings where state officials and societal interests interact to construct public policies as guides to action. Peter Hall has aptly described the institutional relationship that binds these forces together and structures their relations to society.<sup>57</sup> His approach to understanding the logic of state intervention and economic management presents a view of policy as a theoretical construct. Public policies are courses of action to deal with specific problems, but that action is anchored in both a set of values regarding appropriate public goals and a set of beliefs about the best way of achieving those goals.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The distinction between regular or routine policy shifts and more significant paradigm shifts is an important theoretical consideration. A number of political scientists continue to contest the ability of ideational-institutional theories to explain large-scale political change. See, for instance, Robert C. Lieberman, "Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order: Explaining Political Change," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 4 (December 2002), 697-712; and Streeck and Thelen, "Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies."

<sup>57</sup> Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy*, 19.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Atkinson, ed., "Public Policy and the New Institutionalism," in *Governing Canada: Institutions and Public Policy* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 19. Atkinson notes that public policy in the sense

Policies, therefore, exist in the realm of ideas and public discourse. This view is mirrored by other institutionalist scholars who stress the need to understand ideas and interests in institutional settings – what some have deemed an institutional-interpretative approach.<sup>59</sup> Above all, the advantage of such an approach is that it relaxes the strict institutionalist emphasis on order and embraces the view that to account for policy change or reform is to understand the role played by ideas and institutions within periods of uncertainty.

Irrespective of the policy sector being considered public policies are made within ideational frameworks that help structure individual and collective thinking about what constitutes a public problem. Simply put, ideas are essential because policy makers need to know what public problems are, to understand potential courses of action, and later to evaluate the overall results. Political ideas are thus used to advance political interests and inform appropriate actions. Ronald Manzer has argued the utility of locating ideas in a causal chain that accommodates a role for other factors. He notes:

Policies here are seen as results or outcomes of political actions. They can be explained by a range of causal factors, which include the distribution of power among participants in policy-making, organization of political interests, structure of institutional constraints, and influences of socio-economic environment. To explain public policy the effect of political ideas must be weighed against the effect of these other causal factors in the policy-making process.<sup>60</sup>

A historical institutionalist approach can be used for case study research through the elaboration of two concepts: the policy paradigm and the agenda-setting network. The

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understood here is a branch of political theory. Policies, he maintains, “require a theory of the right and the good and a theory of how the world works. They are nourished by the belief that their goals are worthwhile and their means are effective. Doubt on either of these matters signals the beginning of policy change.”

<sup>59</sup> For a consideration of the role and causal importance of ideas and institutions in politics see Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms"; and Judith Goldstein, "Ideas, Institutions and American Trade Policy," *International Organization*, 42, 1 (1988), 127-217.

<sup>60</sup> Ronald Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 4-5.

concept of the policy paradigm in political science borrows noticeably from Thomas S. Khun's discussion of scientific paradigms.<sup>61</sup> Political scientists refer to a reasonably consistent set of ideas that guide policy thinkers in defining the "problem" and in seeking information to shape the policy "solution." Reference to Khun, notes Peter Hall:

allows us to locate the different kinds of policy change relative to one another. First and second order change can be seen as cases of "normal policymaking," namely of a process that adjusts policy without challenging the overall terms of a given policy paradigm, much like the "normal science." Third order change, by contrast, is likely to reflect a very different process, marked by the radical changes in the overarching terms of policy discourse associated with a "paradigm shift." If first and second order changes preserve the broad continuities usually found in patterns of policy, third order change is often a more disjunctive process associated with periodic discontinuities in policy.<sup>62</sup>

For our purposes, the policy paradigm allows us to consider the development and operation of multiculturalism as the product of an intellectual endeavour – an exercise in social learning – undertaken by policymakers. Working within a framework of ideas and standards, these policymakers set out in a deliberate attempt to adjust the goals of ethnocultural integration in response to past experience and new information. Here, an agenda-setting network can be identified generating a body of advice, both solicited and volunteered, with ideas that in some instances led to the creation of competing paradigms. Over the course of multicultural policy, advice flowed to the federal government from a variety of sources including multicultural groups, various government bodies, government-appointed advisory groups, the media, and academics. When the government ignored such advice, the ideas did not necessarily disappear. Some "hovered"

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<sup>61</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

<sup>62</sup> Peter Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain," 279. For another account of policy paradigms see Walter Salant, "The Spread of Keynesian Doctrines and Practices in the United States," in *The Political Power of Economic Ideas*, ed. Peter Hall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

over the policy field, thereby continuing to provide alternatives to the conventional policy approach used within government. The persistence of certain ideas can be seen when they reappear in different policies within similar policy fields (e.g. immigration). From this vantage point, when several of these ideas or notions keep recurring in policy advice, they can be said to constitute a new or competing policy paradigm.<sup>63</sup>

The agenda-setting network, or "policy network" concept in political science, has its origins in comparative research on industrial performance and economic policy.<sup>64</sup> The academic attention to policy networks has generally been reserved for describing the relationship among a particular set of actors that form around an issue important to a specific policy community.<sup>65</sup> The object of policy network analysis, irrespective of its branch of research, has been to conceptualize the relationship between the state and civil society.<sup>66</sup> Further to this, our interest is to understand how actors that make up an ethnocultural policy community have influenced a prevailing policy paradigm. Every political system contains a distinctive constellation of forces channelling the flow of ideas and information into decision-making circles. From this vantage point, policy communities serve to explain and defend those ideas whose action gives purpose and direction to state intervention. If policy design is about choosing the most appropriate instrument to deal with public problems, then any explanation for a particular policy must

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<sup>63</sup> The role of ideas and ideologies influencing a policy agenda is discussed in Andrew Chadwick, "Studying Political Ideas: A Public Political Discourse Approach," *Political Studies*, 48, 2000.

<sup>64</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

<sup>65</sup> William D. Coleman and Grace Skogstad, eds., *Policy Communities & Public Policy in Canada: A Structural Approach* (Mississauga, Ontario: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd, 1990), 26.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Éric Montpetit's comparative discussion of policy networks and the contribution to governance in *Misplaced Distrust: Policy Networks and the Environment in France, the United States, and Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003).

address not only those who identify the problem but the agenda-setting network interested in what means are properly and practically available to deal with it.<sup>67</sup>

It is out of moments of political conflict that solutions to public problems are often envisioned. More specifically, we attempt to show the formation of ideas and institutions that led pragmatic but principled politicians, bureaucrats, members of ethnocultural communities, and others to adopt, rethink and then recast a policy of multiculturalism. This, therefore, is not a story of independent variables, but of configurations among ideational and institutional elements, none of which is sufficient but each of which is necessary for a comprehensive explanation of an important episode in Canada's ethnocultural policy.

### ***1.3 Organization of the Thesis***

In this study, therefore, we take our cue from historical institutionalists and policy analysts to explore the development of multiculturalism in Canada. Chapter Two begins this analysis by considering the role multiculturalism plays as an "interpretative order" within which citizenship is understood in a multicultural state. This chapter builds on the argument raised earlier in this chapter about the connection between multiculturalism and citizenship and the role played by institutions as constitutive meanings of politics. Chapter Three sets in motion our detailed investigation of the policy; here we describe the first stage in its trajectory by focussing on developments in the mid-1960s and 1970s.

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<sup>67</sup> This view of public policy and problem recognition as a socially constructed discourse has many adherents. See, for instance, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966); Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); David A. Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb, "Problem Definition, Agenda Access, and Policy Choice," *Policy Studies Journal*, 21, 1: 56-71, 1993.; and Malcolm Spector and John I. Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1987).

Chapter Four tracks the debate and expansion of the policy into the 1980s; a period of growth for multiculturalism but also a period of contestation. During this era political ideas, including those associated with neo-liberal governance and the national unity debate, found persuasive expression among actors whose institutional position gave them both the motive and the opportunity to undertake reform. Chapter Five examines multiculturalism in the 1990s, a time of decision when debates and ideas carried over from the previous period led to a re-evaluation and rethinking of Canada's approach to managing ethnocultural diversity. The concluding chapter returns to arguments about institutions, ideas and the public agendas influencing Canadian multiculturalism policy in periods of socio-political transformation.



## CHAPTER 2

### **Citizenship and Multiculturalism: Managing Difference in an Ethnoculturally Diverse State**

#### *Introduction*

Both state and non-state actors in Canada have appealed for models of ethnocultural relations based on their particular conception of the requirements and bonds of membership in a political community. We contend that discourses on citizenship are fundamentally linked to the development of ethnocultural policy in Canada. This chapter continues our analysis of multiculturalism in Canada by establishing the connection between citizenship and the management of ethnocultural diversity. It explores the literature on citizenship both in Canada and abroad, analysing how the concept has served as a conceptual framework for thinking about the meaning and scope of membership in a diverse political community. It examines the traditional language of citizenship largely confined to race and immigration and the expansion of the idea of citizenship related to the diversity of arenas in which citizenship is now being claimed and contested. This analysis also considers a range of strategies for managing difference and recognising citizens in ethnoculturally diverse states.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter returns to the argument introduced in the previous chapter about the role played by institutions as constitutive of meanings of politics. It does so by exploring

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<sup>1</sup> Attempts to reconcile diversity with the norms of citizenship are discussed by Micheline Labelle and Daniel Salée in « La citoyenneté en question: l'État canadien face à l'immigration et la diversité nationale et culturelle », *Sociologie et sociétés*, vol. 31, n° 2, (1999), 125-144; and Danielle Juteau « Le multiculturalisme est-il compatible avec l'idée moderne de citoyenneté? », dans L. K. Sosoe, ed. *Diversité humaine. Démocratie, multiculturalisme et citoyenneté*, (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2002).

the interplay between ideas and institutions in mediating conflicts of value in Canadian society. Beneath every policy debate there is a complex but important process through which issues come to awareness and ideas about them become influential. As Donald Schon has termed them, these “ideas in good currency” may change slowly or lag behind present events but they provide a reference point for policy debates.<sup>2</sup> Untangling the meaning of these political ideas requires an interpretive analysis with an emphasis on political language. Ronald Manzer has captured the essence of this enterprise:

Political ideas constitute meanings of politics and policies because they form the language through which people understand their place in the political world, and thence articulate their interests, conceive modes of association with others in their political community, and devise courses of collective action. Political thinking is the condition for political action; political language is the precondition for political thinking; political ideas are the elements of political language. If the existence of public policies implies collective awareness or consciousness of choice, either prospectively or retrospectively, collective consciousness of the meanings of political institutions and public policies depends on being able to describe them by the means of the ideas that comprise the community’s political language.<sup>3</sup>

Analysing the political ideas inherent in citizenship debates then, provides a method for learning the language of ethnocultural politics and policy-making. Policy-making, to be clear, is about trying to solve public problems – a process that includes an awareness of a problem (problem recognition), a persuasive argument about the nature of the problem, and possible solutions (problem definition).<sup>4</sup> The core process of concern,

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<sup>2</sup> D. A. Schon, *Beyond the Stable State* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971), 123. The ways in which shared ideas spread and how one shared idea replaces another is also represented in the work of the philosopher Daniel Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); and J.W. Kingdom, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson, 2001), 96-100.

however, is the intellectual process of shaping the problem definition (problem structuring). Such a process involves the mobilization of political actors and policy specialists whose interest is with helping to shape a workable understanding of the problem.<sup>5</sup> Our focus in this chapter is therefore on the content of ideas that emerge from considerations of membership and social cohesion prevalent within citizenship studies.

The rest of the chapter is divided into several sections. The first part is devoted to a discussion of the political ideas inherent in the literature on citizenship. A connection between citizenship and ethnocultural relations is explored and evidence from the literature and laden phrase "identity politics" is presented as a venue where the two fields often meet. We then consider ethnocultural policy and multiculturalism in particular as an extension of the ideas central to citizenship. This section delves into what might be termed the "big debate" of ethnocultural relations within liberal democratic states – attempting to uncover the appropriate policy options designed for managing differences among populations.<sup>6</sup> Multiculturalism represents a very specific response to ethnocultural relations and can best be understood if distinguished comparatively from other possible responses, including but not limited to segregation and assimilation. We conclude by presenting multiculturalism as an expression of contemporary citizenship for ethnically diverse societies, one in which political integration (the goal of any democratic state) may be facilitated. Such an understanding, we demonstrate, is based on a view of social

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<sup>5</sup> W. N. Dunn, *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 138.

<sup>6</sup> Most of the methods for eliminating rather than managing differences among populations have few defenders among contemporary policy experts. It is worth remembering, however, the Western democracies have in the past used forced population transfers, and genocide to deal with inter-ethnic tensions. The historical treatment of indigenous peoples in North America and more recently acts of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia are both examples of extreme methods for eliminating differences.

cohesion where concerns about social stability, political unity, and civil peace meet to address the goal of membership in a political community.<sup>7</sup> As we document here and in subsequent chapters, many of the fears about the erosion of citizenship or the fragmentation of national unity prevalent within debates about multiculturalism can be traced to the various dimensions of social cohesion. Other concerns about multiculturalism, as we discover, are linked less to identity concerns (identification and attachment to a political community) than to the legitimacy of state intervention in areas of social policy and in the lives of citizens more generally.

## ***2.1 Citizenship and Belonging***

The desire to live together in harmony and to manage the differences between cultures has long been an area of interest for theorists engaged in citizenship studies. Prior to the 1990s, citizenship was largely discussed only in relation to questions of race and immigration. Today the concept seems to have captured the interest of a wide range of academics from an equally wide range of perspectives.

While there may be no single view of citizenship, issues surrounding membership is where the politics of citizenship has taken root. Often this implies more than a discussion of "who does and who does not belong." It includes struggles over the meaning of membership in the community in which ones lives. It is not uncommon,

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<sup>7</sup> This is Kymlicka and Norman's characterization of social cohesion. They speak of social cohesion in the context of their discussion on "citizenship worries" which they view as a product of "the aspect or aspects of citizenship that are supposedly endangered by various cultural rights". See "Citizenship in Culturally Diverse Societies: Issues, Contexts, Concepts," in *Citizenship in Diverse Societies*, eds. Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman (New York: OUP, 2000), 31. See also Denise Helly, "Social Cohesion and Cultural Plurality," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 28(1) 2003: 19-42.

therefore, for the literature to reflect this preoccupation by using concepts such as justice, recognition, inclusion, participation, and responsibility. These are then linked to models of reality (how the world works) and the prescriptions that flow from them (what policy makers should do). From the standpoint of trying to understand ethnocultural policy through the language of contemporary citizenship, the role of ideas becomes of crucial importance.

Like all the important contested political concepts of our time the concept of citizenship can be appropriated within very different political discourses and articulated to very different positions. Most authors who equate citizenship with membership are inclined to discuss the legitimacy of social rights that are to be provided by the state. For T.H. Marshall, the fullest expression of these rights required a liberal welfare state. In his discussion of citizenship and social class he provides one of the earliest, clearest and most suggestive accounts of the historical and social reasons for the emergence of the post-war welfare state.<sup>8</sup> Although the bulk of Marshall's work was focused on the British experience his terms of reference were implicitly general and capable of widespread application in the social sciences of Western societies. It is not surprising therefore that writing on social citizenship since then has derived a considerable extent from Marshall's thinking on the subject.<sup>9</sup> Conceptually, the interest in social citizenship has spawned two overlapping but distinct sets of rights' concerns. The first set of "conventional" social citizenship rights refers to social welfare entitlements such as income security programs

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<sup>8</sup> T. H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development* (London: Trentham, 1949).

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Gosta Esping-Anderson, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990); and Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

and health care guarantees. While the second set of "new" social citizenship rights presents a more encompassing set of social policy provisions compared to specific (i.e. fragmented) welfare programs noted above. In this second representation, social rights refer to guarantees of equal opportunity for socially disadvantaged groups that are designed to facilitate their full participation in public as well as economic life.<sup>10</sup> The building of social institutions and the establishment of social rights for citizens along the lines of the "new" social citizenship has become the dominant trend in the literature.<sup>11</sup>

In Marshall's initial exploration of the topic he proposed that citizenship flourished under a particular kind of social bond – through a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession.<sup>12</sup> In this conception citizens are viewed as political actors constituting political spaces. Closely linked to democratic and neo-republican thought, this model emphasized the involvement of citizens in the building of society. In discussions over the last decades this idea has helped to encourage thinking outside a purely legal framework where citizenship was once seen merely in terms of the formal rules of nationality. The effect of this judgment has been to reinforce the widespread argument that citizenship is at heart an oppositional concept, defining a relationship between individuals and the state.<sup>13</sup> Membership is,

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<sup>10</sup> Lynda Erickson and J. Scott Matthews, "The Mass Politics of Social Citizenship". Paper prepared for the *Canadian Political Science Association Annual Meetings*, May 30 to June 1, 2003, Halifax, NS.

<sup>11</sup> One of the ongoing debates generated by an interest in social citizenship has been the critique that multicultural policies make it difficult to sustain an expansive Welfare State. This position is discounted by Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka in, "Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State?" Queen's University, School of Policy Studies, Working Paper 33 (Revised Version: December 2004).

<sup>12</sup> T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Oxford, OUP, 1950).

<sup>13</sup> Gerard Delanty, "Models of Citizenship: Defining European Identity and Citizenship", *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (1997), 288.

however, not conditional, it is a matter of right and entitlement. But it is reciprocal – providing rights, but also demanding responsibilities towards the community.

While Marshall's work captured the spirit of Britain's post-war statism it remained virtually silent on the question of competing ethnic identities. There was no discussion of the state's role in mediating disputes among different ethnic groups, nor was there a discussion of how to advance respect for minorities and alleviate racism through social policy. In Marshall's defence these were unlikely the issues that preoccupied him and his contemporaries – class and production relations were the key social cleavage of the post-war citizenship model. The result of this tradition, nonetheless, is that it helped establish a conceptual framework for thinking about the management of ethnicity in modern liberal democracies. It did so in a number of ways. First and foremost, research on citizenship established a number of constituent dimensions or concepts that the literature on managing ethnic relations would come to share. This connection is especially apparent in that both policy areas focus on the dimensions of membership required to permit a liberal democratic state to function in the face of diversity. These dimensions include measures for eliminating as well as managing differences between citizens or groups. For instance, models of social citizenship are focused primarily, but not exclusively, on the representation of state interests as it applies to the design or redesign of welfare state architecture.<sup>14</sup> At an operational level this has come to mean a choice among which major social policy initiatives and goals for public spending should be designed to achieve some measure of equality among citizens.

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<sup>14</sup> Jane Jenson and Denis Saint-Martin, "New Routes to Social Cohesion? Citizenship and the Social Investment State". *Canadian Journal of Sociology*: 28(1) 2003, 89.

Likewise for those interested in state responses to ethnocultural relations, the attention has been on the appropriate mix of policy instruments designed to alleviate tensions between ethnic groups and promote unity and equality.

Second, the work on citizenship suggested that membership in the liberal democratic state would remain a contested concept. During times of economic and political uncertainty state actors have frequently sought to redefine policy goals and look for changes to the status quo. With its origin firmly in the politics of rights, this meant citizenship would inevitably be swept up in discussions focusing on the re-allocation of services and entitlements offered by the state. As the debates on citizenship were eventually broadened to include race and ethnic relations it became difficult for both proponents and opponents of a liberal welfare state to exclude ethnicity as a variable within their problem definition. This led social theorists by the 1970s to consider the impact for ethnic minorities of power relations and the structural inequalities related to the operation of the capitalist economy.<sup>15</sup> It also produced a considerable effort aimed at empirically measuring attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity that would prove useful in the production of social policy aimed at ethnic communities.<sup>16</sup>

Admittedly, there are differences that become apparent when comparing the literatures on social citizenship and ethnocultural relations and citizenship – explaining in

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<sup>15</sup> In Canada some of the studies during this period include: J. Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); Leo Driedger, *The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic: A Quest for Identity* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978); and Jeffrey G. Reitz, *The Survival of Ethnic Groups* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> See J.W. Berry, R. Kalin and Donald M. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada* (Ottawa, Department of Supply and Services, 1977). More recently Statistics Canada has measured attitudes towards ethnicity: "Ethnic Diversity Survey: Portrait of a Multicultural Society," *Statistics Canada: Housing, Family and Social Statistics*; 89-593-XIE. (Ottawa, Minister of Industry, 2003).



part the presence of two separate but interrelated fields of study. One difference arises over the very idea of state support for prescriptive policy. For instance, few of even the most radical proponents of change to the post-war welfare state model would suggest that government should remove itself altogether from all areas of social policy. This would include the strongest supporters of free-market principles in Canada and abroad who recognise that citizenship warrants some degree of state investment to enhance or protect social cohesion. Even in the wake of increasing global competition and the focus on the knowledge-based economy, right-leaning governments have come to a similar conclusion and continue to advocate an interventionist role in areas of social policy. Support in Canada for these measures has, for example, continued to sustain various income-based security programs. The issue then is not about the presence of intervention, but the degree.

No such consensus on the need to support state intervention, however minimal, exists among theorists and policy-makers concerned with managing ethnocultural relations. The starting point of their discussions commonly revolves around the rationale for *any* degree of state supported action. The outcome is effectively to split the field into those theorists and commentators who accept the need for state action but disagree over the appropriate methods for achieving certain goals, and those who reject a role for the state outright by suggesting that the management of ethnocultural relations to foster social cohesion is compromised through an emphasis on group differences rather than commonalities.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In the first category of Canadian supporters of the policy we might include Kymlicka, Taylor, Fleras and Elliott (introduced in Chapter 1). In the second group, some of the most notable objections to the policy in Canada have come from authors who view multiculturalism as working against the need to promote

A second version of this argument, that multiculturalism divides rather than unites citizens, includes supporters of a model of limited government who believe that the state has no business cultivating or validating cultural diversity.<sup>18</sup> This position is markedly different from that which advocates intervention through such policies as multiculturalism in the belief that it may serve to stifle dissent among minorities and preserve the status quo among social classes.<sup>19</sup> There is a difference, in other words, between those who oppose multiculturalism, and individuals who hope to use it for reasons antithetical to those underlying current state policy.

This brings us to the third contribution of thinking about citizenship, an awareness of a time perspective. If citizenship remains a contested concept then the interest it generates is likely to rise and fall. In this sense it is very much a product of a certain time and place. Like discussions of citizenship more generally, the re-emergence of ethnicity

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cultural and political unity through homogenization. Reginald Bibby, in particular, views multiculturalism as impeding the full integration and acceptance of immigrants into the mainstream. See *Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1990). Likewise, Neil Bissoondath argues for "reasonable diversity within vigorous unity" as an alternative to the current policy. See *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Penguin Canada, 1994), 224. Other prominent critics include the Canadian historian J.L. Granatstein. See *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1998); Richard Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (University of Toronto Press, 2000); and Daniel Stoffman, "The Illusion of Multiculturalism," in *Multiculturalism and Immigration: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Elspeth Cameron (Toronto: CSPI, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> This line of reasoning is most commonly associated with neo-liberal arguments about the necessity of reducing state intervention in policy areas that are considered to be in the private domain, and hence not a legitimate arena for government involvement. In Canada, this position was first adopted at the federal party level by the Reform Party in 1989 as one of its founding principles. Reform Party of Canada, *Platform and Statement of Principles* (October 1989). Since the merger of the Canadian Alliance (formerly the Reform Party) and the Progressive Conservative Party in December of 2003, the official policy of the Conservative Party of Canada has become somewhat less clear. While the party's first policy declaration speaks of multiculturalism as a "valued reality", it falls short of speaking directly to the requirement of supporting multiculturalism through public funding. See Conservative Party of Canada, *Policy Declaration*, (March 19, 2005), 33.

<sup>19</sup> If any confusion exists here between the two it is likely because most people assume that one either supports multiculturalism for similar reasons, or opposes it for equally similar but different reasons. The reality is more complex. As we noted in the first chapter there is more than one theory about the nature of multiculturalism and its effect on inter-cultural relations.

and its relationship to social cohesion in the literature of the past decade is a product of our times. As noted earlier, ideological arguments about the role of the state in the production of services to meet public ends has drawn considerable and wide attention. In Canada, this has encouraged the view in some quarters that investment in a social policy agenda over the past two decades has taken a back seat to the federal priorities of debt reduction, tax cuts, and more recently national security concerns.<sup>20</sup> For both defenders and opponents of this sweeping endeavour the battles waged over social policy are very much part of the new reality of public issue management in turbulent times.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, increasing levels of diversity throughout Western liberal societies has also sparked the interest in the connection between ethnocultural relations and the dimensions of social cohesion. Recent events from Europe, most notably the rioting of French Muslim youths in the fall of 2005 has only served in many cases to strengthen the resolve of both advocates and opponents of a particular state treatment of the "ethnic issue".<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the debate over immigration in the aftermath of the September 11,

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<sup>20</sup> Peter Hicks, *Social Policy Reform in Canada: Establishing an Effective Social Policy Agenda with Constrained Resources*. International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (Ottawa, 1995); Michael J Prince, "From Health and Welfare to Stealth and Farewell: Federal Social Policy 1980-2000," in *How Ottawa Spends 1999-2000: Shape Shifting: Canadian Governance Toward the 21st Century*, ed., Leslie Pal (Don Mills, OUP, 1999); and Andrew Jackson, "Whatever Happened to Social Development?" *Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance*. Canadian Council on Social Development. May 21, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> The reference to "public issue management in turbulent times" is taken from the subtitle of Leslie A. Pal's book, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*.

<sup>22</sup> The riots were touched off by the deaths of two Muslim youths of African origin electrocuted in a power station as they fled the police in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois on Oct. 27. Responsibility for the violence some conclude must fall, in part, on the shoulders of the French Republic and its unwillingness to give immigrants a stake in a new national identity. For a discussion of France's failure to recognize ethnic communities as legitimate actors, see Timothy B. Smith, *France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality and Globalization since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Violence of the sort, if not of the same degree, has occurred elsewhere in Europe, most notably the fighting between Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants and British police officers in several towns in northern England in the summer of 2001.

2001 terrorist attacks in the United States has challenged policymakers and academics alike. The challenge, as some see it, is to implement measures that will strengthen domestic security without turning away from a tradition that recognises the contribution of immigrants to their host societies.<sup>23</sup> Still others see in immigration from non-Western sources the potential to undermine the basis of political unity as government-sanctioned privileges (read multiculturalism) “rejects the idea of a “color-blind” society of equal individuals and instead promotes a “color-conscious” society”.<sup>24</sup>

With these views and concerns in mind advocates of official multiculturalism in Canada point to the increasing growth of foreign born residents as the natural result of a liberal immigration policy and further evidence of the need to retain an inclusive policy that promotes tolerance.<sup>25</sup> Opponents of the policy are no less moved by the increasingly heterogeneous nature of the Canadian population which they view as further confirmation of the need to promote a singular Canadian identity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> On the challenges of diversity in Canada, particular immigration in the post 9/11 environment see Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> This is the argument by Samuel P. Huntington. See “If Not Civilizations, What? Samuel Huntington Responds to His Critics,” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1993. Strong disagreement with multicultural accommodation can also be found in Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: WW Norton, 1992). In Britain, the unfolding social and political responses to racial equality and the hostile response to multiculturalism over the past two decades is chronicled in Roger Hewitt’s *White Backlash and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Other comments about the need for multiculturalism include: that problems of national unity are not the result of its diversity, but the result of a failure to recognize diversity; that the policy works to remove discriminatory barriers that preclude equality; and that multiculturalism is a necessary response to the reality of a diverse Canadian society.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, Garth Stevenson, “Multiculturalism: As Canadian as Apple Pie,” *Inroads*, vol. 4 (May 1995).

## 2.2 *Citizenship and Identity Politics*

Evidence of a wide-ranging conversation exploring the links between citizenship and the identity based political movements of the second half of the twentieth century is increasingly apparent. The term "identity politics" has come to signify a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of certain social groups. Identity politics begins with the investigation of previously stigmatized accounts of group membership. These social movements have fostered a body of literature that takes up questions about the nature, origin and futures of the identities being defended. One of the most renowned of these investigations considers the relationship of ethnicity to an evolving post-national citizenship. In her work, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Post-National Membership in Europe*, Yasmeen Soysal presents an empirical examination of Turkish migrants in six European countries, and in so doing reflects on the complexity of cultural and identity issues that surround their status as guest workers.<sup>27</sup> This foundation leads Soysal to posit the evolution of a post-national model of membership in which identities continue to be culturally particularized, but rights are decoupled from nation-states and universalized under an international human rights rubric. Although not an examination of European policies towards ethnic minorities, her study tell us a great deal about the posture of European governments towards the absorption of a certain category of immigrants. The challenge of diversity in the modern world leads the author to present a compelling argument for an inclusive democratic ideal compatible with ethnocultural diversity. While her conclusions based on the study of Turkish migrants are

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<sup>27</sup> Y. N. Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

removed from Canada's recent experience with ethnocultural relations, they suggest that membership, and particularly the tensions between host and immigrant communities, has increasingly become a socially and politically significant concern of Western governments.

At a theoretical level, Soysal's discussion of citizenship emphasises a post-national dimension. While not implying that citizenship is devoid of any meaning when detached from the nation state, most authors writing of the Canadian experience highlight the discourse and practice of citizenship that individuals have as members of bounded communities. Several stand out in this regard, including Alain Cairns' *Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship and Constitutional Change*; Bourque and Duchastel's *L'Identité fragmentée: Nation et citoyenneté dans les débats constitutionnels canadiens, 1941-1992*; Jenson and Phillips' "Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada"; Miriam Smith's *A Civil Society?: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life*; and Kymlicka's *Multicultural Citizenship*.<sup>28</sup> What these works have in common is their reference to the problems and stresses associated with Canada's identity as a multinational and multicultural country.

For Alan Cairns, one of the dominant themes emerging from recent constitutional discussions in Canada has been a consideration of ethnicity – be it expressed as Aboriginal rights, immigration, or multiculturalism. The centrality of ethnicity's position

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<sup>28</sup> Alan Cairns, *Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship and Constitutional Change* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995); Miriam Smith, *A Civil Society?: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005); G Bourque and J. Duchastel, *L'Identité fragmentée: Nation et citoyenneté dans les débats constitutionnels canadiens, 1941-1992* (Montreal: Fides, 1996); Jane Jenson and Susan Phillips, "Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada." *International Journal of Canadian Studies*. 1996: 14: 111-35; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: OUP, 1995).

in Canada, he notes, is confirmed as all of these issues have appeared in one form or another in the last three attempts at constitutional renewal in Canada (with the exception of multiculturalism's absence in the Charlottetown Accord). According to Cairns, the saliency of ethnicity in Canada has been particularly obvious since the mid 1980s in discussions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Among the most important analyses of the Charter's impact on public life in Canada, Cairns has argued that it is viewed as more than an apparatus that hands out abstract rights. According to Cairns, most Canadians now view the Constitution not as unchanging part of the landscape, but rather as a policy instrument for their goals, and perhaps more importantly, as making the most fundamental statement that a society can about who counts as a citizen.<sup>29</sup>

By exploring the impact of the Charter on group politics, Cairns' work emphasises the ways in which political institutions and public policies shape the demands of social forces. For a number of authors, however, this position overstates the impact of state institutions on the current range of identity claims being advanced by identity based social movements. As Miriam Smith has argued in her analysis of the gay liberation movement, "If one of the results of the entrenchment of the Charter has indeed been the rise of new forms of identity politics and a new frame of rights talk, then we would expect that social movements prior to the Charter would have used the courts less and would have been less anchored in rights-based frames".<sup>30</sup> The evidence, she concludes, does not support the hypothesis; court challenges by equality seeking social movements

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<sup>29</sup> Cairns, 20-22.

<sup>30</sup> Miriam Smith, "Social Movements and Equality Seeking: The Case of Gay Liberation in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 31: 2 (1998), 288.

have a long history in Canada. Smith goes on to suggest, “The fact that a nascent social movement with relatively weak political and financial resources and poor chances of legal success chose to pursue and support litigation demonstrates that equality seeking is a frame and a strategy that has deeper roots in Canadian society than some claim about the Charter’s impact would suggest”.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, whether as a result of the Charter or as part of a movement with deeper roots, the fact remains that identity claims are very much part of the expanding collection of political movements committed to struggles that have hitherto been neglected or suppressed.

The capacity of state institutions to recognise and foster social forces is also reflected in the literature on national identity. In *L’Identité fragmentée*, Bourque and Duchastel examine the evolving representation of national identities in Canada. Like Smith, they concur that the Charter both as an institution and as a constitutional process has contributed to the recognition of identity claims. However, while Smith chronicles the equality seeking successes of social movements, Bourque and Duchastel survey the problematic character of the Charter’s capacity to recognise different identities. Based on the constitutional discourses of federal and provincial leaders from 1941 to 1992, they discuss the general process of fragmentation of the Canadian identity that ultimately resulted in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For the authors, this fragmentation is responsible for the present crisis of legitimacy in Canada and has manifested itself in two ways: the narrowing of the democratic space and the weakening of the national political community. The solution to the current predicament varies, they argue, and hinges most notably on whether it is analysed through a Quebec or Canadian perspective.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



The latter of the two concerns expressed by Bourque and Duchastel is especially important in that it supports our claim that identity concerns vary not only with time but with space. In the present context this is abundantly clear to the extent that Quebec and English Canada have had different and at times competing views concerning the value of official multiculturalism. Most importantly, the general acceptance of multiculturalism in Canada has not been matched in Quebec. There the policy has been heavily criticised for having undermined the claims to nationhood of the Québécois. This has left some feeling that multiculturalism not only violates the spirit of the two founding nations' thesis, but is an attempt to mask the national question that has otherwise dominated federal politics since confederation.<sup>32</sup>

While the impact of the Charter on Canadian citizenship has been well documented, by comparison, studies into the effects of ideological shifts on citizenship are somewhat more recent.<sup>33</sup> Jenson and Phillips have discussed the ideological effects of citizenship change in light of its impact on interest advocacy and citizen access to elites. With a similar emphasis on the role of ideology, Morris and Changfoot sought to uncover how neo-liberalism and transformations of the state have influenced the question of national unity.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Guy Rocher, « Les ambiguïtés d'un Canada bilingue et multiculturel », dans *Le Québec en mutation* (Montreal: Hurtubise HMH, 1973); Julien Harvey, « Une Impasse, le multiculturalisme? » Texte présenté à la Conférence fédérale-provinciale sur le multiculturalisme, Winnipeg, 1985; Huguette Labelle, "Multiculturalism and Government" in James S. Frideres, ed. *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); and Danielle Juteau, "Multicultural Citizenship: The Challenge of Pluralism in Canada," in *Citizenship and Exclusion*, ed. Veit Bader (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1997), 96-112.

<sup>33</sup> This theme appears to be of particular interest to European theorists. See D. Miller, "Bounded Citizenship," in *Debating the Borders of Citizenship*, ed. K. Hutchings. (London: Macmillan, 1998).

<sup>34</sup> Martin J. Morris and Nadine Changfoot, "The Solidarity Deficit: The Rise of Neo-liberalism and the Crisis of National Unity," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, Issue, 14 (Fall 1996).

In the case of Jenson and Phillips, they argue that the institutions and practices that constitute Canadian citizenship were being dismantled through budgetary cuts and general fiscal restraint.<sup>35</sup> Their work is based on the premise that state institutions consciously as well as inadvertently engage in the politics of recognition that contributes to the stability or brings about change in the relationship between citizen and state. At its most general, then, citizenship is about establishing the conditions of inclusion and exclusion. In Canada, they argue, post-war citizenship fashioned after Marshall's passive entitlement based on social rights was being restructured under pressure as state and non-state actors sought to make sense of the world conditions confronting them. Although they share the notion with others that citizenship defines boundaries among individuals, they emphasise the market driven pressures confronting states today are far different from the politics of special interests (seeking differentiated rights) that is reflected in the literature on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As they claim, "more than a decade of politics driven by a neo-conservative (New Right) agenda has resulted in new definitions of marketised and individualised citizenship".<sup>36</sup> For Jenson and Phillips, the shifting relationship between state and society was evident in that the legitimacy of group action and desire for social justice was losing ground to the notion that citizens and interests could compete equally in the marketplace of ideas.

Drawing on Jenson and Phillips, Miriam Smith argues that there is an important relationship between the transformation of group politics in Canada and the transition

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<sup>35</sup> According to Jenson, a citizenship regime includes "the institutional arrangements, rules and understandings that guide and shape state policy; and the range of claims recognised as legitimate". (1997, 631).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

from the Keynesian welfare state era to the era of neo-liberal globalisation.<sup>37</sup> What is important about this work, in light our discussion of citizenship, is the argument that the adoption of a neo-liberal agenda by the federal government in the 1990s has resulted in the diminished capacity for democratic engagement. By assuming less responsibility for the redistribution of social wealth and becoming increasingly concerned with reducing spending, the federal government, she contends, has weakened the relationship between state and citizen. The problem with this neo-liberal conception of citizenship, according to Smith, is that it de-legitimises collective action and group activity. She concludes that the professed need to restructure the state has gone beyond the level of policy change, reshaping the central institutions of the state.

The rise of neo-liberalism has also been chronicled in the works of Bradford, Brodie, and McBride and Shields. The major contribution of these studies is their similar attention to the process of macroeconomic policy change and the dismantling of the post-war economic and social order. For Bradford in *Commissioning Ideas*, there have been few reorientations in national economic policy-making throughout Canadian history. The current course of national policy is viewed by the author as a period of fundamental change resulting from critical economic and social policy choices. More than mere incremental change, Bradford contends that the Liberal government under Jean Chrétien governed with a political agenda remarkably similar to that of their Conservative predecessors. For all the talk of policy innovation in the run up to the 1993 election, the Liberals continued and at times accelerated the pace of deficit reduction and public-sector

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<sup>37</sup> Miriam Smith, *A Civil Society?: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005).

downsizing.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Janine Brodie argues that the course of neo-liberal policy in Canada has had a significant impact on social entitlements and social policies.<sup>39</sup> Yet the author makes the point of accounting for the decline in social programs as more than simply a shift in governing philosophies and practices, but a "challenge" to the very basis of Canadian's understanding of themselves and their fellow citizens. In *Dismantling a Nation*, McBride and Shields contend that the continuity between the Conservative and Liberal governments has made the return to an activist federal state and a renewed social policy focus seems quite remote. They argue that the pursuit of market-driven strategies to the resolution of economic problems has reinforced the disintegrative tendencies emanating from regional, cultural and national tensions, and has undermined the uneasy basis for national unity.<sup>40</sup>

The points of convergence between the literature on citizenship and the rise of neo-liberalism demonstrate a growing concern with the increased defection from support for the public goods of the welfare state. At this point we are left to ask whether the same can be said in the area of ethnocultural policy. Is there, or has there been, a growing concern with ideological based attacks similar to those evidenced in other social policy areas? The short answer is yes. Yet, to claim that neo-liberalism, or any other ideologically based movement, has single-handedly changed the character of ethnocultural policy in Canada, would appear at this stage far too simplistic and

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<sup>38</sup> Bradford, 1-3.

<sup>39</sup> Janine Brodie, "Citizenship and Solidarity: Reflections on the Canadian Way," *Citizenship Studies*, Volume 6, Number 4 / December 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen McBride and John Shields, *Dismantling a Nation: The Transition to Corporate Rule in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Halifax, NS: Fernwood, 1997), 18.

deterministic. Choosing one determining variable as the cause in the absence of other potential explanations is somewhat arbitrary, and at worst potentially misleading. One could just as easily begin with the introduction of multiculturalism in Canada in 1971, or with objections and pressure from Quebec nationalists. The options are numerous and equally (potentially) valid.

While it may be difficult to identify why ethnocultural policy, and multiculturalism in particular, has changed since the early 1970s – a task taken up in subsequent chapters – we need first to establish a context in which policy change becomes possible. This requires recognition that there are a range of options available to liberal democratic states for managing diversity. As noted in the first chapter, policies such as multiculturalism are variable in their content and always subject to reformulation when new ideas and circumstances discredit their practice and reopen debate. Many states have experimented with different strategies reflecting the search for new policy solutions that inevitably are marked by conflicting attitudes or ideas towards change.

### ***2.3 Recognising Citizens: Different Strategies for Managing Diversity***

A number of names have been given to explain the various policies that contemporary states use in responding to ethnocultural diversity; multiculturalism, interculturalism, pluralism, state patronage, the list goes on.<sup>41</sup> Yet despite the wealth of names there are perhaps only three broad strategies that a liberal democratic state might pursue; assimilation, segregation, and integration. The first type may be viewed as a

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<sup>41</sup> One of the obvious omissions from the list given above is state sanctioned violence aimed at eradicating a subordinate or minority group (genocide). As this section and chapter is primarily directed towards the experience of liberal democratic states, I exclude these cases here.

means directed towards the elimination of differences while the latter two are examples of attempts to manage differences. It is worth noting that the management of cultural diversity like other areas of state intervention is part of a dynamic policy process that evolves with time. For this reason it is useful to consider different stages in the evolution of cultural policy in addition to contemporary cases. This section continues with several examples in a cross-national framework. The cases offered are not intended to represent an exhaustive list but to highlight certain features of the strategies considered here.

### *Creating Citizens by Assimilation*

The first of the three strategies, assimilation, has been described as a one-way process of absorption, where the intent is to supplant minority patterns of living and impose the cultural and institutional values of the host (dominant) society. The desired outcome is that the minority group in question loses its distinctiveness and acts like the majority. This orientation towards diversity has been justified on the grounds that the system of beliefs and values held by ethnocultural minorities are irrelevant, immoral, or anachronistic.<sup>42</sup> Like most policy measures designed to produce some degree of outward compliance, the options available here range from more to less coercive. The banning, for instance, of all ethnic associations that seek to celebrate and foster a minority identity would be viewed as fairly heavy handed. In practice such a commitment would be unlikely to bring about a wholesale absorption into the mainstream. Minority customs are therefore generally tolerated as long as they are restricted to the private realm.

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<sup>42</sup> Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliott, *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Nelson, 2002), 61.

Throughout Canadian history cultural assimilation has been the state objective most written into law, yet it has rarely worked as completely as designed. As a consequence a strategy of cultural exclusion has often followed. Canada's early experience with immigration makes clear that conformity was to be achieved through excluding certain groups that, for various reasons, were seen as inassimilable or undesirable. Without the marked presence of these cultures British-Canadianism became the de-facto standard. For the country's major federal parties adherence to this policy was a matter of some necessity. Both the Liberals and Conservatives viewed immigrants of non-British origin as capable of weakening or debasing Canada's national character.<sup>43</sup>

Canada's history of assimilationist policy has been matched elsewhere. In the United States, immigration policy became the means to deny entry and identify the conditions under which new residents could live. A case in point is the 1924 federal immigration law designed to exclude certain groups deemed unacceptable or unable to be readily assimilated.<sup>44</sup> The legislation performed the dual role of excluding "undesirables" while allowing in those predominantly white European immigrants that were considered likely to accept the dominant ideology and culture of the United States. Immigration policy aside, the driving force behind assimilation in the United States has not been the presence of restrictive policies but an underlying American ethos that values rugged individualism and the idea of equality of opportunity. As John Garcia notes: "These values have historically been ingredients of a pervasive American tradition that serves as

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<sup>43</sup> Daiva Stasiulis and Yasmeeen Abu-Laban, "Ethnic Minorities and the Politics of Limited Inclusion in Canada," in *Canadian Politics: An Introduction to the Discipline*, eds. Alain Gagnon & James Bickerton (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 1990), 581.

<sup>44</sup> Robert M. Jiobu, *Ethnicity and Assimilation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 8.

a cultural core that all members of society (citizens or not) internalize, thus ensuring societal stability and gradual change.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, while ethnic differences are recognised the expectation is that group members will internalise American values within the first generation. The importance of this obligation can not be understated. Difference implies incompatibility with the dominant culture and the very idea of diversity suggests a repudiation of the social and political fabric of the nation. Historically, defenders of this position invoked a common refrain by arguing that multiple allegiances served to minimise a common identity that ensured national pride both at home and abroad.<sup>46</sup>

Among European countries, France has received similar attention for its management of immigration and ethnocultural diversity through assimilation.<sup>47</sup> Since the revolution of 1789 the prevailing conceptions of nationality and citizenship have led the French state to pursue policies aimed at cultural uniformity based on the norms prevailing among the majority community. Until recent reforms which ended the automatic acquisition of French nationality by the children of immigrants, membership in the French polity was relatively open to outsiders. This openness was partly motivated by demographic concerns – a product of France's declining birthrate throughout the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> This confidence in the capacity of

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<sup>45</sup> John Garcia, "A Multicultural America: Living in Sea of Diversity," in *Multiculturalism from the Margins*, ed. Dean A. Harris (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 30.

<sup>46</sup> It is therefore quite understandable, as Garcia continues that members of multicultural groups are seen as opponents of mainstream society, patriotism, and American global power. (ibid., 30-31).

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Alec Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London: Routledge, 1995), 162. Within the context of Franco-German relations a low birth rate was a matter of serious concern when it came to raising a standing army.



French society to absorb immigrants is reflected in the number that entered the country from 1950 through the 1960s. Yet the assimilationist tradition, like other aspects of France's revolutionary heritage, is double-sided and steeped in ambiguity. On the surface the citizenship and immigration practices appear universalistic and egalitarian – in keeping with republican principles. In cultural terms, however, they may be viewed as exclusionary and repressive. The French model of assimilation implies that there are standards of behaviour and values that ethnic groups can acquire. Leaving aside the deeper theoretical issue of whether such standards may even be defined, the policy enables the state to avoid challenges to the majority's cultural hegemony.<sup>49</sup> In short, it accepts that particularistic cultures represent a rejection and therefore a danger to a universal dominant culture and its influence on people and communities.<sup>50</sup>

In Canada, only in the latter half of the twentieth century would immigration come to play a more vital role in the electoral strategy of, in particular, the federal Liberal party. Cultural policy therefore, to the extent that it began to suggest pluralism as a possible avenue for managing diversity, was still defined primarily as a pluralism of two – English and French. The focus of state interests was to devise a solution to the problems of a bilingual and bicultural state, not the ethnoculturally diverse nature of the country.

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<sup>49</sup> As Peter S. Li notes generally, the inability to adequately define the behaviours and values needed to join the majority of any culture raises two problems. On the one hand, in the absence of any objective criteria any sign that appears at odds with the majority is taken to be an indication of incomplete assimilation. More importantly, it is impossible in the first place for visible minorities to ever assimilate completely. See Peter S. Li, ed., "Race and Ethnicity," in *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: OUP, 1999), 14.

<sup>50</sup> The riots in the fall of 2005 have only intensified longstanding debates about integration and discrimination in France. For one perspective on the crisis see Immanuel Wallerstein, "The French Riots: Rebellion of the Underclass", Fernand Braudel Center, Binghamton University, Commentary No. 174, Dec. 1, 2005.

By the 1950s, the commitment to Anglo conformity began to diminish with postwar immigration from continental Europe and beyond. The reason was somewhat understandable. In the two decades after 1950, Canada's population almost doubled with new immigrants contributing approximately seventeen percent to the total.<sup>51</sup> Uncertainty about the cultural, socio-economic and political consequences of changes in the population gave the federal government a reason to reevaluate its approach. If only to help immigrants settle and foster a sense of community among a diverse population, successive governments began to modify the existing concept of Canada in line with these new demographic realities.

*Segregation: Separate – and Often Unequal – Citizenships*

Unlike assimilation, where the goal ostensibly is to eliminate differences between groups, segregation has a different aim and inspiration. Rather than absorbing difference, the intent here is to isolate ethnic minorities from the majority culture by the imposition of a normative moral, ethical and legal framework. In recent times the policy has been employed primarily by white populations to maintain their ascendancy over other groups by means of social colour barriers.<sup>52</sup> The separation may be geographical leading to the "ghettoisation" of minority groups, but is usually supported or may be limited to providing services through separate institutions such as schools. From the point of view of ethnic minority groups, this can mean involuntary exclusion from full and equal

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<sup>51</sup> *Censuses of Canada, 1871 to 1996*; Employment and Immigration Canada, *Immigration Statistics, 1994* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997).

<sup>52</sup> Some of the most complicated cases include the segregation of indigenous populations. The reservation system in Canada and the United States is perhaps the ultimate symbol of this attempt.

participation in virtually all areas and institutions of public life. In effect, the creation of a separate or unequal citizenship is the resulting state of affairs.

Linked to the goal of guaranteeing the political and economic power of a dominant group, support for segregation also tends to be based on the assumption that assimilation is either not possible or not desired. In the first instance, the presence of a significantly numerous ethnic minority might make it unlikely to ever fully assimilate into the mainstream culture. It may also be built on the assumption that assimilation can never be totally achieved. The other basis for segregation is based on psychological and biological conceptions of race. Advocates of racial segregation are apt to reject an egalitarian conception of multicultural integration. The historical example of the United States is a case in point. Although the American Constitution had unambiguously provided legal guarantees to all of its citizens, African-Americans were subject to segregationist laws for most of that nation's history.

By the mid 1960s, the civil rights movement, fuelled by the guiding ideas of liberalism, had taken shape. Through various organisations and as individuals, African-Americans began to bring to the fore deeply critical views of racism and segregation by measuring their reality with the yardstick of the nation's highest principles.<sup>53</sup> One of the means by which this resentment was channelled into effective opposition was through the use of the legal system. Efforts more recently to enforce anti-discrimination laws and to promote affirmative action programs for selected groups have met with resistance in the United States. As a result, the federal government has been reluctant to recognise *groups*

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<sup>53</sup> Lucius T. Outlaw, "Racial and Ethnic Complexities in American Life: Implications for African Americans," in *Multiculturalism from the Margins*, ed. Dean A. Harris (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 41.

as special categories eligible for benefits or targeted sanctions. This stems from the idea that freedom of choice allows each person to work out his or her differences with the result that banding together becomes voluntary. While the activism of the civil rights movement heightened the awareness of the disempowerment of minority groups, it was unable to challenge the deep seated belief that cultural pluralism represented anything else but a serious challenge to American individualism.

Another informative example of segregation can be gleaned from South Africa's apartheid past. The main focus of legislation enacted during the late 1940s concerned population registration, the prohibition of mixed marriages, demarcation of group areas, and restructuring of education – nothing less than a state apparatus designed to maintain ethnic privilege. The government of the day, determined to resist any and all movements toward self-determination, insisted that in South Africa self-determination for the minority white population was incompatible with majority African rule. The result was a program of separate development through the establishment of a national homeland, or Bantustan, where Africans were encouraged to settle. Under the guise of "trusteeship", state policy was to confine the African majority to reserves that could not support them, thus ensuring the continuation of cheap labour.<sup>54</sup> Those that chose to remain in many of South Africa's black townships were denied basic political rights and were subject to deportation in the event of unrest or large-scale unemployment.

By creating new citizenship status through the homelands, the white's only policy effectively removed the African population from protection under the law. Before the

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<sup>54</sup> The state legislation that permitted the Apartheid government to do this was the Group Areas Act of 1950; it was only repealed in 1991.

establishments of the homelands, the government's obligation to the black majority, as limited as it was, made them subjects of the state. The redefinition of citizens as foreigners, however, was driven by the idea of marginalising rather than serving the majority black population. Yet the idea of enshrining a constitution that promoted exclusion rather than integration was destined to provoke conflict. By promoting racial privilege apartheid ironically accelerated the downfall of institutionalised racism and brought with it an end to state sanctioned segregation. It therefore failed quite irrevocably, in the final analysis, to stave off dissent and secure the stability of the regime, as unjust and illegitimate as it may have been.

With the benefit of the foregoing discussion a more general critique of segregation can be advanced and separated into two areas; that it is either unworkable or limits personal freedom. In the first instance segregation is unworkable because it does not adequately address the central issue of disunity it is designed to mitigate (a similar indictment is made against multiculturalism, a charge we take-up later in this chapter). Rather than serving as a check to the potential problems that ethnocultural differences create, segregation serves in the long term to exacerbate an already complicated situation. It does so in many ways. By restricting contact with other individuals and institutions segregation curtails the opportunities people have to participate in civil society. Far from aiding social cohesion, where members share common values enabling them to identify common aims and objectives, this effectively frustrates attempts to collectively deal with problems facing the state. Grievances, in part from ethnocultural minorities, can then begin to spiral with resistance to state control conceivably met with punitive measures or violence.

Segregation also falls short in the realm of personal freedom, which has emerged as a central principle influencing contemporary discourse on ethnocultural policy. Along with assimilation, neither strategy has any positive lessons to provide in this area. Both regard it as a primary function of the state to overly prescribe the moral character of society by willingly eliminating or segregating ethnocultural differences. A truly liberal-democratic state, alternatively, should by definition reject such attempts and allow citizens the freedom to develop their own identity and form their own associations.<sup>55</sup> This stems from the liberal view that state action cannot be justified on the basis that one's life is more or less worthy or meaningful than that of another. Furthermore, since many people believe in more than one objective "correct" set of values, every person should enjoy the freedom to arrive at their own conception of the good.<sup>56</sup> By "conception of the good" we can include the hopes one might have to establish mutually beneficial attachments to other individuals – or a sense of belonging to a wider community.

Each member of society is, nonetheless, expected to live up to certain normative standards of behaviour. Individuals are expected to participate in the workings of society and contribute to the common good in exchange for the individual rights and benefits that society endows upon its members. This is the moral connection between the individual and society. Still, while a degree of social order is important for maintaining national unity, there is no requirement that it must come at the expense of cultural pluralism.<sup>57</sup> No

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<sup>55</sup> This point has been made by Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 25-73; and Will Kymlicka in *Multicultural Citizenship*.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 108.

<sup>57</sup> Social order is not the same thing as social cohesion. As Dick Stanley points out, "[social order] can arise in a socially cohesive society... but they also inevitably arise in an authoritarian society or a beleaguered

consensus in the literature or conclusive empirical proof suggests otherwise. In fact, what is needed is not necessarily cultural homogeneity but support for a culture with shared values that creates a sense of familiarity or belonging. Citizens in a liberal democracy, it may be argued, will be more likely to develop an attachment to the nation if they view those who govern them as working within an established and legitimate framework. Conversely, citizens that either do not recognise their leaders or the political system as legitimate are less likely to be open to measures undertaken by the state to promote national identity. Along similar lines several authors suggests that the acceptance of pluralist integration as a state's defining cultural philosophy is a significant advance over previous ideologies and likely the best route for polyethnic and multinational states to follow.<sup>58</sup> Kymlicka, in particular asks, what holds these nations together in the absence of any common history or shared history? The great variance in historical, cultural, and political situations suggests that no one solution is likely to apply in all cases. However, he notes: "What is clear, I think, is that if there is a viable way to promote a sense of solidarity and common purpose in a multinational state, it will involve accommodating, rather than subordinating, national identities. People from different national groups will only share an allegiance to the larger polity if they see it as the context within which their national identity is nurtured, rather than subordinated".<sup>59</sup>

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community such as Nazi Germany, a street gang, or the Michigan Militia. However, they succeed in achieving these characteristics at the price of coercion and exclusion." In "What do we know about Social Cohesion: The Research Perspective of the Federal Government's Social Cohesion Research Network." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 28(1), 2003, 9.

<sup>58</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*. See also John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> This is a central argument of Kymlicka's *Multicultural Citizenship*.

*Integration: Out of Many, One Citizenship*

It is obvious that ethnic conflict on any level is a crisis most states seek to avoid. Doing so within a framework where democratic principles and human rights are respected is more challenging. This is, in part, the legacy of the evolution in thinking about principles of non-discrimination and the wider acceptance of minority and cultural rights in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>60</sup> It is also the result of the growth of liberal values and the spread of democracy. This does not suggest that these rights and principles could not be violated. It is, however, certainly more problematic and less acceptable to violate minority rights in a democratic regime. Liberal-democratic states that violate human or minority rights often feel obliged and occasionally pressured to present an explanation for their behaviour before the international community. In essence, while maintaining national cohesion is still a basic goal for every national government, increasingly it has to coexist with the principles of democracy and human rights.

With these concerns in mind interest in ethnic integration has, especially in the English-speaking world, eclipsed other strategies as a just form of recognition and accommodation of ethnocultural minorities. With its roots in pluralist theory, where the focus is on the retention of personal identities and recognition of citizens, ethnic integration stresses that the harmonious coexistence of different groups is based on the maintenance of their own unique characteristics within a larger community. At an interpersonal level this involves the social processes by which individuals of different

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<sup>60</sup> For example, this acceptance was reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). The latter stipulated that minorities should not be denied religious freedom, the use of their language, and more importantly in the context of our discussion, they should be able to "enjoy their culture".



ethnic groups interact. This interaction results in changes to the ethnic identity of the individuals creating a new transcendent identity of citizens that is more than the sum of its constituent parts. The key features of this integrationist process may be summarised as follows: it is not assimilation – ethnocultural minorities should not be expected to give up their distinctive cultures and identities to integrate into the new society; it is a two way process – ethnocultural groups must adapt to their new society but the new society must also adapt; it involves all of society – while government should lead, integration involves civil society; it requires the active participation of immigrants in articulating their needs and in the development and delivery of services; and finally, it should take place within a rights framework (equality and anti-discrimination legislation and policies).<sup>61</sup>

There are several forms, or more appropriately, degrees of ethnic integration; the Melting Pot and the Mosaic are the most commonly known.<sup>62</sup> The Melting Pot entails a reciprocal relationship, where ethnic integration is founded upon the desire for all groups to contribute in the formation of one culture. Ideally, this one "melting pot" culture becomes the sum or amalgamation of all its contributors, and it is constantly evolving to accommodate its participants. To be clear, the concept is similar to that of the mosaic, though interest in retaining the cultural distinctiveness of groups is certainly not as great. The intent or state strategy is, for that reason, manifestly different. As a consequence it is thought of as a process of merging, in opposition to assimilation and integration.

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<sup>61</sup> This integration inventory is adapted from John O'Neill. "Integration of Refugees in Ireland: Experience with Programme Refugees 1994-2000," in *No welcome here? Asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland and Britain*, eds. Colin Harvey and Margaret Ward, Democratic Dialogue, Report 14, October 2001, 97.

<sup>62</sup> There is some question among academics as to whether the idea of the melting pot is truly an integrationist strategy. Fleras and Elliott consider the "merging" of dominant and minority cultures to represent a synthesis and not a wholesale process of assimilation, 73-76. Robert Jiobu, however, sees the melting point as a variation on the assimilationist theme, 8-10.

Although the melting pot has been attached to many countries it is predominantly used with reference to the United States and the creation of the American nation. As such it is closely linked to the process of Americanisation – the creation of a "distinct people" amalgamated from various ethnocultural groups. This is in stark contrast to the mosaic model which is committed to the recognition of separate cultures and is predicated upon the accommodation and the retention of ethnicity. The emphasis here is squarely upon heterogeneity and diversity, where ethnocultural differences are recognized and celebrated. This model is often referred to as multicultural.

*Multiculturalism: An Ideal Unmatched by Reality?*

Although multiculturalism is understood as both a philosophical school with a distinct theory of one's place in the world and a perspective on (or a way of viewing) human life, in the context portrayed here it is best understood as a political doctrine with a policy or programmatic content. State action in the form of multiculturalism is directed towards more than simply respecting the cultural differences of its citizens. It is designed to cultivate a willingness among members of society to cooperate with each other so as to contribute to their development and well-being. Willingness to cooperate implies a necessary, but freely chosen, participation in public affairs through citizenship. If some groups in it wish to lead autonomous lives to the extent that they infrequently interact with others, the state should respect their choices so long as they do not compromise the solidarity and trust between members of society.<sup>63</sup> It is not a requirement, of a

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<sup>63</sup> This discussion is based loosely on the themes of social cohesion discourse described by Denise Helly in "Social Cohesion and Cultural Plurality," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 28(1) 2003, 19-20.

multicultural strategy, to require that all citizens form partnerships of the same kind or intensity. Indeed, it is precisely because it attaches great importance to cultural diversity that a policy of multiculturalism accommodates those that do not share its dominant cultural ethos.

In Canada, it has become somewhat of a cliché since the mid-1960s to refer to Canadian society as a *cultural mosaic* – set against the American model equated with the metaphor of the *melting pot*. Still one cannot push the idea of the cultural mosaic too far without recognising that it represents an ideal that is often unmatched by reality.

Depending to whom one speaks this has led to the various conclusions; that multiculturalism either fails to accommodate diversity or effectively denies it – this is often referred to as the "multiculturalism as assimilation by another name" criticism.<sup>64</sup>

The inventory of criticisms can continue, but the two central arguments against multiculturalism may be summarised as follows.<sup>65</sup> First, opponents argue that contrary to the stated aims of the policy to foster a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada, multiculturalism fragments people in ways that dissolve the potential for shared action. In a multinational and multicultural state, they argue, multiculturalism erodes the solidarity that is necessary to unify citizens across their many differences. The fear this engenders is two fold, where will the primary commitment or allegiance of ethnic minorities lie in cases of conflict; and what are the potential consequences of groups who regard themselves as separate and seek self-government rights. Both of these concerns surface in

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<sup>64</sup> E. Vasta, "Dialectics of Domination: Racism and Multiculturalism" in *The Teeth Are Smiling: The Persistence of Racism in Multicultural Australia*, eds. E. Vasta and S. Castles (Sydney: Allen, 1996), 46-72.

<sup>65</sup> Other charges against multiculturalism are that it implies relativism, and condones illiberal practices. For a rebuttal of these claims see Anne Phillips, "Why Worry About Multiculturalism?" *Dissent*. Winter, 1997.

the face of claims for the political representation of underrepresented groups, yet like many of the problem addressed under the heading of multiculturalism, they relate to more general issues about the way rights or choices of one group constrain the rights or choices of another.<sup>66</sup> This also highlights, quite clearly, the significance of state action in the area of ethnocultural relations. To summarise, the debate remains essentially tied to the following question: How far should the state go in respecting the values and practices of different groups? Further, should it pursue policies which enable groups to maintain their separateness or should it leave them to fend for themselves, giving only those protections that it extends to all individuals within its jurisdiction?

The suggestion that multiculturalism leads to fragmentation is the most serious criticism and also the most widespread. The sentiment here ranges from fear that the policy will produce an uneasy or weak sense of national unity, to the more alarmist call that is so intrinsically corrosive that it will eventually destroy any society that adopts it.<sup>67</sup> The problem lies both with the nature of multiculturalism and the highly complex nature of citizenship. Because a multicultural strategy intervenes to manage ethnocultural relation it has the potential to structure relations, as noted earlier, that allow individuals the freedom to lead autonomous lives and avoid interaction with others. A multiculturalism policy clearly carries some risks. While not designed to divide and separate people the unintended consequences are a product of extending the traditional

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>67</sup> Many authors have either expressed one or both views, those that have influenced my response include; Alvin J. Schmidt, *The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan Horse in America* (Praeger Publishers, 1997); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992); William J. Bennett, *The De-Valuing of America* (New York: Summit Books, 1992); Reginald W. Bibby. *Mosaic Madness: The Potential and Poverty of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1990).

liberal principle of individual toleration to groups.<sup>68</sup> This does not preclude the ability of citizens to commit themselves to a shared sense of belonging. Although we hear from many of multiculturalism's opponents that this is a contradiction. Nor does it appear that the adoption of multicultural policies will adversely affect redistributive social policies central to the Welfare State.<sup>69</sup> In fact, it has been argued that multiculturalism could help to strengthen social solidarity needed for a vibrant welfare state, by virtue of the message the state sends to citizens by encouraging minorities to trust the larger society.<sup>70</sup>

Attachment to a political community involves a primary commitment to its continuing existence, and implies that one cares enough not to actively or consciously undermine it. Even though various citizens may develop different emotions towards their community, what is necessary to maintain it and can legitimately be expected of them is a basic commitment to its integrity and welfare, what one might call patriotism or political loyalty.<sup>71</sup> Their criticisms need not indicate disloyalty so long as their basic commitment to the community is not in doubt.

Furthermore, far from pleading multiculturalism's neutrality in matters of national unity, supporters contend that the policy promotes the national interest by breaking down

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<sup>68</sup> F. Harris makes the point that it is unfair to criticize multiculturalism when these consequences are unintended. See *Multiculturalism From the Margins* (Westport, C.T.: Bergen and Harvey, 1995).

<sup>69</sup> Keith Banting, Richard Johnston, Will Kymlicka, and Stuart Soroka, "Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State? An Empirical Analysis," in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies*, eds. Will Kymlicka and Keith Banting (Oxford: OUP, 2006).

<sup>70</sup> Banting and Kymlicka contend that in some respects countries that have adopted formal multiculturalism have fared no worse in sustaining redistributive social policies, and may have done better than those opting for a different approach.

<sup>71</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, "What Is Multiculturalism?" in *Multiculturalism: A Symposium on Democracy in Culturally Diverse Societies. Seminar*, #484, December 1999.

social and cultural barriers.<sup>72</sup> Rather than weakening the national character, or presenting a slippery slope whereby all groups may appeal for separate (read special) treatment based on every imaginable difference, it strengthens national identity by binding citizens to a single moral community. In this respect no contradiction exists between the goals of unity and diversity. A policy of pluralist integration, therefore, represents a conscious choice among a range of options in handling ethnocultural diversity. It is not an admission that nothing can be done to manage diversity. In other words, the state has not resigned itself to increasingly heterogeneity in the absence of another method. Quite the opposite, to choose integration is to signal that such a strategy is viewed as the preferred option for maintaining unity while at the same time respecting cultural differences.

The second argument draws its insight from neo-liberal judgments about the role of the state in market driven economies. Although not all who share this view may be considered neo-liberal. Fiscal restraint, one may argue, does not necessarily imply neo-liberalism. Nonetheless, for these critics of multiculturalism their interest is less with the potentially destabilising affects of cultural diversity than with the search for a rationalised world order based on capitalist economic liberty in which particular cultures are of less importance. Proponents of this view hold that cultural and social issues should take a back seat to free-market economics.<sup>73</sup> More to the point, they argue that the state should

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<sup>72</sup> R. Stam, "Multiculturalism and Neo-conservatives" in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, eds. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, Ella Shohat (Minneapolis, MN: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997).

<sup>73</sup> There are at least two strains to modern neo-liberalism represented by conservative views on social and fiscal matters. The first faction, variously known as paleo-conservatives, the New Right, Christian Right, etc., consider cultural and social issues to take precedence over economics. The second faction, known as neo-conservatives, may be motivated by liberal doctrines in all fields except economics. It is this second that has been the most influential in its opposition to multiculturalism. Admittedly, one does not have to be a neo-conservative to agree with the contention that state funded support for diversity is misguided.

not be involved in funding a policy of cultural diversity as a point of principle. Even though they may uphold the freedom of individuals and families to nurture aspects of culture that are important to them, they argue that multiculturalism as a taxpayer-funded program is ill-conceived.<sup>74</sup> Neo-conservatives are for the most part in agreement with the liberal left on such things as ethnic differences, inter-ethnic marriage, and immigration. For them there are no significant intellectual or behavioural differences between ethnic groups. What they decry about multiculturalism is the view that ethnicity deserves state encouragement and assistance. In effect, their support for multiculturalism, if at all, is based on a weak or thin conception. The strong or thick form of multiculturalism on the other hand advocates state protection for, and material support of, cultural communities.

The crucial difference between the two arguments is that the latter believes that in effect all citizens regardless of ethnicity compete on an equal playing field. For some neo-liberals, this is accepted as an article of faith. Critics argue, on the other hand, that this in fact a myth designed to make extreme levels of inequality dictated by untrammelled market forces more acceptable. The belief in an equal playing field is habitually reinforced by anecdotal evidence designed to reinforce the conviction that if only an individual can tap into their inner strength, if only they can unleash their potential, they too will succeed.

The "strength" of multiculturalism ultimately depends on the practical meaning of encouraged and assisted. In Australia, this encouragement and assistance has taken a number of forms and is perhaps the best example to consider in relation to the Canadian

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<sup>74</sup> This view of multiculturalism is a direct reflection of the Conservative Party of Canada thinking on the subject. See *Areas of Agreement: Conservative Party of Canada Partial Policy Statement*, February 4, 2004. <http://www.conservative.ca/english/documents/policy.pdf>, 10.

case. With a similar history of immigration, the presence of aboriginal populations, and membership in the Commonwealth, Australia's experience with managing diversity closely mirrors that of Canada's. Through an openly biased immigration process and the official White Australia Policy which justified it until 1973, the state initially pursued an exclusionary strategy. Mounting pressure from non-white ethnic groups, that by the 1970s constituted approximately 10 per cent of Australia's population of fifteen million, led to a shift in state policy. At the same time as Australia becoming party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1975, the government began to make public pronouncements on the country's changing racial composition. In that year the ministry concerned with immigration became the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, followed by the creation of an Ethnic Affairs Branch in 1977. However, the initiative that had perhaps the most profound effect on the direction of state policy, was the 1978 *Report on the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants*; known widely as the Galbally Report.<sup>75</sup> Within its many recommendations for improving the integration of immigrants was the proposal to create an institute of multicultural affairs to provide advice and information on multiculturalism. With the creation of the institute and the acceptance of cultural diversity more generally, multiculturalism was adopted as the official policy of the main political parties. This appears, initially at least, to have been done for overtly political objectives. The first action by the Liberal government of the day was to attract a substantial portion of the "migrant" vote that had emerged primarily through Asian immigration, and the

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<sup>75</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *Migrant Services and Programs: Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1978).



second was to continue reductions in government spending by shifting the burden of migrant social welfare away from state agencies and onto the ethnic communities themselves.<sup>76</sup>

Over time multicultural rhetoric in Australia has become increasingly linked to the promotion of an inclusive national image.<sup>77</sup> Internationally, the policy serves to demonstrate that Australia has overcome its racist past, but also the emergence of an ideological consensus among such principles as democracy, inclusivity, and national economic policy. The idea that Australia should make it self more acceptable, and accepted by, its major trading partners in Asia came to be viewed as a major priority by many state leaders and academics in Australia.<sup>78</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

A consensus among multinational and ethnocultural states about the sources of cultural unity which affirms rather than denies their national differences has yet to be fully realised. As we have noted, one reason has been that demands for polyethnic and representation rights based on inclusion and membership in multinational societies have traditionally been seen as potentially destabilising and a threat to social unity. This

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<sup>76</sup> Freda Hawkins, "Multiculturalism in Two Countries: The Canadian and Australian Experience," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17: 64-80 (1982), 77.

<sup>77</sup> While multiculturalism was a common feature of national debate under the Labor governments of the 1980s and 1990s, more recent criticism of the policy (including the Prime Minister John Howard) is evident in the reluctance of state officials to use the term multiculturalism. In its place there is frequent mention of shared citizenship or a shared national identity. On this issue see Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts, *Australian Citizenship* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004).

<sup>78</sup> On the subject of Australia's relationship with East Asia see Stephen FitzGerald, *Is Australia an Asian Country?* (Melbourne: Allen & Unwin, 1997).

necessity to maintain order, a common requirement of all societies, may partly explain the different approaches that have been brought to bear by the various states introduced here. This does not mean that the specific national context is irrelevant to the policy process – far from it. For the countries examined in this chapter, their histories, institutions, and cultures have constrained the policies they can adopt and the success new policies can achieve. And although several authors have suggested that a policy of multiculturalism is the ideal towards which most states should be striving, it is clear that movement in this direction if and when it occurs is often incremental.

Our discussion of multiculturalism also exposed the criticisms to be as compelling as the arguments in favour. This stems from the fact that the policy has many dimensions, including an ambiguous and often misunderstood view of state-society relations. Still, the policy marks a significant departure from the past. It entails both an instrumental and symbolic order designed to manage relations among cultural groups. This understanding of multiculturalism suggests that public policy is capable of providing a context for shaping social identities. Yet state institutions are also environments within which individuals and groups seek recognition of their identity and their historical and contemporary contribution to society. From this perspective, the first step towards understanding multiculturalism as public policy was to understand the relationship between citizen and the state. We did so by exploring the literature on citizenship both in Canada and abroad, presenting the increasing saliency of cultural identity as a challenge to traditional understandings of belonging and membership in ethnically diverse societies.

We also revealed that the re-emergence of ethnicity and its relationship to social cohesion in the literature of the past decade is a product of our times. A great deal of this

attention has been directed towards the gathering momentum of neo-liberalism, especially as a challenge to the character of public institutions. Yet, despite the growing literature on the reorientation of federal fiscal policy in response to neo-liberalism, very little is known about the impact of macroeconomic policy on citizenship. As a political doctrine, neo-liberalism supports the logic of *laissez-faire* economics and is fundamentally about shifting decision-making power to the marketplace. Moreover, it upholds as a basic tenet the belief that the entitlements of the liberal welfare state can be scaled back and the design of free market enterprise restored. In Canada, gradual movement towards a neo-liberal policy agenda was first evident in the mid-1970s, but it was only in the mid-1980s with the election of the Conservative Party that a methodical shift in this direction occurred at the national level. Although cutbacks to social spending have often functioned as a response to the cyclical nature of advanced capitalist economies, there is an important distinction to be made between normal policy variation associated with periods of recessionary pressure and neo-liberalism. Accordingly, what is new is not simply “quantitative” cutbacks of financial resources for social services but rather “qualitative” attacks to undermine them.

The political advantage of neo-liberalism generally has been its appeal both to individuals concerned with the reach of the modern state and those who decry the decline of traditional moral values. Understandably, these views have found their greatest resonance among the right. But politics, as the saying goes, makes strange bedfellows, and the current emphasis on restructuring the welfare state places leftist intellectuals alongside right-wing conservatives. This ideological convergence breaks down when the fundamental issues of state intervention and public expenditures are elaborated and

defended. Specifically, those on the right who hold to a neo-liberal agenda believe that if there is to be a welfare state it should be a residual one in which social spending becomes the public expenditure of last resort.

In the end we are mindful that all societies are continuously in the process of being constructed and transformed under the impact of internal and external forces. There are times, however, as Raymond Breton reminds us when the process is accelerated, when change is precipitated, when a variety of circumstances and interventions converge to generate a significant reorientation or reconstruction of the collective identity and the character of public institutions.<sup>79</sup> Given such changes in the policy environment the dynamics of policy choice and the management of ethnocultural diversity in Canada deserve an informed analysis. For more than twenty-five years multiculturalism in Canada has served as an expression of the federal government's commitment to ethnocultural diversity and has frequently been subject to both public and political opposition. Disagreement over the merits and direction of federal policy is an important story, as among other things it reveals the differences in opinion over the terms of recognition in Canadian society. To begin to consider how multiculturalism as an expression of citizenship is being refashioned, we have to recall what the policy represented historically. The next chapter undertakes this task and begins our detailed examination of this transformation with a study of multiculturalism's beginning as state policy in the mid-1960s.

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<sup>79</sup> Raymond Breton, "Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation-Building," in *Politics of Gender, Ethnicity and Language in Canada*, eds. Alan Cairns & Cynthia Williams (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 28.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Building the Mosaic: The 1960s and 1970s**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter begins our detailed investigation of policy paradigms and the management of ethnocultural diversity in Canada. It traces the development of multicultural ideas, analysing how this conceptual framework overtook pre-existing thought and practice about Canadian state-society relations. It uncovers the intellectual origin of the policy process and institutional setting that guided Canada's passage towards an inclusionary model of integration. We argue that in the late 1960s, state-sponsored activity functioned as a catalyst for adjusting the goals of ethnocultural integration and structured a wider and more complex debate over the nature of citizenship in Canada. Government policy came to represent an increasingly broad identity based model of membership, and in so doing reinforced the notion that citizenship was about recognition.

Our focus in this chapter is on the interplay between ideas and institutions in the federal governments of Lester Pearson and Pierre Elliott Trudeau covering the years 1963-1981. Special attention is directed at understanding the power of the state to both legitimise identity claims and provide institutional recognition and opportunities for ethnocultural groups. Following an analytic viewpoint established in earlier chapters this emphasis privileges a role for the state as a key player in structuring the citizen's perceptions of self and community.

Our work follows several related themes and concentrates on two pivotal events. The first theme involves the development of postwar citizenship and the gradual

abatement of the Anglo-centric model of Canadian identity. This analysis moves us towards two events, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism established in 1963 and the unveiling of multiculturalism policy in 1971. The government's response to the recommendations of the commission and the emergence of multiculturalism are then examined in the context of ethnocultural mobilisation and the federal government's political agenda for national unity. All told, the measures considered here serve to establish a major thematic link connecting ethnocultural policy to citizenship around three fundamental issues: how the boundaries of membership within a polity should be defined; how the benefits and responsibilities of membership should be allocated; and how the boundaries of membership should be understood and legitimised.<sup>1</sup>

In focusing on the emergence of multiculturalism and its consolidation in the 1970s, it is evident that the policy was part of a larger rights framework that has evolved over time. Multiculturalism may have had its origins in the 1960s, but developments of the late 1940s and 1950s laid the basis for several important changes that have shaped the Canadian political landscape. These included; the growth of the postwar citizenship regime based on the welfare state, the rise of new forms of identity politics, and the liberalisation of Canadian society following an international trend towards individual rights. Foremost among these transformations was the debate over identity concerns and the connection to membership in the Canadian political community. Our first section sets out to consider the evolving relationship between citizens and the Canadian state in terms of the development of citizenship and immigration policy from the postwar period to the

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<sup>1</sup> This list is adapted and borrowed from Douglas Klusmeyer, "Introduction," in *Citizenship Today: Global Perspectives and Practices*, eds. Thomas Alexander Aleinikoff and Douglas Klusmeyer (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001), 1.

mid-1960s. Before it thought about recognising ethnocultural diversity, the Canadian state had first to clarify its position on citizenship as a matter of law, and reconcile the demands for loyalty with the requirements of immigration to drive the postwar economy.

### ***3.1 Postwar Citizenship and Immigration Policies: Opening the Door to Diversity***

From the mid-1940s to the late 1960s, Canada's political direction setting the boundaries of citizenship underwent a gradual transformation. The first postwar pronouncement on the subject, the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1946, operated primarily to identify and reinforce the notion of a single national community to which Canadians were bound. Although the legislation marked the end of a centuries-old definition of British subjecthood, the needs of the economy and the preservation of the country's national identity meant that, as before the war, English-speaking immigrants from Britain and the United States were the most highly sought after.<sup>2</sup> While the new citizenship legislation signalled Canada's intention to define its own identity, it was not inspired by, nor was it intended, to accommodate Canadian diversity in any shape. But with time, other policy choices dedicated to social rights along with increasing immigration would operate to undermine that narrow definition.

The substance of the Citizenship Act centred on the identification of citizenship with the elaboration of a formal legal status. This narrow citizenship-as-legal-status conception reflected the established understanding of citizenship defined by a set of

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<sup>2</sup> Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared* (Montreal, MQUP, 1989).

limited rights that the individual held against the state.<sup>3</sup> The legislation also exposed lingering concerns about loyalty. The prevailing wisdom of state actors was that any form of pluralist integration, or even the more modest goal of recognition, was antithetical to the larger objective of supporting national unity and purpose.<sup>4</sup> Affirming Canada's status as a sovereign nation coupled with reforming its naturalisation laws were the major preoccupations of the day. In sum, the concerns of identity had yet to fully overtake concerns about loyalty.<sup>5</sup>

This limited ambition, however, was important, albeit for reasons different than those provided above. Despite being narrowly defined Canadian citizenship immediately following the war was linked to a broader social theory that included an idea of citizenship as an institution capable of creating an image of membership.<sup>6</sup> This was made possible because citizenship grants rights.<sup>7</sup> While there was no universal principle that

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<sup>3</sup> Fleras and Elliott contend that the Citizenship Act was part of a trend towards the erosion of the Anglo conformity model in the aftermath of the Second World War. In our view, although it is correct to suggest generally that the postwar period marked a transition towards a more "liberal" model of accommodation and toleration; the act should not be held out as an example of Anglo dominance on the wane. See *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Nelson, 2002), 61.

<sup>4</sup> In keeping with this view immigration policy in the immediate postwar years was concerned primarily with the ability of newcomers to be readily assimilated. As a consequence, language, customs, and general social mores were the factors most often cited as absorptive criteria – not economic requirements. On this issues see Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared*, 38.

<sup>5</sup> On this topic and a discussion of the juridical nature of Canadian citizenship see Janine Brodie, "Three Stories of Canadian Citizenship," in *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, eds. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn & Robert Menzies (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> According to Ronald Beiner, the utility of citizenship is that it offers a sense of belonging that other discourses fail to provide. See *Liberalism, Nationalism, Citizenship: Essays on the Problem of Political Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> In either understanding of citizenship – as the elaboration of a formal legal status, or by virtue of a shared membership in a political community – joint rights and obligations are the outcome. On the implications of a state-centred national citizenship see W. R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Randall Hansen *Citizenship and Immigration in Post-War Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation* (New York: OUP, 2000).



determined what the rights and duties would be, at a minimum, to associate rights with citizenship was to make a proposal about how membership in Canada could be conceived. This had the affect of advancing the meaning of rights by broadening the scope of its application. To speak of rights in the context of citizenship was to entertain the possibility that the state would intervene to enrich the quality of people's lives. Citizenship, in other words, was not simply a matter of formal status.

Between the 1930s and 1970s, state intervention in Canada demonstrated the evolutionary development of citizenship towards a welfare-rights version that promoted a model of more inclusive membership. The growth of this postwar "citizenship regime" had evolved to a point where the state came to recognise both the individual and collective rights of citizens.<sup>8</sup> This regime also reinforced the changing relations between legally defined status to other dimensions of citizenship, most notably social inequality. The inspiration for this regime can be found in the domestic political consensus taking shape in postwar democracies. Paramount among these ideas was the changing attitudes of politicians and the public towards social welfare.

In the interwar years, a wide variety of charitable and philanthropic organisations existed, yet there was only modest backing for a comprehensive system of welfare support. Nonetheless, the desire for social justice was challenging laissez-faire notions of state involvement in social policy. Governments, it was believed, could enforce limits on the market and individuals should not be forced to engage in market activities that denied their dignity. Given the inequalities of the market place the national community saw itself

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<sup>8</sup> Jenson and Phillips, "Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practice in Canada," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*. 14: 111-35 (Fall 1996).

as responsible for the basic well-being of all its citizens. Successive governments in Canada responded by introducing a number of measures, including; a national unemployment insurance program (1941); the creation of a universal family allowance (1945); a federal universal old age pension scheme (1951); the establishment of Canada's universal Medicare program (mid-1960s); and the development of the Canada Assistance Plan (1966) to provide a means of cost-sharing with the provinces for social services.<sup>9</sup>

These programs were intended to provide a social safety net on which the fortunate could build, and the less fortunate could depend. The impact of these provisions and entitlements, however, was far greater. For the first time the state was actively involved in the extension of rights and the advancement of equality on a national basis. Underlying access to these programs was the notion of collective responsibility with the state as prime architect. This meant extending pan-Canadian social and economic rights of citizenship, several of which established a direct link between individuals and the federal government.<sup>10</sup>

### *Changing the Face of Canada: Immigration Policy*

Like the citizenship legislation it was designed to dovetail with, immigration sought to foster population growth by encouraging resettlement among those selected to become part of the dominant English-speaking, or to a much lesser extent, French-

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<sup>9</sup> For a more complete list of programs and objectives, see Keith Banting, *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Montreal: MQUP, 1987); and Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Jenson and Phillips, 116.

speaking culture.<sup>11</sup> As Prime Minister Mackenzie King noted, “the essential thing is that immigrants be selected with care, and that their numbers be adjusted to the absorptive capacity of the country.”<sup>12</sup> The new policy revisions were still far from colour blind. The federal government actively recruited “preferred” immigrants based on a nationality preference – those of British, American, and European ethnic backgrounds.<sup>13</sup> Most immigrants granted access were European, with large numbers coming from Southern Europe. Eastern Europeans, in contrast, continued to share the objectionable distinction along with Asians of being viewed as simply too far removed from Canadian values to integrate successfully within Canada's host society.

Canada's commitment to the international community in the wake of the Second World War briefly forestalled the country's insistence on taking only “acceptable” candidates. Beginning in 1947, Canada along with many of its war time allies agreed on the permanent resettlement of Europeans uprooted by the war. Two categories were of immediate concern. The first was composed of displaced persons and the second refugees, including many who were survivors of the Holocaust.<sup>14</sup> These actions marked a departure from the highly restrictive guidelines during the war that had denied entry to most, including Europe's persecuted.

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<sup>11</sup> A historical survey of Canadian immigration policy can be found in Valerie Knowles' *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1997* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Canada, House of Commons. *Debates*, 20th Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, May 1, 1947, 2644-2646.

<sup>13</sup> The direction of immigration policy after the war was modified without a new Immigration Act. The Immigration Act of 1952 marked the first formal legislative change since 1910.

<sup>14</sup> Approximately 250,000 were admitted between 1947 and 1962, making Canada for several years host to more displaced persons than all overseas countries combined. See Valerie Knowles, *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1997), ch.5.

The 1950s offered a modest liberalisation in immigration policy, evidenced in part by the expanding class of admissible immigrants. Still, immigration strategy deviated little from postwar custom – the preference for immigrants from the Anglo-American democracies remained in place. This meant a continuation of immigration through selective discrimination. The building of Canada's workforce continued unabated, with demographic estimates predicting shortfalls in key areas of the economy. Beyond the needs of a growing economy, Canada was also still seen by many as an essentially unfilled country that needed more people to realize its full potential.<sup>15</sup> Immigration policy in this context was therefore to some degree seen as a limited triumph of economics over discrimination, in the sense that economic demands could only be met by turning to countries formerly excluded from selection.<sup>16</sup> In total, between 1946 and 1961 roughly two million immigrants came to Canada – the second largest influx since the turn of the twentieth century that combined with the natural growth of the population to produce the largest increase in Canadian history.<sup>17</sup>

Significant change, in the form of a less discriminatory immigration policy, however, would have to wait until the 1960s.<sup>18</sup> First in 1962, and later in 1967, immigration policy was overhauled to remove the preference for Europeans and institute

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<sup>15</sup> Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern* (Montreal: MQUP, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> C.E.A. Passaris, "The Economic Determinants of Canada's Multicultural Integration," *International Migration*. 1984, 22(2), 91.

<sup>17</sup> Canada, Department of Manpower and Immigration. *A Report of the Canadian Immigration and Population Study* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974).

<sup>18</sup> The story of shifting immigration patterns in this period is told in Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

a less biased system for the selection of independent immigrants through a point system. This second innovation was the product of the 1966 federal government's *White Paper on Immigration*. Under the point system immigration officers assigned points up to a fixed maximum in each of several categories, including education, technical and professional training, age, labour market experience, and knowledge of one or more of the country's official languages. This policy stressed that the privilege of immigration should be bestowed upon those immigrants who could compete in the economic marketplace. In so doing, it reinforced the notion developed by the authors of the White Paper that the country's admission criteria should not be based on one's nationality or ethnicity.<sup>19</sup>

Accounting for these and other modifications to Canada's immigration policy of the 1960s leads us to identify two factors. The first, and more obvious of the two, pushes us towards an understanding of these changes as a tangible response to structural adjustments in the postwar economy. Changes to policy, in this vein, were evidently influenced by a shortage of skilled workers and a conviction that increasing immigration could play an important part in assisting Canada's expanding labour market.

The second, and we would suggest equally important trend, is the elaboration of an equity and social justice discourse through which immigration policy was increasingly filtered. A central element in the construction of this "rights frame" included an awareness of identity concerns and the claims for recognition that arise within modern society.

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<sup>19</sup> Canada, Citizenship and Immigration. *White Paper on Immigration* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 1966).

These ideas surfaced both internationally and domestically.<sup>20</sup> On the international scene Canada was engaged along with other Western states in the movement to promote greater freedom and democracy throughout the world through institutions such as the United Nations. Anti-imperialist and anticolonial struggles joined with the powerful symbolism of the American civil rights movement to discredit tyranny and call into question European ethnocentrism.<sup>21</sup> Domestically, it became difficult for the federal government to continue the justification of immigrant selection on the basis of ethnic prejudice. The passage of the Bill of Rights in 1960 gave notice that discrimination by reason of race, colour, national origin, was to be expressly rejected. Moreover, past practices now seemed untenable in an era when provincial governments were legislating against discrimination on the basis of race in such areas as employment and education.<sup>22</sup>

The sociopolitical context of this era has been summarised by Raymond Breton:

[T]he period can be described as a configuration of changing circumstances, events and state activities, as well as a set of unfolding processes. These processes were an integral part of the evolving situation. They were, so to speak, its underlying dynamics – a dynamic... consisting of the interaction between various circumstances, groups pursuing their symbolic interests, and the state pursuing its institutional interests.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> As a by-product, in part, of the civil rights movement the United States passed the Immigration and Naturalization Services Act of 1965, thereby eliminating various nationality criteria. See Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2006). Similarly, the discriminatory "White Australia policy" was dismantled in the mid-1960s as a response to attitudinal changes, and the growing recognition of Australia's responsibilities as a member of the international community. On this issue see James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). In Canada, eliminating the last vestige of racial discrimination in immigration policy and the introduction of the point system by 1967 were a consequence of this new era. See Kelley and Trebilcock, and Gerald Tulchinsky, *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives*, ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Morton Weinfeld and Lori A. Wilkinson, "Immigration, Diversity, and Minority Communities," in *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Peter S. Li (Don Mills: OUP, 1999), 60.

<sup>22</sup> Knowles, *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977*, ch.6.

<sup>23</sup> Raymond Breton, "Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation Building," 39.

Our contention here is not that any trend (including, but not limited to those described above) was necessarily more responsible for changes in the way the federal government viewed immigration in the 1960s. Rather, our point is to return to a key issue raised earlier in this thesis about the power of state institutions to reflect ideas and convey messages about membership and inclusion in society. Changes to citizenship and immigration policy in the 1960s provided a context within which citizens of an increasingly diverse society could recognise themselves. For instance, when the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Ellen Fairclough declared in 1962 that immigrant families should be entitled to the same social benefits as other residents of Canada, she signalled to Canadians, and especially to ethnocultural minorities, that the citizenship regime being constructed was indeed theirs.<sup>24</sup> Recognising themselves in the values and meanings of these evolving institutions provided reassurance that there was a growing congruence between their own identities and public life. In short, the period demonstrated that public policy was capable of assuring those whose values it reflected that Canada was a society capable of meaningful recognition.

Although state action in the first two decades of the postwar period was fuelled in part by social justice concerns as well as the international attention to displaced persons and human rights, the challenge of fostering a more inclusive society extended beyond social and economic rights. If the Canadian state remained tightly wedded to the idea of a single-national identity, changing demographic realities along with the demands emanating from nationalist circles in Quebec would encourage change.

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<sup>24</sup> Canada, House of Commons. *Debates*, 24<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 5<sup>th</sup> Session, March 29, 1962, 2279.

### ***3.2 The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism***

The agenda-setting process responsible for the birth of multiculturalism was inextricably linked to biculturalism and socially constructed in the realm of public and private discourse. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is then the inevitable starting point for any discussion of multiculturalism policy in Canada. Not only did the commission's recommendations drive the development of multiculturalism, but its analysis was the first serious attempt to come to grips with issues of language, ethnicity, and membership in Canadian society.

The commission emerged primarily out of concerns about national unity. In the 1960s, the growing nationalist movement in Quebec presented the Canadian state with one of its most significant challenges. The period of sociopolitical awakening had cast Quebec nationalism, in the eyes of most English-speaking Canadians, as a threat to the territorial integrity of the federation. The importance of this perceived threat stemmed not only from the objectives of the independence movement but also from its rapid growth and sense of urgency. Seen in light of the changes that were transforming Quebec society in the 1960s, the "Quiet Revolution" served notice of a French-speaking majority conscious of its vulnerability and concerned with its collective survival. Among the obvious consequences of this era, English-speaking Canadians became increasingly conscious of the will of the French-speaking majority in Quebec that had adopted an interventionist posture through their provincial government and voiced grievances towards the federal government.

Leading these grievances was the prevailing view that institutions both within Quebec and at the federal level failed to incorporate a Francophone identity. For instance,



English-speaking dominance of the economy became an obvious target for Quebec's Quiet Revolution.<sup>25</sup> While numerically a minority, Quebec Anglophones enjoyed a disproportionate measure of influence within Quebec society. Even by the 1960s, this enabled English-speaking Quebecers to act as if they were the majority rather than the decreasing proportion of the population they truly represented. Substantial gains made by French speakers in the work force were therefore seen as a move to change the balance of economic and political power in Quebec. Federally, the institutions of the Canadian state prior to the 1960s reflected the Anglo-centric model of identity that undermined the "French Fact". Most notably English was the principal language in the public service.<sup>26</sup> French-speaking candidates seeking employment in the federal public service had to be both bilingual and prepared to work almost exclusively in their second language. Not unexpectedly, they were underrepresented in the bureaucracy, especially at higher levels. Deeply concerned with the loyalty of its citizens and the state of Canadian unity, these challenges became one of the central themes of the 1960s.

To defuse the looming crisis the federal government responded in part through the appointment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The commission was designed in 1963 to examine existing bilingualism and biculturalism and to recommend ways of ensuring wider recognition of the basic cultural dualism of Canada. The mandate of the commission was:

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<sup>25</sup> The economic power of the English-speaking minority in Quebec during and before the Quiet Revolution is discussed in Paolo Prosperi, *The Dynamics of Ethno-Linguistic Mobilisation In Canada: A Case Study of Alliance Quebec* (M.A. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> A discussion of this history can be found in Milton J. Esman, "The Politics of Official Bilingualism In Canada," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), 233-253.

[T]o inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.<sup>27</sup>

Although instructed to investigate the nature of French-English relations, there was no definitive sense at the outset of how the work would proceed. Given the appointment of André Laurendeau as co-chair and de facto leader of the ten member commission, however, there should have been little doubt as to the overall direction. Until his unexpected death in 1968, and replacement on the commission by Jean-Louis Gagnon, Laurendeau was driven by his belief in dualism as a guiding principle of Canadian life.<sup>28</sup> He was to make this clear in early pronouncements when he sidestepped questions about the government's directive to investigate the contribution of "Other" ethnic groups, and in turn focused almost single-mindedly on the issue of biculturalism. According to Kenneth McRoberts, for Laurendeau, who was in many respects responsible for advancing the idea of a commission, this was understandable. Dualism, he notes, "was fundamental to his own vision of Canada; indeed, it was only on this basis that he would have been prepared to co-chair the commission."<sup>29</sup> Laurendeau's views on biculturalism were certainly known to Prime Minister Lester Pearson. In creating the commission Pearson shared the conviction with others that the cause of national unity, threatened as he saw it from American cultural influence and Quebec nationalism, could

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<sup>27</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume 1, General Introduction: The Official Language (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1967), appendix 1, 173-174.

<sup>28</sup> See Guy Laforest's discussion of Laurendeau in *Trudeau et la fin du rêve canadien* (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> Ken McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (Toronto, OUP, 1997), 118.

be advanced by promoting greater reconciliation between the two solitudes.<sup>30</sup> Displaying his interest and optimism for the project, he maintained:

[That] the rapprochement between the two groups requires among other things that English Canada become more aware of the aspirations of French Canada and that French Canada not be too impatient if it finds that this awareness is slow in expressing itself. Some genuine progress is being made from one generation to the next. For example, the Bourassa doctrine on Canadian nationalism, which was considered heresy one generation ago, is now accepted by almost all of English Canada. After all, if we are not evolving at quite the same pace, we are at least changing in the same direction. In my opinion, that is what is essential.<sup>31</sup>

For Laurendeau, meagre but sympathetic attention to the claims of non-Charter groups (non-British and non-French) was acceptable because biculturalism reflected the reality of Canadian society and its growing acceptance offered the best hope of continued positive relations between the English and French. Unlike other ethnocultural groups, Laurendeau believed that the two founding communities were more than an assemblage of individuals with a common mother tongue. They constituted societies equipped with a full set of institutions that allowed them to function within a complete social framework. And through the commission he made it clear that non-British and non-French groups would ultimately have to choose between the English or French-speaking communities, in order that their participation in Canadian life be considered "real".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Pearson's memoirs are revealing on the subject. He believed national unity to be the most important issue facing the country and agreed with the commission's "realistic analysis of Canadian disintegration". See *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, Volume 3, 1957-1968, eds. John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 239-242.

<sup>31</sup> Lester B Pearson, *Text of Speech delivered by the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada, at the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian French Language Weekly Newspaper's Association, August 17, 1963* (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, 1963), 7. The Bourassa doctrine, to which Pearson refers, is the view expounded by Henri Bourassa the founder of the Montreal daily, *Le Devoir*. In it Bourassa attacks the imperial connection and advocates an independent and bicultural Canada.

<sup>32</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume 1, XXV. It is generally accepted that Laurendeau was the main if not the sole author of the "blue pages" (that preceded the main body of the report) where these comments were made. See McRoberts, 118.

In their stance on bilingualism and biculturalism Laurendeau and his fellow commissioners made a conscious attempt to downplay the importance of ethnicity. This was to have weighty implications in so much as it allowed the commission to see French and British as the primary basis (i.e. the true limits) for cultural pluralism at the heart of Canadian society. Specifically, they conceded that the term "ethnic group" mentioned within their terms of reference implied a sense of identity but argued that their task was focused on "linguistic and cultural matters, or linguistic and cultural aspects of political and socio-economic matters."<sup>33</sup> In this way an "ethnic group" was defined primarily as a social identity, not in terms of one's cultural origin. However, the commission, according to Jean Burnet, "then inconsistently chose to substitute the term cultural group for ethnic group, reserving the term ethnic for origin category."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, by subsequently embracing a linguistic and not an ethnic basis for membership they were constructing a paradigm that restrained ethnicity as a possible basis for inclusion in Canadian society.

In the final analysis, while Laurendeau's belief in biculturalism was central to the commission and its guiding preoccupation, it was certain to run into resistance.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> This reference comes from the abridged report. See Hugh R. Innis, *Bilingualism and Biculturalism: An abridged version of the Royal Commission Report* (Ottawa: McClelland and Stewart Limited in co-operation with The Secretary of State Department and Information Canada, 1973), 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Jean Burnet, "Ethnic Relations and Ethnic Policies in Canadian Society," Paper Presented to the Ninth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chicago, August, 1973, 14, quoted in John Berry, Rudolf Kalin and Donald Taylor, *Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1977), 5.

<sup>35</sup> Laurendeau's disinterest in the contribution of other ethnic groups has in recent years been eclipsed by wider attention to his personal comments on bilingualism. In the fall of 1965, well into the commission's work, he wrote privately that bilingualism would never work and suggested instead that two "distinct societies," each with separate rights were needed to keep Canada together. His devotion to biculturalism, and the notion of equality between citizens as members of one of two cultures, however, appears to have remained intact. See *The Diary of André Laurendeau: Written During the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1964-1967*; trans. Patricia Smart and Dorothy Howard (Toronto: Lorimer, 1991).

Opposition emerged from various camps, including those who disagreed with the promotion of bilingualism, or resented the recognition of the French language on an equivalent basis with English. Included in the former category was commissioner Rudnyckyj, who would ultimately produce a dissenting opinion in the commission's final report on the issue of official languages.<sup>36</sup> Unable to recommend that only two languages be officially recognised, he made the case for the recognition of languages other than English or French on a regional basis, where sufficient numbers warranted.

### ***3.3 Ethnocultural Mobilisation to the Royal Commission***

The most coherent opposition to the royal commission came from groups and individuals who took issue with the commission's terms of reference. In their view, the commission was preoccupied with the idea of an "equal partnership" between the two founding peoples to the exclusion of other groups within Canadian society. As Leo Driedger notes, "to many people, these expressions of dualism seemed a continuation of the age-old battle of the European British and French nation-states, which could think in terms only of unitary sovereignties and who had faced each other across the Ottawa river for centuries."<sup>37</sup>

This opposition was expressed in two ways; through briefs submitted to the commission, and public hearings held throughout the country in 1964. In both instances, although admittedly to a lesser degree in the public hearings, the issue rested on the apparent indifference shown by the commission towards the ongoing contribution of

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<sup>36</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume 1, 155-169.

<sup>37</sup> Leo Driedger, *Race and Ethnicity: Finding Identities and Inequalities* (Don Mills: OUP, 2003), 100.

ethnocultural minorities to Canadian society. They were not, to be clear, objecting to assessments of the seriousness of the national unity crisis; they were opposed to their exclusion from proposed solutions. They were acutely aware, as no doubt many other Canadians were, that the commission's work had been devoted to bridging the gap between Canada's two main groups. This analysis led naturally to considerations of what Canadian society had become, and possibly could be. Ethnocultural minorities, in short, wanted to be recognised as contributing rather than detracting from Canadian unity.<sup>38</sup>

The unintended consequence of the commission hearings, therefore, was to provide the locale where these groups were able to articulate their place in Canadian society and make their concerns known. In effect, by limiting itself to the "contribution" of other ethnic groups, and similarly by referring to the presence of "two founding races", the commission had awakened a quiescent movement.<sup>39</sup> Spokespeople for the non-Charter groups (estimated to be equal to roughly one third of the population) appropriated the concept of a "Third Force" to both announce their difference, and signal their willingness to mediate relations between the two major communities.<sup>40</sup> It was the Ukrainian groups that had the greatest influence and were most vocal. They requested to know why the federal government assigned less importance to their culture, for instance, than to that of the much smaller French-speaking minorities in the Western provinces.

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<sup>38</sup> See, for example, "Content Report on Vancouver Regional Meeting," *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*. Prepared by Peter Findlay, April 27, 1964, 3.

<sup>39</sup> These identities were not created by the B&B Commission; they were always carried by groups and individuals. As Jenson has pointed out, claims for recognition arise within civil society and are the product of collective action. See "Citizenship and Equity: Variations across Space and Time," in Janet Heibert, ed. *Political Ethics: A Canadian Perspective* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991).

<sup>40</sup> Jean R. Burnet with Harold Palmer, *'Coming Canadians': An Introduction to the History of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 224.

Within Parliament the Ukrainians would find at least one ally, in the person of Paul Yuzyk. Appointed to the Senate in February 1963 by then Prime Minister Diefenbaker (who himself expressed concern with the limits of the commission's term of reference), Yuzyk spoke in defence of an expanded notion of cultural recognition. In the same way as Pearson was undoubtedly aware of Laurendeau's political convictions, Diefenbaker's appointment of Yuzyk signalled identification and acceptance of the Saskatchewan native's commitment to broadening the representation of Canada's ethnic groups. In his maiden speech as a senator entitled "Canada: A Multicultural Nation," the former history professor spoke about bilingualism and reminded the B&B Commission that Canada "was more a mosaic of people than an envelope composed of two halves."<sup>41</sup> Credited with being the first parliamentary official to champion multiculturalism, the senator argued, "in keeping with the ideals of democracy and the spirit of Confederation. Canada should accept and guarantee the principle of the partnership of all peoples who have contributed to her development and progress."<sup>42</sup>

While Yuzyk and the ethnocultural groups who appeared before the royal commission may have spoken in similar terms of the need to reconsider the terms of partnership, the commissioners believed the dissent expressed in the public hearings stemmed from fear of exclusion. In their preliminary report released in the spring of 1965, the commissioners recount that they were frequently called upon to reiterate their commitment to explore the contribution of other ethnic groups in the face of pressure

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher Gully, "The Father of Canadian Multiculturalism," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, June 16, 1996, No. 24, Vol. LXIV.

<sup>42</sup> Canada, Senate. *Debates*, 26<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, March 3, 1964, 50-63.

from ethnocultural minorities. These groups, they note, “repeatedly advanced one specific point: ‘If two groups are privileged,’ they pointed out, ‘that makes all the others, and that means us, second-class citizens.’ Some were even afraid that they might be witnessing a manoeuvre intended to take away rights they already had.”<sup>43</sup> Both types of comments were especially revealing, for they exposed the commission’s role as part of an ongoing process that would define the identity of Canadian society and the vision of Canadian citizenship

When ethnocultural minority groups spoke through the commission they were engaging in a culturally and politically symbolic process of defining who they were. They were equally passing judgment on the way the commission had singled out and elevated a model of Canadian identity that marginalised their contributions. They were not, however, questioning the ability of the commission to provide status and recognition. On the contrary, their concerns demonstrated an understanding of the commission both as a powerful institution and as a process capable of determining status. This was possible, in the first instance, because royal commissions serve as a representation of state power and expression of its collective will and identity.<sup>44</sup> In the same way as national celebrations become symbols of our collective identity, commissions provide statements about the priorities of the nation and desirable forms of development. As Breton notes, “the symbols of the collective identity can be objects (e.g. flags, monuments), rituals, public ceremonies, constitutions, public policies, institutional activities, and the pronouncements

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<sup>43</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Preliminary Report (Ottawa: Queens Printer, February 1, 1965), 28.

<sup>44</sup> See Neil Bradford, *Commissioning Ideas: Canadian National Policy Innovation in Comparative Perspective* (Toronto: OUP, 1998).



of authorities... They are important because what they express relates to the members' own identity"<sup>45</sup> As an institutional practice, commissions embody a series of claims and grant status to a set of political actors, some, as in this case, that have been denied or marginalized. In this way the commission process can be viewed as having played a central role both as an idea factory and an institutional locale for adjusting the boundaries of membership at an important juncture in Canadian society.

### ***3.4 Beyond Mobilisation: New Ideas and Public Prescriptions***

The government's direct response to the commission's primary recommendations was to adopt the Official Languages Act in 1969. Although the legislation was directed towards both main language groups, it was generally accepted that the principal aim was to improve the status of the French language and provide more equitable treatment to the country's French-speaking minority.<sup>46</sup> While this did not deny the existence of ethnocultural identities, it emphasised official language communities as a symbolic basis for the development of Canadian identity.

This linguistic basis for membership did not appeal to all ethnocultural communities, many of whom were looking for a broader understanding of identity linked to their ethnicity. Indeed, faced with pressure to validate the role of ethnocultural minority groups a compromise was ultimately struck when the commission produced a fourth – and late – volume in its study entitled, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other*

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<sup>45</sup> Raymond Breton, "Intergroup Competition in the Symbolic Construction of Canadian Society," in *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, 296.

<sup>46</sup> Stacy Churchill, *Official Languages in Canada: Changing the Language Landscape* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 1999), 15.

*Ethnic Groups*. Published in 1970, Book IV as it became known, produced sixteen recommendations, including fair employment practices and anti-discrimination measures, extending the legal rights of citizenship to all immigrants, the expansion of non-official language teaching at various educational levels, the removal of restrictions on private and public broadcasting in the non-official languages, and that the arts and letters of ethnic groups other than the British and French be supported by all levels of government.<sup>47</sup>

In one of its last recommendations the commission did acknowledge the link between culture and ethnicity and recommended financial assistance be extended to ethnocultural minority groups to support cultural initiatives.<sup>48</sup> This concession, however, left the commissioners far short of embracing a policy of multiculturalism. The Commission members acknowledged that although they had taken a specific position in support of biculturalism, there were “many ways to preserve and reinforce the other cultures in Canada”.<sup>49</sup> In other words, cultural diversity was a sociological fact that deserved recognition but not to the same degree, and certainly not at the expense, of the two founding cultures.

This position revealed the commission's understanding of culture as applied to ethnocultural minority groups, along with some of the problems inherent in discussions of culture. In the first instance the recommendations advanced by the commission in Book IV indicate that they were prepared to treat culture as it appears in its common and

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<sup>47</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume IV (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1970), 228-230. A complete list of the recommendations and the federal government's official reaction to them in October 1971 are reproduced in the report's Appendix 1.

<sup>48</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume IV, 230.

<sup>49</sup> Canada, Multiculturalism Canada. *Multiculturalism and the Government of Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984), 8.

otherwise straightforward usage; as an aspect of leisure, recreation and entertainment based upon such institutions as "cultural centres" and cultural festivals.<sup>50</sup> In so doing it may appear that they were choosing a representation of ethnocultural minority culture least likely to be objectionable to most Canadians. What they were implicitly rejecting, however, was a deeper understanding of culture and this was for calculated political reasons. They rejected a broad version of culture synonymous with an identity based on a system of beliefs, social practices, common history and language.<sup>51</sup> They opted for a "thin" as opposed to a "thick" version of culture characteristics because of the implication that the latter might detract from the fundamental premise of duality. Ultimately, if this characterisation of the commission's recommendations is to be believed, it appears that they were motivated not simply by their defence of biculturalism, but out of concern that a broader understanding of culture might invite the politicisation of all group identities based on culture. Not only were they unprepared to concede that all cultures were deserving of equal recognition, they signalled in their recommendations that all cultures need not be publicly affirmed in the same way.

This said, Book IV was still an important concession. Yet it is occasionally dismissed in the literature as being only marginally influential in establishing a path for official multiculturalism. This is a serious charge which we will consider in the following sections. For the moment, it is the view taken here that the release of Book IV was consequential precisely because of the collective action it provoked and the potential it

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<sup>50</sup> The definition of "thin" culture represented here is taken from John Berry, Rudolf Kalin and Donald Taylor, 4-5.

represented. True, the commission never strayed in its final recommendations from its support for biculturalism.<sup>52</sup> However, Book IV, released under pressure five years after the first volume on official languages was completed effectively enlarged the debate on citizenship by suggesting a broader pluralism beyond the limits officially sanctioned by the commission.<sup>53</sup> And while multiculturalism may not have emerged directly from the recommendations they were suggestive of the need to more closely consider the distinction between linguistic duality and cultural pluralism, as well as their possible relationship.

### ***3.5 Making Claims: The Ideas and Identity of a Third Force***

The achievement of Book IV's existence was an example of collective action on the part of ethnocultural minority groups. For them, opposition to biculturalism quickly became an identity-defining issue. And the political environment, represented by the commission, served as a conditioning factor – or intervening variable – for mobilisation. This part of the story, therefore, is of a movement sensitive to its environment, capable of exploiting its chances. Seeing the political opportunities presented by the commission, however, is only part of the story; a sense of empowerment was created through

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<sup>51</sup> This is a characterization of culture based on John Horton's discussion in "Liberalism and Multiculturalism: Once more unto the breach," in *Multiculturalism, Identity and Rights*, eds. Bruce Haddock and Peter Sutch (London: Routledge, 2003), 32.

<sup>52</sup> In fact the commission issued what can be considered a broad disclaimer in the opening pages of Volume IV where they restate and reaffirm their commitment to biculturalism. See *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume IV, 3.

<sup>53</sup> This is also the conclusion reached by Jean Burnet. See "Myths and Multiculturalism," *Canadian Journal of Education*, 4:43-58, 1999.

mobilisation around a collective identity that would continue into the next decades.<sup>54</sup>

Their collective action was a signal of the growth in self-consciousness among Canadians who claimed neither French nor British background. As the Pepin-Robarts Task Force on National Unity was to conclude only a few years later: "It was indeed the very definition of the country in dualistic terms, both in the mandate and outlook of the B&B Commission, which helped to stimulate the assertiveness of these ethnic groups, an assertiveness which was consecrated in 1971 by the Trudeau government's policy of multiculturalism."<sup>55</sup> Therefore, partly as a result of the government's policy and the response to it in the ethnic communities, the terms of membership in the Canadian polity were being redefined, and citizenship rights and recognition were changing.

The activism and successful mobilisation of ethnocultural groups, which included an understanding of a collective identity (named the "Third-Force") and the elaboration of a strategy, is best understood as emerging a result of external opportunities. Their action spoke to the distress of many ethnocultural groups who had not been able to reconcile themselves with the commission's strategy of biculturalism. Prime Minister Pearson's inability to see beyond a bicultural definition of culture fed the fears of some ethnocultural communities that they had been forgotten in the debate over Canadian

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<sup>54</sup> Despite the well known limits, indeed confusions, long associated with the concept of political opportunity structure, we have chosen to speak of it here because we are interested in the interaction between ethnocultural groups and the external environment it faced. The concept was first developed in order to account for the "when" of social movement mobilisation, identifying the conditions facilitating or accounting for mobilisation. It also served as a conceptual escape hatch from the ongoing controversy between students of the "how" of social movement action – the resource mobilisation school – and the "why" – new social movement approaches. See Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Mass Politics in the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 83.

<sup>55</sup> Canada, The Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together: Observations and Recommendations* (Ottawa, January 1979), 15-16.

unity. It is true that the commission spoke of their contribution to Canadian society and noted that the part played was not incidental, but such declarations took second place to the hand tendered to official language communities.

Seen in this way, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and especially the release of Book IV, was a crucial moment in rendering these groups visible. Who they were, (Third Force, "Other" ethnic groups), and the vision of the country they advanced was made visible to the federal government. And although the mobilisation of ethnocultural groups did not seize the imagination of the commission, it exposed their desire for recognition as the basis for a modern Canadian identity. The commission was therefore compelled to treat the claims of ethnocultural minorities as meaningful, albeit not equivalent, to the claims of the "two founding nations".<sup>56</sup> This had the impact of making the content of any future state policy on cultural pluralism the subject of negotiation. By 1971, this "opening" or "window" would also provide the federal government with a counterforce to the potentially unstable dichotomy posed by bilingualism and biculturalism and lead to the creation of a new policy paradigm.

### ***3.6 The Multiculturalism Agenda Emerges***

In an announcement before the House of Commons on October 8, 1971, the federal government made its latest views on cultural policy known with the unveiling of official multiculturalism. Coming only a year after the release of Book IV, the policy

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<sup>56</sup> The discourse on Canadian culture and diversity in the 1960s failed regularly to view the contribution of Aboriginal peoples as significant or as meaningful as the role played by Europeans (French and British) in building Canadian society, hence the frequent use of the "two founding nations" concept which had the effect of marginalising Aboriginal identity.

represented a significant departure from the royal commission's recommendations. While the commission had accepted the maintenance of ethnic minority identity within the context of two (i.e. British and French) dominant societies, Prime Minister Trudeau presented multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. In short, the representation of Canada had become multicultural and bilingual rather than bicultural and bilingual.

The difference was intentional, although Trudeau was shrewd in presenting the new policy as the product of similar conclusions reached by the commission and the federal government. Wrapped in the language of citizenship, he noted:

It was the view of the royal commission, shared by the government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly.<sup>57</sup>

By suggesting that Canadian citizenship depended on no official culture while embracing bilingualism, the prime minister had constructed a peculiar policy blend. As Fleras and Elliott suggest, the policy seemed to both affirm and deny the relevance of diversity as a basis for living together.<sup>58</sup> The departure from the royal commission here could not have been more obvious. In his endorsement of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, Trudeau had chosen to refute a basic premise supported by the royal commission, and in so doing had opted for a policy focus that disassociated two variables often understood as connected. Consistent with their position on the status of the two founding nations, the commissioners' noted, "language is the most evident expression of

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<sup>57</sup> Canada, House of Commons. *Debates*, 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, October 8, 1971, 8545.

<sup>58</sup> Fleras and Elliott, 63.

a culture. In terms of our mandate, this means that the problems of bilingualism and biculturalism are inseparably linked.”<sup>59</sup> The net effect of Trudeau's decision was to engage the Canadian state on a course that, while separating the major components of identity, accorded official status only to language.<sup>60</sup> A new and more coherent vision of "culture," however, was still to be created.

### *Multiculturalism as Policymaking*

A full accounting of multiculturalism policy is considerably more involved than the brief analysis presented above. Coming to terms with Trudeau's decision leads us to focus on the role of policymaking, with an understanding that the definition of public problems invariably shapes the nature of the policy response.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, central to our understanding of multiculturalism policy is an appreciation of how these problems were defined.<sup>62</sup> Before the announcement in the fall of 1971, the federal government had developed an ideational framework to help structure its thinking and inform its action. More accurately, in the language of policy analysis, it had developed a "problem definition", or an argument about the nature of the policy problem that led it to identify specific instruments and goals to resolve its concerns.

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<sup>59</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Volume I, xxx.

<sup>60</sup> Churchill, 16.

<sup>61</sup> Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Nelson, 2001), 93. In keeping with our view expressed in Chapter 1, Pal argues that the central component of identifying and framing public problems is the role of ideas.

<sup>62</sup> In policymaking, the usual course followed is to elaborate a policy and its goals and to differentiate between the two. This means providing an explanation of what the policy is, and how it will achieve certain ends. Usually relevant goals that are logically connected to the policy are made explicit. Less apparent in constructing a policy argument in favour of some course of action are the implicit goals of policy decisions.



Looking back to the fall of 1971, the formulation of multiculturalism policy was preceded by the federal government's acknowledgement of a public problem. There was, however, no single "focusing event" in the sense of a sudden crisis that shaped the government's evaluation of a specific issue.<sup>63</sup> Rather there were a set of concerns, as we noted earlier, that stemmed from apprehension over the state of Canadian unity that became linked to the royal commission and ultimately emerged in the government's response to Book IV. Why then did the federal government's response depart from the recommendations handed down by the commission? To answer this question our analysis must return once again to the early 1960s. As we discuss in the next section, the federal government offered its own mix of policy prescriptions because it had developed a fundamentally different definition of the problem. As a result, events at this early stage would have a decisive impact on the policy process.

*From Recognition to Definition: The Problem Takes Shape*

The federal government's multiculturalism policy may have taken shape in response to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, but the root problem ran deeper. By the 1960s Canadians were confronting, in a way they never had before, their fundamentally divergent conceptions of Canada.<sup>64</sup> The transformation of nationalist discourse in Quebec had propelled Canada and its constitutional system towards a protracted state of crisis. Before the federal government could present possible

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<sup>63</sup> A great deal of our understanding of how issues appear on the government agenda has been shaped by John Kingdom. See *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).

solutions in the form of a national unity strategy, it first had to offer a persuasive argument about the nature of the problem threatening to divide the country.

The prevailing mood of a national malaise was no less apparent in Quebec where some Francophone Quebecers had become convinced that little accommodation could be hoped for with English-speaking Canada and that the future of French Canada lay in an independent Quebec. Much, it was clear, had changed through the course of the Quiet Revolution. For much of its history, Canada has existed as society in which linguistic cleavages became politically relevant through the creation of a federal system in which the division of powers recognized and protected two different communities. The representation of Canada that matched this institutional division of powers was the vision of Canada as a bicultural and bi-national country. Consequently, the history of intergovernmental relations was marked in part by the question of how to engage the minority community, that is to say Quebec, within the scope of Canadian federalism.

From the 1940s through the 1960s, an era characterised by "co-operative federalism", the federal government sought to fashion its pan-Canadian welfare state through cost-sharing programs with the provinces.<sup>65</sup> Successive Quebec governments resisted such actions for both ideological reasons, in the case of the conservative Duplessis government's opposition to state intervention in the social realm, as well as concerns about state autonomy. The latter concerns were especially evident after 1960, when a progressive Liberal government came to power in Quebec. The Quiet Revolution

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<sup>64</sup> McRoberts, 31. As the author goes on to explain, the discontent was apparent in that "the pre-eminent status of Quebec was made much more explicit as nationalist thought and strategies were fundamentally recast".

ushered in by Jean Lesage's government was devoted to modernizing Quebec society and building a modern state that could provide social services and serve as a motor of the Quebec economy. This involved a struggle with the federal government over autonomy in areas of provincial jurisdiction – culminating in the opting-out of some domestic federal policy initiatives.

Under Lester Pearson, these issues and events took on great importance pushing the national unity question to the top of the government's domestic agenda. Pearson's strategy had hinged on elevating the importance of Quebec's position in the federation. This was to be accomplished by meeting the demands of Quebec or by negotiating a compromise.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, Pearson noted, "National unity does not imply subordination in any way of provincial rights or the alienation of provincial authority. It does require a government at the centre strong enough to serve Canada as a whole; and its full realization demands a strong Canadian identity with the national spirit and pride that will sustain and strengthen it."<sup>67</sup> For the prime minister who called Quebec "a nation within a nation" and "the homeland of a people", this represented an accommodative approach to national unity. While Pearson had attempted to forge a framework that would be acceptable to English-Canadians but win the active support of Quebeckers, his successor had settled on a more confrontational approach.

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<sup>65</sup> Richard Simeon and Ian Robinson, *State, Society, and the Development of Canadian Federalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>66</sup> Examples of this strategy beyond the royal commission include the resolution of the national flag debate on terms acceptable to Quebec, and the negotiation of a more equitable division of federal taxes between Quebec and Ottawa. For an account of this period see Donald V. Smiley, *The Federal Condition in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1987).

<sup>67</sup> Lester Pearson, *Address to the Empire Club*, Toronto, October 15, 1964.

Trudeau joined the federal liberal party in 1965 at the behest of Pearson.<sup>68</sup> His views on the national unity file and more directly on the topic of nationalism we already well known. Along with his colleagues at *Cité Libre*, a dissident journal he helped co-found in 1950 that helped provide the intellectual basis for the Quiet Revolution, Trudeau would launch a concerted attack against the excesses of Quebec nationalism. His views on the danger of nationalism more generally stemmed in part from a liberal position in favour of individual rights against the state. Moreover, he believed that the rights of individuals should supersede the collective rights of a people. As McRoberts attests, Trudeau and his colleagues at *Cité Libre* believed that “equality within a given state could only be among individuals. Equality between collectivities necessarily implied separate states.”<sup>69</sup> This idea was at the root of his battle against Quebec nationalists, whom he viewed as a sectarian throwback to the era when the Roman Catholic Church dominated the social realm and much of the political life of the province.

By the mid-1960s, Trudeau had firmly rejected the belief of Quebec sovereigntists that change to protect the collective rights of Francophones in the province could be achieved only through political independence. More fundamentally, upon becoming prime minister in 1968 he challenged the assumption that Quebec was the national government of French-speaking Canadians and insisted that the protection and development of the French culture in Canada was as much the task of the federal government as that of the government of Quebec. His strategy was therefore aimed at

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<sup>68</sup> Pearson’s courting of the three “wise men” from Quebec that included Trudeau, Gérard Pelletier and Jean Marchand, was an example of his strategy to elevate the power of the province in the federation.

<sup>69</sup> McRoberts, 121.

responding to Quebec not through appeasement, but through the encouragement of an alternative representation of Canada as a pan-Canadian "union." Instead of an emphasis on resolving cleavages based on traditional notions of dual nationhood, the management of diversity became associated with reconciling provincial interests.<sup>70</sup> Throughout the course of his tenure as prime minister, this was to lead to new forms of conflict in intergovernmental relations and in constitutional politics, in which provinces, rather than nations, became the principal vehicles for the promotion of societal interests.

From this perspective, Trudeau's enduring view of Quebec nationalism was to form an ideational prism through which major policy decisions would be influenced. The national unity strategy to which he would subscribe was part of a larger policy paradigm that inspired his demand for government action. And it was precisely his identification, then estimation of the root causes of the national unity crisis that led him to consider possible policy solutions. In short, for Trudeau the pre-political, or at least pre-decisional process of defining the national unity problem was to play a critical role in the policy process, both in regards to what measures would be considered and what choices would ultimately be made.

#### *From Definition to Implementation: The Policy is Formulated*

Trudeau's understanding of the problem definition at the heart of the national unity debate played a central role in the emergence of multiculturalism.<sup>71</sup> But the story of

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<sup>70</sup> Samuel V. Laselva, *The Moral Foundations of Canadian Federalism: Paradoxes, Achievements, and Tragedies of Nationhood* (Montreal: MQUP, 1996).

<sup>71</sup> Our use of "problem definition" is based on D.A. Schon's interpretation of the concept's contribution to political discourse. See, for example, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

the policy's origins is not limited to its perceived utility as a tool to frustrate Quebec nationalism. Even though labels such as "Quebec nationalism", "separation", "independence", "other ethnic groups", are examples of suitable answers to the question: "Which issues were on the agenda?", such answers do not reveal how these issues were defined. The context within which a national unity strategy was formed, and multiculturalism policy was debated, was established in the 1960s. Trudeau's ideas, or his principled beliefs about role of the state in this period – the policy paradigm we referred to earlier – influenced the public policy process by helping him make sense of complex problems and realities.<sup>72</sup> As the former prime minister wrote, "make no mistake, we were an ideological government – ideological in the sense that we were motivated by an overarching framework."<sup>73</sup> This framework often associated with the term "Just Society" was more than a convenient phrase; it was the inspiration that provided an element of coherence across policy fields and unified his fifteen years as prime minister. Informed by the values of cultural democracy and participatory citizenship, Trudeau recognised the importance of creating and expanding new possibilities for a common space of cultural and political exchange. During this period, liberal human rights concerns were espoused, with the aim of expanding citizen access to a whole range of public services on an egalitarian footing. The objective that assumed the highest priority in the pursuit of this Just Society became equality. As Trudeau added, "For where is the justice in a country in which an individual has the freedom to be totally fulfilled, but where inequality denies

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<sup>72</sup> On the significance of policy paradigms in the policy process see Peter Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning and the State: The Case of Economic Policy making in Britain," *Comparative Politics* 25:3, 1993.

<sup>73</sup> Pierre Trudeau, *Towards a Just Society: The Trudeau Years*, ed. Thomas S. Axworthy (Markham, Ontario: Viking, 1990), 4.

him the means? And how can we call a society just unless it is organized in such a way as to give each his due, regardless of his state of birth, his means or his health?"<sup>74</sup>

The democratic vision of Trudeau's Just Society also welcomed the continued existence of Quebec as an integral part of the Canadian Confederation. His early writings on federalism traced the problem of Canadian unity to the absence of a shared goal among Canadians and he suggested that the goal of building a Just Society could fill this vacuum.<sup>75</sup> The 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is probably the most important and conspicuous item on this agenda, but multiculturalism policy met the new standard of a state responsibility to provide equal status, equal opportunity, and fair treatment for all Canadians. Other examples of this paradigm in action in the decade following the introduction of multiculturalism policy include the passage of a new Immigration Act in 1976, which for the first time included a non-discrimination clause, and the adoption of the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1977 which established a new legislative framework to foster mutual respect among Canadians of all backgrounds.

While national unity and participatory citizenship were the main catchwords in Ottawa by the 1970s, this did not preclude the value or existence of other explanations for the emergence of multiculturalism. The fact that the mobilisation of ethnocultural groups was precipitated by the government's action to embark upon a royal commission presents itself, in our estimation, as a key casual story that cannot be dismissed out of hand.

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<sup>74</sup> "Our Trudeau," *Globe and Mail*, Saturday, September 30, 2000. The day after Trudeau won the leadership of the federal Liberal party on April 7, 1968, he was quoted as saying "I will use all my strength to bring about a just society to a nation living in a tough world."

<sup>75</sup> The ideas that represented the Just Society, however, tended to be very diffuse and did not necessarily translate easily into specific views in all policy sectors. World views or ideologies, as Howlett and Ramesh note, seldom do. See *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Don Mill, Ont.: OUP, 2003), 127.

With this in mind, if the opposition to biculturalism was a direct outcome of state intervention in matters of cultural policy, one might expect to find a government that is more responsive than usual. This is precisely the point we wish to make. In Canada, government funded commissions have often served as important instances of policy learning, where the state has been made aware of the presence, or more often the extent of public problems. They have contributed greatly to the development of the country by considering policy arguments in the face of deep uncertainty and growing fragmentation among various societal interests.<sup>76</sup> In the case of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the presence of sufficiently organised ethnocultural groups would not have come as a surprise to the federal government. Yet the level of dissent directed towards the commission suggested something more informative. The fact that the federal government validated the interests of ethnocultural groups through the production of Book IV, groups that were, by McRoberts own estimation “uneven, and heavily dominated by Ukrainian-Canadian groups”, is testament to the growing political and economic power of ethnocultural communities. A similar conclusion was reached by Burnet and Palmer:

The fact that the government heeded the pressure of lobbyists for the other ethnic groups is an indication that those groups had already gained economic and political strength. While the cynics hold that the government acted only in order to have a counterpoise to French-Canadian aspirations, the other ethnic groups would not have been seen as a potential counterpoise if they had not been strong. It had been possible in the past to ignore them. Now they included senators, members of Parliament, prominent and wealthy business people, academics, and public servants.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Bradford, 159-160.

<sup>77</sup> Burnet and Palmer, 224.



While the mobilisation of ethnocultural groups may not have been "sufficiently broad-based", as McRoberts has charged, to independently move the government to action, the capacity of the groups to make their identity claims known and resonate with the Canadian state outweighed the significance of their numbers.<sup>78</sup> This developing conversation can be viewed as an adjunct to the prevailing "identity climate" of the 1960s that stressed human rights and was coming to terms with ethnicity as a source of strength. Even the royal commission that had tried to retain its focus squarely on biculturalism contributed to this frame of mind. As Day concedes, "despite its relative sophistication in textual construction, the commission managed to unwittingly invoke the settlement and expansion phases of the Canadian discourse on diversity as a means of setting up a solidarity between the Other Ethnic Groups and the Two Founding Races."<sup>79</sup>

At this point several claims need restating while others should be clarified. The foregoing analysis has highlighted the way in which multiculturalism emerged within a specific political agenda. It is not, as Kymlicka has suggested, that multiculturalism was introduced without any real idea of what it would mean.<sup>80</sup> On the contrary, the complex nature of multiculturalism revealed its intention as a policy that could offer symbolic recognition and endorsement of ethnocultural diversity while fulfilling a larger policy project. This larger mission entailed promoting cultural differences as a public good, but also as a potential foil to Quebec nationalism. In this sense multiculturalism policy was

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<sup>78</sup> McRoberts, 124.

<sup>79</sup> Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 181.

<sup>80</sup> It is likely that what Kymlicka meant by this is that as a tool to support cultural pluralism it was unclear that the government had any real sense of what sort of policy instrument it had created. See *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: OUP, 1998).

created out of the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of its chief architect Trudeau, and encapsulated in the prevailing national unity discourse of the period. An important question, however, remains. Was multiculturalism policy devised to accomplish both goals equally?

At the very least the policy did not emerge after a lengthy decision-making process. The subtext here is that the central stages in the policy cycle (from recognition to implementation) proceeded without extensive consideration of the problems brought to light by the royal commission's Book IV. Coupled with this, the fact that Trudeau spoke so infrequently about multiculturalism has only strengthened convictions that the policy was not as vital to the government as his introductory speech in the House of Commons might have suggested.<sup>81</sup> This supports the position that the implicit aim of the policy, a scheme devised to bolster national unity, superseded the emphasis on fostering cultural pluralism. It may also suggest that multiculturalism was in part a "spillover problem" drawn into an existing government agenda devoted to national unity.<sup>82</sup> Trudeau's decided emphasis on certain aspects of the policy in his unveiling of multiculturalism does not appear to undermine this judgment.

As introduced, the policy was constructed in such a way as to allow for individual freedom while ensuring national unity. This was made possible by separating the question of language rights from that of individual cultural freedom. The principle here was to

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<sup>81</sup> V. Seymour Wilson, "The Tapestry Vision of Canadian Multiculturalism" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 16: 4 (December 1993), 657.

<sup>82</sup> On policy windows and spillover problems see Howlett and Ramesh, 135-138.

ensure equality among citizens through state assistance. Thus, the policy committed the federal government to work in four key areas:

First, resources permitting, the government will seek to assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance, the small and weak groups no less than the strong and highly organized. Second, the government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society. Third, the government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity. Fourth, the government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society.<sup>83</sup>

The order in which the government's targets were announced may have suited ethnocultural communities interested in preserving their cultural distinctiveness, but Trudeau's speech clearly focused on the second purpose. In so doing he was able to cast the policy in a light more consistent with his belief in the primacy of the individual. Therefore, as McRoberts adds, "for Trudeau multiculturalism was more about freeing the individual from constraints than promoting the development of cultural groups."<sup>84</sup> Yet the prominence of individual autonomy in the prime minister's speech revealed the balance between individual and collective rights at the heart of the policy. In so far as multiculturalism was designed to fit within a bilingual framework, freeing individuals from constraints necessarily meant recognising ethnocultural differences to a degree not afforded before by the Canadian state.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Debates*, 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, October 8, 1971, 8546. The full text of Trudeau's speech (including the federal response to the recommendations of Book IV) is reproduced in Appendix 1 of this thesis.

<sup>84</sup> McRoberts, 126.

<sup>85</sup> For McRoberts the symmetry we refer to here is more appropriately understood as a conflict, others such as Claude Couture see both bilingualism and multiculturalism as a balance between individual and collective rights. See *La loyauté d'un laïc: Pierre Elliott Trudeau et le libéralisme canadien* (Montréal: Harmattan Inc., 1996).

These observations notwithstanding, in the final analysis the main concerns of ethnocultural groups had been met by the policy. They had received ostensibly what they had been looking for – inclusion and recognition of their claims. The significance attached to each or any of the government's targets was secondary to the symbolic victory of the policy's announcement. In this vein, what counted was that Canada had become the first country in 1971 to officially affirm and support the value of ethnocultural diversity as a strategy for managing the social order.

*From Implementation to Evaluation: Phase One Begins*

Despite grand plans and considerable rhetoric, the first years after multiculturalism's announcement produced mixed results. Most of the programmatic elements of the policy were inadequately funded, subject to reorientation, or lacked strong consistent stewardship. All were symptomatic of a policy that suffered in this initial stage from an ambiguity of purpose. Yet by the mid-point of the decade a new policy direction sharpened the federal government's resolve and was more in tune with Canada's changing demographic realities.

At the outset the federal government had attached six programs to implement its multiculturalism policy in response to Book IV. Most of the core initiatives were to be carried out under the auspices of the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, they included programs that provided multicultural grants; culture development; ethnic histories; Canadian ethnic studies; teaching of official languages;

and programs of the federal cultural agencies.<sup>86</sup> The most significant and interventionist of these was the grants program that ushered in state funding to support ethnocultural associations.<sup>87</sup> Eligible activities within this program included multicultural encounters; organisational meetings for new cultural groups; citizenship preparation and immigration orientation; and ethnocultural conferences.

As constituted the programs met with general approval among ethnocultural groups precisely because they reflected their primary interest in cultural development activities. On the other hand, for groups that had reservations about the policy as a whole, it was not viewed so much as unwelcome as subject to greater question. As the federal government was to find from its own study of the issue there was lack of understanding concerning “the basic principle” of the policy that was a factor in most, but not all opposition to the policy.<sup>88</sup> In this respect it appeared not only that the character of the problem affected the nature of the government's response, but it also influenced the public's understanding of the policy. As Pal notes, complex problems are not always well defined and adequately understood so that the policy response seems evident and uncontroversial.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, although the policy became popular with ethnocultural communities, the complicated nature of the policy would form part of its enduring legacy.

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<sup>86</sup> Recommendations proposed by the federal cultural agencies were to be directed by the agencies concerned and coordinated through an Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee, which although it existed never functioned in a real capacity. See *Debates*, 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, October 8, 1971, 8580-8585.

<sup>87</sup> Leslie A. Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada* (Montreal: MQUP, 1993), 115.

<sup>88</sup> Canada, *Non-Official Languages: A Study in Canadian Multiculturalism*, Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism (Ottawa, 1975), 347.

<sup>89</sup> Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis*, 94.

From this perspective it appeared, initially at least, that the groups that had championed multiculturalism were willing to live with any perceived ambiguity of the policy in exchange for a precedent setting framework by which they could pursue state resources and recognition.<sup>90</sup> Even the somewhat modest sums attached to the policy in the first years after 1971 did not appear to dampen enthusiasm for the policy or become the subject of significant debate; by and large the upbeat mood was shared by members of the Citizenship Branch who saw their profile within the federal bureaucracy grow.<sup>91</sup>

Despite its original relationship with the Citizenship Branch, the federal government decided in 1972 to foster a more autonomous identity for multiculturalism policy and its programs. This resulted in the creation of a multiculturalism portfolio through the appointment of a Minister of State, and the establishment in 1973 of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (CCCM). On the surface both measures were intended to convey, and certainly suggested, an elevated status for the policy within the federal government. Yet both came under criticism as examples of the increasing politicisation of multiculturalism. The policy that had benefited at its inception from an all-party consensus, one which coveted favour with Canada's growing ethnocultural communities, had quickly lent itself to political manipulation. Such was the conclusion reached by John Jaworsky in his study of the policy's first decade. As the author notes:

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<sup>90</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "The Politics of Race and Ethnicity as a Contested Arena." *Canadian Politics*, eds. James P. Bickerton and Alain G. Gagnon (Peterborough: Broadview, 1994), 246.

<sup>91</sup> In 1972 the budget for the Multiculturalism Program was approximately \$4 million, while that of the Citizenship Branch was \$44 million. Canada Consulting Group, "Improving the Management Effectiveness of Citizenship Branch," Department of the Secretary of State (Ottawa, Nov. 1971), I-4, quoted in Pal, *Interests of State*, 112.

Although it is unlikely that partisan political considerations were of primary importance in leading to the announcement of the policy, multiculturalism rapidly achieved a higher political profile than may originally have been intended. Several senior servants who worked in the Citizenship Branch of the department of the secretary of State in the early seventies were of the opinion that multiculturalism policy became more "politicized" following the October 1972 federal election, when the number of seats held by the Liberals in Ontario decreased from 64 (1968) to 36. Several Conservative and NDP candidates were elected in traditional Liberal ridings in Toronto where a large number of voters were of "other" ethnic origin, and this may have encouraged the Liberal party to pay more attention to voters of non-Anglo-Saxon and non-French background.<sup>92</sup>

The multiculturalism portfolio was therefore viewed to a certain degree as a symbolic gesture underlined by political motives.<sup>93</sup> The fact that no fewer than six secretaries of state would be handed the multiculturalism portfolio in the course of the first decade did little to dispel the belief that the policy held a low profile within the cabinet.

The other significant move made by the federal government was the creation of the CCCM. The council was formed as an advisory body to the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, but one which functioned in part as an exercise in public relations. The Council had been created following the prime minister's decision to establish a "body of persons well qualified to make recommendations designed to ensure the full participation of all Canadians in the cultural development of this country."<sup>94</sup> While its membership initially included representatives of no fewer than 47 ethnocultural groups, including those of British and French descent, it came to be regarded as an organisation devoted primarily to the interests of ethnocultural minorities. In its capacity as a source of policy

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<sup>92</sup> John Jaworsky, *A Case Study of the Canadian Federal Government's Multiculturalism Policy* (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1979), 100-101.

<sup>93</sup> The history of Canada's Ministers of State (now Secretaries of State) demonstrates that they may be assigned to areas the government deems sensitive, but they are less important than full cabinet portfolios.

<sup>94</sup> Canada, *First Annual Report of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism*, Minister of State Multiculturalism (Ottawa, 1975), vi.

advice the council became an important institution by organising conferences and promoting research emphasising the reality of ethnicity as a factor of Canadian society. Its political profile notwithstanding, the council was disposed to call upon the federal government to become more visible in its support of multiculturalism, arguing in 1977 that “[a]lthough ultimately the real backbone of a workable cultural pluralism will be public acceptance, participation, and initiative, the Council is convinced that government too has much to do.”<sup>95</sup>

Criticisms by stakeholders and allies alike in these first years acted to reinforce the impression that the policy was both in need of clarification and stronger state guidance. By 1975, and with the appointment of John Munro as the second minister responsible for multiculturalism, it appears the government had reached similar conclusions. For the first, but not the last time in its history, multiculturalism would undergo an external review that paved the way for a reorientation of established policy. In his public announcement of the review’s recommendations and the government’s intended action Munro indicated the policy’s shift from an emphasis on cultural retention to a concern for reducing intolerance and discrimination, with special attention devoted to “visible” minorities.<sup>96</sup> The new direction appeared to be designed to dispel the perception that the government’s commitment to multiculturalism was primarily aimed at financing

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<sup>95</sup> Canada, *Report of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism*, Minister of State Multiculturalism (Ottawa, 1977), 8.

<sup>96</sup> The fact that Munro chose first to speak publicly through the *Globe and Mail* was not lost on the CCCM. At their second biennial conference several months after the minister’s announcement, delegates were reportedly preparing a “pointed reaction” to the statements. As detailed in Jorgen Dahlie, “Ottawa report: A Note on the Second Biennial Conference of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism,” *Ethnic Studies*, Vol.8, No11, 1976.



the various folkloric activities and celebrations of ethnocultural groups. It was also a signal of the changing composition and dynamics of Canada's ethnocultural milieu.

The federal government was increasingly sensitive to the grievances of new immigrants whose concerns differed from those of earlier groups, primarily of European origin, who had been the first to mobilise in support of the policy in 1971. Cultural retention and the celebration of diverse identities were of less importance to the new category of immigrants, many of them visible minorities, than breaking down economic and political barriers due to racism and discrimination. This was of course the second priority announced in 1971, and the direction that was most agreeable to Trudeau, given his concerns with a Just Society and so on.<sup>97</sup>

By aligning itself more closely with issues of equity rather than identity, the federal government could more fruitfully address two issues – one increasingly problematic and one longer standing. As a response to criticism of their emphasis on cultural retention, from those who opposed it or alternatively sought a more robust emphasis on fighting racism, the government could now optimistically hope to target any confusion about the cohesive nature of the policy. By moving multiculturalism in a new direction the government could, by the late 1970s, provide a stronger focus for the policy. More directly, they could address any scepticism about the policy's true intention by promoting a goal that was presumably more readily acceptable to the population at large. In practical terms the new prominence of an anti-discrimination focus would also contribute to this remedy by helping to dispel the perceived incompatibility of a

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<sup>97</sup> McRoberts, 127.

multiculturalism policy within a bilingual framework. Suspicion that major concessions to ethnocultural communities would come at the expense of the "two founding nations", and detract from official bilingualism, could therefore be allayed.

The desire to focus squarely on promoting equity and ending exclusion was echoed by John Munro in 1979 at a conference devoted to multiculturalism and bilingualism. He noted: "We must avoid locking sectors of our society or groups of Canadians out of any part of the national life of this country. We must continue to work to eliminate those conditions that either make people insecure and defensive or place them in an adversarial role."<sup>98</sup> Altogether, this new emphasis involved a certain deviation from the vision evoked by the idea of the cultural mosaic, since what was being encouraged was overcoming cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society and not cultural retention as a primary instrument of state policy.

The decision brought the policy closer in line with what some were calling the "polyethnic" nature of Canadian society. The difference here with multiculturalism is more than just semantics. Commentators were beginning in the mid 1970s, some no doubt in response to the shift in the policy's emphasis, to suggest that the term multiculturalism represented a misnomer, because what the government was increasingly promoting through its policy was a diversity of ethnic expression and recognition rather than the maintenance of many cultures.<sup>99</sup> As summarised by Roberts and Clifton, with

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<sup>98</sup> John Munro, "Multiculturalism – the Policy," in *Multiculturalism, Bilingualism and Canadian Institutions: Papers Presented at a Conference Sponsored by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews in Co-operation with the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba*, ed. Keith A. McLeod (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1979), 34.

<sup>99</sup> This position is supported by Alan B. Anderson and James S. Frideres, *Ethnicity in Canada: Theoretical Perspectives* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981).

this position "the notion of pluralism shifts from the traditional picture of the mosaic of internally integrated ethnic groups toward a collection of individuals who use ethnic characteristics when and if it suits their psychological needs."<sup>100</sup> In short, the character of ethnic identity that was being promoted was almost purely symbolic.

### ***Conclusion***

Throughout this chapter we have given an overview of the ideas and concerns that guided Canada's passage towards a multiculturalism policy. In the mid-1940s, a monolithic view of membership built upon an Anglo-centric model was the prevailing representation of Canadian identity. The model was supported by the perception that state strategies designed to promote pluralist integration risked endangering national unity. By the late 1960s, the Canadian state began to envisage that while individuals might retain "other" cultural traditions in their private lives, they would in other respects accommodate to the national culture and public institutions of Canada. In other words, within limits the recognition of diverse identities was not dismissed as incompatible with Canadian unity.

From the standpoint of trying to explain the emergence of multiculturalism policy we focused on the role of policy-making as an exercise in political thinking. Political ideas were highlighted as an important determinant of the policy process because they influenced the conceptualisation of the problem, and underscored potential courses of action. Describing and analysing Prime Minister Trudeau's views on Quebec nationalism

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<sup>100</sup> Lance W. Roberts and Rodney A. Clifton, "The Ideology of Canadian Multiculturalism," *Canadian Public Policy*, VIII:1, 1982, 92.

allowed us to understand the ideational framework through which a national unity strategy was constructed. Even though the national unity problem played a central role in the policy process from which multiculturalism emerged, the story of the policy's origin is not limited to a single explanation. Multicultural ideas gathered momentum and once engaged with Trudeau's conception of the Just Society fuelled an innovative attempt to deal with matters of cultural policy. Similarly, the mobilisation of ethnocultural groups in response to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism figured as an important causal factor. The ideas and agendas associated within this period did more than advance political interests, they revealed an ongoing attempt by state and societal interests to fashion a consensus on how the boundaries of membership within a polity should be defined; how the benefits and responsibilities of membership should be allocated; and how the boundaries of membership should be understood and legitimised.

The main focus of multiculturalism policy in the first half of the 1970s was on the provision of culturally appropriate services with the understanding that cultural maintenance, especially involving ethnic diversity, should be supported. Following this period the focus of concern shifted from cultural maintenance to concerns about inequity and social disadvantage. The response was not, however, to set up parallel institutional structures but, as noted, to reorient existing priorities within the multiculturalism portfolio. In sum, phase one of the policy's development underlined an evolving response to ethnocultural diversity, yet it also indicated that the management of diversity necessitated a pro-active state response.

This state response was suggestive of an environment shaped by the postwar citizenship regime where government intervention was evident in several areas of social

policy. And by the end of the 1970s, an agreement existed on the appropriateness of state support for ethnocultural groups with multiculturalism as a key element in the symbolic expressions of Canadian citizenship.<sup>101</sup> This symbolic recognition, backed-up by institutional support, is significant in its own right but must be understood as part of a larger rights framework that included more than multiculturalism policy. The federal government's commitment to diversity and the idea of citizenship it supported were based on policies and initiatives such as immigration, human rights and social justice. As Jenson notes, "the strategy for building Canadian citizenship rested on a notion of rights and responsibilities that recognizes individuals' right to maintain an identity defined in terms of their ethnocultural origins. This dimension also recognised the need to spend public funds to make this right more than formal."<sup>102</sup> Social policy was not viewed as an end in itself. Nor were the recipients of entitlements ends in themselves. On the contrary, both policies and people were the means to the end of attaining a more uniform condition of justice.

What is striking about this period is the fact that a consensus had been reached on the vision that the provision of "welfare" in the widest sense, ought to be carried out by the institutions of the state. The nineteenth century conception that private and much of social life constituted a sphere of natural liberty of which the state should take no cognizance was conspicuous by its absence.<sup>103</sup> Indeed state leaders increasingly gave

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<sup>101</sup> Abu-Laban, 246.

<sup>102</sup> Jane Jenson, "Building Citizenship: Governance and Service Provision in Canada," in *Building Citizenship: Governance and Service Provision in Canada*, CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|17 (September 2001), 16.

<sup>103</sup> Jose Harris, "Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An Intellectual Framework for British Social Policy," *Past and Present*, No.135 (May, 1992), 135.

voice to the opposite point of view. As the British historian Richard Titmuss explained the philosophy behind the welfare state, “it was increasingly regarded as a proper function or even obligation of government to ward off distress and strain not only among the poor but among all classes of society. And because the area of responsibility had so perceptibly widened, it was no longer thought sufficient to provide through various branches of social assistance a standard of service hitherto considered appropriate for those in receipt of poor assistance.”<sup>104</sup>

Achieving social justice and equity were, therefore, very much legitimate goals of state action. As the next chapter details, these principles were to prevail in the expansionary phase of multiculturalism policy on into the 1980s. However, by the end of the decade, a period considered to be synonymous with the policy's growth, political ideas began to find persuasive expression among actors whose institutional position gave them both the motive and the opportunity to consider policy reform. It is to the story of these contrasting ideas and policy agendas that this thesis now turns.

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<sup>104</sup> Robert Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London: HMSO, 1950), 506.

## CHAPTER 4

### Consolidating and Contesting Multiculturalism: The 1980s

#### *Introduction*

This chapter extends our study of ideas and institutional settings as determinants of ethnocultural policy. It traces the development of multiculturalism throughout the 1980s, examining the events and processes that contributed to the consolidation of the multiculturalism framework as well as those that served to contest the policy's passage into the 1990s. While the 1980s are usually treated in the literature as years of consolidation, and indeed they were, the election of the Progressive Conservatives plus the advent of world-wide neo-liberalism brought a new set of ideas.<sup>1</sup> Although these ideas did not upset the existing ways of understanding multiculturalism, by the end of the decade the edges of policy began to fray. Moreover, the events of the Meech Lake Accord brought a return to the old pattern and discourse on dualism reminiscent of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, thereby demonstrating that multiculturalism would again be hostage to national unity. We suggest that this episode served to announce the way in which multiculturalism would be debated in the 1990s.

Policymaking in the multiculturalism sector during the 1980s was punctuated by episodes of incremental reform. As we demonstrate in this chapter, while the pattern of

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<sup>1</sup> Consolidation and growth during the 1980s is a central theme in much of the work on multiculturalism. See, for example, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "The Politics of Race and Ethnicity as a Contested Arena." *Canadian Politics*, eds. James Bickerton and Alain G. Gagnon (Peterborough: Broadview, 1994); Peter S. Li, "The Multiculturalism Debate," in *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Peter S. Li (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999); Marc Leman, "Canadian Multiculturalism," *Parliamentary Research Branch*, Current Issue Review 93-6E (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, 1999); and Jean R. Burnet with Harold Palmer, *'Coming Canadians': An Introduction to the History of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988).

policy change varied, multicultural policy as a whole retained a high degree of internal consistency.<sup>2</sup> In effect this meant that on the surface adjustments to the federal policy were often compatible with the existing policy paradigm. For the long-term stability of multiculturalism, however, we argue that the changing circumstances and ideas that were characteristic of this policymaking era would ultimately serve to inspire efforts towards more fundamental change. In this regard we see the 1980s as a pivotal decade, one that proved not to be an era of true policy innovation, but one that triggered intellectual and bureaucratic debate around new policy goals and practices. Policy innovation on the scale indicated here implies a transformation in the ideas, institutions and interests that underpin public policy. The end result is to upset the internal consistency of a given policy thereby representing a break from past practice.

Before contestation became representative of the policy discourse aimed at redefining federal multiculturalism in the 1990s, there were elements of policy growth in the 1980s that stemmed from the launch of additional legislation, strategies, and institutional structures. These examples of consolidation were a response to policy goals identified in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and reflected in multiculturalism's new emphasis on equity and improving race relations. The first part of this chapter focuses on two events that sharpened the policy's focus in such a way; the enactment of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* of 1982, and the passage of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988. In the last section of the chapter our discussion moves from consolidation to contestation.

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<sup>2</sup> Internal consistency or stability within public policies is generally understood to include three elements: the problem definition, policy-centred goals, and policy instruments to achieve those goals. In other words, this means that while elements of the policy may change, the core meaning and purpose do not. See Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis*, 11-13.



Here attention is directed at indicating that the era of expansion associated with the 1980s was also a time when ideas in the Canadian polity served to challenge Canada's commitment to multicultural principles. Two pivotal events are discussed; the Employment Equity Act of 1986, and the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord of 1987. Both measures served to weaken an inclusive pluralism in public debates and state contributions to the representation of ethnocultural identities in Canada. This conversation plays a central role in establishing a point of reference that allows chapter five to examine the impact of policy change on multiculturalism in the 1990s.

#### ***4.1 Embedding Ideas***

The 1980s are commonly understood to be the golden years of multiculturalism policy. Underlying conflicts were, however, never entirely overcome. The decade began with criticism that multiculturalism was overly focused on cultural retention when racial inequality had become a greater threat. Indeed, the dramatic increase in visible minority immigration to Canada in the latter part of the 1970s almost guaranteed attention would shift to the problems of racism and discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Contributing to the impact of Canada's new demographic reality was the gravitation of immigrants to its major cities, making the country's multicultural nature all the more real for Canada's mainly urban population.<sup>4</sup> The federal government responded by making the fight against racism a

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<sup>3</sup> Non-European immigration then accounted for six of the top ten countries of origin. This was due, in part, to the Immigration Act of 1976 which placed new emphasis on labour market skills, assisting family reunification, and honouring Canada's international obligations with regard to refugees. See Leo Driedger, *Race and Ethnicity: Finding Identities and Inequalities* (Don Mills: OUP, 2003), 53-54.

<sup>4</sup> By the 1970s, more than three quarters of Canada's ethnic-origin population was urban, a large increase from the turn of the century when the number was slightly more than one third. Ibid, 58.

pivotal component of their strategy linked to overcoming barriers in Canadian society. Included in these efforts was the creation of the Race Relations Unit within the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Secretary of State in 1981, and the commitment to double the program budget by 1984.<sup>5</sup>

While the reality of Canada's changing ethnic composition held a variety of political implications – including but not limited to electoral considerations in mainly urban areas – there was no overt indication that the increasing multicultural nature of the country figured *decisively* in the federal government's ongoing national unity strategy. The impact of diversity on national unity would only acquire a special dimension in Canadian politics during the early 1990s, primarily because it coincided with a constitutional crisis following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.<sup>6</sup> For the most part, ethnocultural diversity, and the demands that it gave rise to, were viewed by the Canadian state as something altogether different than the claims being made in the name of Quebec and Aboriginal nationalism. The political articulation of Quebec and Aboriginal demands were designed to force a re-evaluation of their constitutional status, and therefore represented a serious challenge to the constitutional order. In contrast, the claims being made by, or in the name of ethnocultural groups challenged the idea of a monolithic conception of citizenship, *not* the integrity of the federation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of the Secretary of State, 1982-3* (Minister of Supply and Services Canada).

<sup>6</sup> Alain Cairns, "The Fragmentation of Canadian Citizenship," in *The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship*, ed. William Kaplan (Montreal: MQUP, 1993), 208.

<sup>7</sup> As Kymlicka suggests, this reveals the general nature of ethnocultural rights that are intended not to promote some measure of self-government, but to facilitate integration within a political community. None of the demands being made in the name of ethnocultural identity or preservation suggest a desire to establish a separate or self-governing society. The prevailing ambition continues to be the reform of

By the early 1980s, it was obvious that multiculturalism would not function as a definitive response to the problems of Canadian unity. Admittedly it was constructed with some national unity role in mind, but Prime Minister Trudeau had never expressly designed the policy to deal with the range of problems that comprised the ongoing crisis. In particular, the policy was not crafted as an instrument to mediate or remedy intergovernmental disagreements between competing governments which had become such an indelible characteristic of Canadian federalism. Even if one takes into consideration an expanded role for multiculturalism in the first part of the decade, the policy and the vision it supported was to be part of a much larger scheme. First articulated in the mid-1960s, the overriding objective of this elaborate social and political project was to find a constructive basis for strengthening Canadian unity through the promotion of a new, more unifying national identity.<sup>8</sup> This was to be carried out in a number of ways that ultimately demonstrated a broad commitment to equity: through the encouragement of political advocacy and participation that became the hallmark of the Secretary of State's activity by 1968; the adoption of language and cultural policy in the 1970s; and in the 1980s through developing a sense of national consciousness by linking individuals and groups directly to the state by the vehicle of rights.<sup>9</sup> In this latter respect

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mainstream institutions to make them more responsive to the diverse nature of Canadian society. See "Citizenship and Identity in Canada," in *Canadian Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1999), 26.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, it is a matter of interpretation whether the measures supported by Trudeau were truly "constructive", or a positive basis for supporting national unity. Many Quebecers, no doubt, were likely to have viewed multiculturalism as a negative rather than a positive instrument designed to blunt their cultural distinctiveness. Moreover, according to Peter Russell, Trudeau's initiatives rather than unifying the country gave a "sharper" ideological edge to its constitutional politics. See *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> The complexity of the crisis before the federal government suggests that no single policy instrument, no matter how sophisticated could solve the problem of national unity. Whether unity would have been

the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which would form the centre of Trudeau's national unity strategy, would play a much more pivotal role.

*The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

The Charter is more than a legal rearrangement of the machinery of government.<sup>10</sup> Among the principal pursuits of the Charter was the endorsement of a constitutional process to guide Canadians away from an excessively provincial conception of their national identity.<sup>11</sup> In keeping with this philosophy the Charter spoke about rights in a novel way. It was the first major constitutional initiative in Canada to focus on the rights of individuals and groups, as opposed to listing the rights of governments. By focusing on the citizen as the bearer of rights the Charter opened the constitutional process to a variety of claims upon the state by politicised groups and individuals whose perspective was distinctly indifferent to the battle over federalism. For the federal government, this development would not have been wholly unexpected, nor would it have been cause for great concern. The idea of creating a national community composed of individuals owing their primary allegiance to Canada and its central institutions depended on citizens taking ownership of the Charter.<sup>12</sup> Specifically, they believed that an entrenched Charter of

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better served, as Robert Fulford has noted, "by a less ferociously combative and more conciliatory prime minister," is an entirely separate matter. *National Post*, September 29, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> The single most important constitutional innovation according to Banting and Simeon. See *And No One Cheered: Federalism, Democracy and the Constitution Act* (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1983), 21.

<sup>11</sup> This contributed to the view of the Charter as democratising institution with an overtly political nationalising objective. See Alan Cairns, *Disruptions: Constitutional Struggles from the Charter to Meech Lake*, ed. Douglas E. Williams (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 113.

<sup>12</sup> Consequently any discussion of contemporary citizenship in Canada becomes quite abstract without reference to a constitutional framework supported by the Charter. See for instance the comments of Peter Russell, *Constitutional Odyssey*, 111.

Rights with the individual Canadian citizen at the centre would strengthen national unity in two important ways: by uniting Canadians of all origins through a powerful statement of shared political values and by defusing conflict between the two main language groups by providing constitutional protections for minority language and education rights. Even though these goals had the support of the majority of Canada's population, they would in the final analysis be constrained by the commitment of various constituencies to the entrenchment of certain rights and guarantees.<sup>13</sup>

This part of the Charter's story exposes the struggle between Trudeau's defence of individual rights and the opposition mounted by provinces and group interests committed to their own particular claims.<sup>14</sup> Neither side, however, would declare complete victory. Although the Charter spoke about individual rights the constitutional process equally conferred legitimacy on social identities, including a new set of status seeking groups by guaranteeing certain collective rights. The result was to transform the balance of power between citizens and the state. Yet the explosion of rights claims and group interests that emerged in response to the Charter also had the affect of attenuating the primacy of Canada's English-French cleavage, thereby contributing to a new social vision that was incorporative and pluralistic.<sup>15</sup> A case in point is the role played by the Charter in

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<sup>13</sup> According to Michael Behiels, the origins of this resistance rested in the existing political culture of the country which the Charter could not escape. See "From the Constitution Act, 1982 to the Meech Lake Accord, 1987: Individual Rights for all Versus Collective Rights for Some," in *Democracy with Justice: Essays in Honour of Khayyam Zev Paltiel*, eds. Alain-G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992), 127.

<sup>14</sup> David Milne, *The Canadian Constitution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Lorimer, 1991); and Garth Stevenson, *Unfulfilled Union: Canadian Federalism and National Unity*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Montreal: MQUP, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, the coexistence of individual and collective rights is evidence of the Charter's eclecticism. Behind its liberal individualism a distinct communitarian orientation was built into the new constitution. As Trudeau would attest more than a decade after the Charter's inception, "If people have certain fundamental rights including freedom of association and therefore, forming groups – and that is

extending multiculturalism's reach beyond its original statutory level. Two sections within the Charter are especially relevant in this regard, Sections 15 (s. 15) and 27 (s. 27); both are responsible for elevating the status of multiculturalism and equality seeking constituencies within the new constitutional order.

The first of the two sections is the most important equality provision in the Charter. In recent times the courts have moved beyond their understanding of equality reflected in s. 15, in other words treating everyone the same without distinction based on race, language, sex, religion or other characteristics. Instead they have argued that procedural equality is not sufficient to guarantee equality in practice. In a 1989 landmark ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that equality under human rights codes and the Charter are fundamentally the same, and that the relief of the disadvantage experienced by specific groups was the purpose of s. 15.<sup>16</sup> The impact of the decision was to move towards a more "substantive" version of equality, that is, the courts recognize that in some cases differential treatment may be necessary to achieve full equality.<sup>17</sup>

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what builds a civil society, the existence of various groups between the individual and the state, whether it be the provincial state or the federal state; that is what makes the richness of our democracy – not the individual pitted against the state or the authoritarian state pitted against the individual – but the existence of all those intermediate groups..." Pierre E. Trudeau, "The Debate," in *Debating the Constitution: Proceedings of a conference held in May 1993 under the auspices of the Royal Society of Canada*, eds. Jean Laponce and John Meisel (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 83.

<sup>16</sup> Justice Wilson was also prepared on behalf of the Court to extend this protection to other groups not mentioned specifically in 1982. She argued: "I believe also that it is important to note that the range of discrete and insular minorities has changed and will continue to change with changing political and social circumstances... In enumerating the specific grounds in s.15, the framers of the Charter embraced these concerns in 1982 but also addressed themselves to the difficulties experienced by the disadvantaged on the grounds of ethnic origin, colour, sex, age and physical and mental disability. It can be anticipated that the discrete and insular minorities of tomorrow will include groups not recognized as such today. It is consistent with the constitutional status of s.15 that it be interpreted with sufficient flexibility to ensure the unremitting protection" of equality rights in the years to come." *Law Society of British Columbia v. Andrews*, ([1989] 1 S.C.R. 143).

<sup>17</sup> Previously, under s. 15(1) the courts had been primarily interested in whether all individuals were getting the same treatment. Now they are more apt, for example, to assess the impact of public policy on

At its core the ruling indicates that our understanding of equality has changed while acknowledging that patterns of disadvantage and discrimination exist in society.<sup>18</sup> Apart from these grounds, one of the key considerations taken into account by the courts is whether the difference of treatment, or discrimination, describes a group which is vulnerable to prejudice, or stereotyping. For ethnocultural groups this interpretation is significant, because true equality requires challenging common stereotypes about group characteristics that may underlie law or government action, as well as ensuring that important differences are taken into account.<sup>19</sup>

In effect, by adjusting the interpretation by which equality might be achieved, and in particular by constitutionalising the legitimacy of affirmative action to overcome past discriminatory treatment, s. 15 balances the liberal recognition and protection of individual rights with collective interests. Indeed, the drafters of the equality clause added language on affirmative action out of precaution. Their intent was to bolster the substantive approach to equality relative to individual rights out of concern that affirmative action programs would be over-turned on the basis of reverse discrimination.<sup>20</sup>

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equality seeking groups to make sure they are receiving equivalent results to others. On this subject see Yvonne Peters, "Twenty Years of Litigating for Disability Equality Rights: Has it Made a Difference? An Assessment," *Council of Canadians with Disabilities*, January 26, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> One of the concerns with s. 15 is that it does not define racism, discrimination, or race; such definitions and interpretations have been left to the courts.

<sup>19</sup> Hence, the Supreme Court has argued that the goals of the equality clause are, "to prevent the violation of essential human dignity and freedom through the imposition of disadvantage, stereotyping, or political or social prejudice, and to promote a society in which all persons enjoy equal recognition at law as human beings or as members of Canadian society, equally capable and equally deserving of concern, respect and consideration." *Law v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)*, ([1999] 1 S.C.R. 497).

<sup>20</sup> The power of the message conveyed by s. 15 and the utility of state policy were explained by the Court: "Government actions carry the imprimatur of authority. Silence and action carry social messages.

This has not stopped critics of this interpretation from arguing that such a generous reading of equality further encourages the fragmentation of Canadian citizenship already supposedly encouraged by the nature of the Charter itself.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, for ethnocultural minorities s.15 was viewed as an example of state action that accepted and accommodated differences. This pointed to the heightened salience of ethnicity in public life by recognizing that minority rights (writ large) could strengthen solidarity by removing the barriers and exclusions that prevent groups from embracing political institutions.<sup>22</sup> As such, it aided an increasingly self-conscious and politicised minority who were seeking full inclusion in the rights of citizenship, rather than some special or differentiated citizenship status.<sup>23</sup>

Section 15 is joined in the Charter by section 27 in emphasising the values of a democratic society. The only section in the document to specifically recognize the multicultural heritage of Canada, s. 27 unlike s. 15, would emerge in the final text

This sits at the base of much anti-discrimination legislation. For government to speak provides not only a greater power to rectify wrongs but carries a moral message that discriminatory behaviour does not have a place in that society." *R. v. Zundel*, ([1992] 2 S.C.R. 731), 826.

<sup>21</sup> These critics point out that the "rights talk" generated by equality seeking groups has created the false impression that the constitutional process has been democratised and made more participatory. They argue the Charter and the attachment of particular groups to clauses such as s. 15 have made group competition a central feature, perhaps *the* central feature of Canadian constitutional politics. On the first point see F.L. Morton and R. Knopff, *The Charter Revolution and the Court Party* (Toronto: Broadview, 2000); and on the second argument see Ian Brodie, *Friends of the Court: The Privileging of Interest Group Litigants in Canada* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2002).

<sup>22</sup> Will Kymlicka, "Multiculturalism and Citizenship-Building in Canada," in *Building Citizenship: Governance and Service Provision in Canada*, CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|17, September 2001, 62.

<sup>23</sup> Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon, *The Canadian Diversity Model: A Repertoire in Search of a Framework*, CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|19, November, 2001, 14. Even Trudeau, in his much vaunted defence of individual rights conceded that group equality was a necessary response to disadvantage. He notes, "we seem to think that freedom may be all right but equality is something we should express concern about because it might lead to the formation of what? Of a civil society? Surely the answer is that men or women or aboriginals or immigrants or others use their rights to equality in order to form a society which is destructive of the common wealth, then it is prohibited by law." "The Debate", 84-85.



primarily as the product of advocacy work by concerned groups and organizations.<sup>24</sup> In the earliest draft of the Charter the federal government had repeated the promise of respecting the customary rights of non-official languages in Canada, but overlooked the more central issue of multiculturalism. For ethnocultural organizations, and particularly the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism which provided the most comprehensive and spirited defence of multiculturalism, this was a serious omission.<sup>25</sup> Throughout much of the 1970s the federally funded organization had been the most consistent advocate of entrenching the concept of multiculturalism in legislation. It was therefore understandable that the CCCM, which had demonstrated a capacity to criticize inaction or delay on the part of the federal government in the past, would make full use of its time before the Parliamentary Committee studying the Charter to press for multiculturalism's inclusion.

While the CCCM recognized that s. 15 was an important tool to enhance the rights of Canadians and protect against discrimination, the Charter in its view would remain imperfect to the extent that it failed to incorporate multiculturalism in its portrait of Canadian society.<sup>26</sup> In their presentation before the committee the CCCM argued not

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<sup>24</sup> While the lobbying of ethnocultural groups was the main reason for the inclusion of s. 27, it is worthwhile to note that outside of reservations about the impact of multiculturalism on bilingualism there was no known *concerted* effort of the part of the committee or the federal government to exclude it.

<sup>25</sup> In total, of the more than 100 witnesses who appeared before the Special Joint Committee of Parliament on the Constitution in the pre-Charter consultation phase, nearly one-quarter expressed an interest in multiculturalism and protecting the rights of minorities. See Michael R. Hudson, "Multiculturalism, Government Policy and Constitutional Enshrinement – A Comparative Study," in *Multiculturalism and the Charter: A Legal Perspective*, Canadian Human Rights Foundation (Toronto: Carswell, 1987), 74.

<sup>26</sup> In making its case the Council reminded the committee that as a national policy unanimously adopted by all federal parties in 1971, and reflecting an integral part of the Canadian reality, multiculturalism should be included in the Canadian constitution. Canada, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Parliament (Ottawa, 1980), 29: 124.

for a specific clause, but the addition of a preamble to the Charter in which the multicultural nature of the country would be clearly recognized. Their insistence on formal emphasis in a preamble appeared to stem from the belief that multiculturalism needed to be interpreted in its broadest sense to protect the collective rights, cultural integrity and group dignity of Canada's many ethnic groups. In effect, they were looking for a stronger commitment to multiculturalism than the committee would ultimately recommend or the federal government would eventually accept. They were also conscious of the impact other sections might have on multiculturalism and suggested several modifications to the proposed draft resolution.<sup>27</sup>

In the end the federal government chose a separate section as opposed to the preamble to recognize multiculturalism. The language of s. 27 required the courts to interpret the Charter "in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians." In this sense s. 27 is appropriately understood as an interpretative clause; directing the courts to see the constitution in a manner that takes into consideration the existence of constitutionally entrenched values. Admittedly less than what the CCCM had called for; s. 27 had nevertheless met the general objective of providing the courts with a basis for interpreting the constitution. Furthermore, s. 27 would rank among the select, fully entrenched sections that would not be subject to a legislative override as indicated by s. 33.

For the architects of the Charter the inspiration for a multicultural clause came from a number of documentary sources that ultimately found expression in s. 27. Among

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<sup>27</sup> They were notably concerned with sec. 1 which permits such "reasonable restrictions" on rights "as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society". See *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada*, 29: 125.

these was the government's own multiculturalism policy, and Article 27 of the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, ratified by Canada in 1976.<sup>28</sup> Yet multiculturalism's inclusion as one of the core, entrenched values of Canadian society is only part of s. 27's achievement. The success of the clause can be measured in two ways – on a legal basis and as a symbolic statement of values outside of the courtroom.

On a legal basis the Charter has been instrumental in projecting the idea of a tolerant society in which cultural minority rights deserve protection. Several high profile cases have been significant in promoting this precept, including *R. v. Big M Drug Mart* (1985), *R. v. Keegstra* (1991), and *R. v. Zundel* (1992).<sup>29</sup> In the first case, the Supreme Court ruled that s. 27 was a determining factor by suggesting that in a pluralistic society the state must be ready to accommodate differences that arise from religious practices that are recognized as permissible exceptions to otherwise justifiable homogeneous requirements. In short, the Charter of Rights played a significant role in permitting minority groups in Canada to express their cultural practices. In the other two cases the issue turned on alleged violations of the Criminal Code through the promotion of hate against an identifiable group. In *Keegstra*, the Supreme Court made explicit reference to the value of s. 27 to support the reasonableness of the limits on freedom of expression provided by the hate literature sections of the *Criminal Code*. While the Court noted the importance of free expression in a democratic society, they pointed to the country's

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<sup>28</sup> Article 27 states, "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language." *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, Entry into force 1976.

<sup>29</sup> *R. v. Big M Drug Mart Ltd.*, ([1985] 1 S.C.R. 295); *R. v. Keegstra*, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697; *R. v. Zundel*, ([1992] 2 S.C.R. 731).

commitment to multiculturalism, both in law and as a sociological reality, as a value integral to any assessment of limiting that freedom. This supported the disposition that s. 27 was not only a statement of fact, but a medium needed to legitimise and strengthen the nature of the government's main objective; in this case the prohibition of hate towards groups on the basis of their colour, race, religion, or ethnic origin.<sup>30</sup>

In *Zundel*, although the Court narrowly found in favour of the appellate, the case is informative because of the reference to s. 27 in the dissenting opinion delivered by Justices Gonthier, Cory and Iacobucci. While the court held that limits on free expression under the Criminal Code were not justifiable under s. 1 of the Charter, the dissenting justices argued that it was important to recognize the significance of s. 27 in assessing the importance of prohibiting hate literature (s. 181).<sup>31</sup> They maintained that in light of the interrelationship of sections 27 and 15 of the Charter, the banning of hate literature encouraged the goals of tolerance and equality and supported the protection of the cultural integrity and the dignity of Canada's ethnic groups. In effect, they were prepared to adopt a broad protective stance on how legislation that protects the multicultural nature of the country could be viewed as a reasonable limit upon free expression. They argued compellingly that:

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<sup>30</sup> In this instance the Court agreed with the logic expressed by Justice Cory who, in writing to uphold the *Criminal Code* in *R. v. Andrews* (1988), said: "Hate propaganda seriously threatens both the enthusiasm with which the value of equality is accepted and acted upon by society and the connection of target group members to their community... Multiculturalism cannot be preserved let alone enhanced if free rein is given to the promotion of hatred against identifiable cultural groups." *R. v. Andrews* (1988), 65 O.R. (2d) 161, quoted in *R. v. Keegstra*, ([1990] 3 S.C.R. 697), 758.

<sup>31</sup> In this case hate literature refers broadly to s. 181 of the Criminal Code which prohibits, "wilful publication of false statement or news that person knows is false and that is likely to cause injury or mischief to a public interest."

Section 27 of the Charter is not merely the reflection of a fleetingly popular concept. Rather it is a magnificent recognition of the history of Canada and of an essential precept for the achievement of those elusive goals of justice and true equality. People must be able to take pride in their roots, their religion and their culture. It is only then that people of every race, colour, religion and nationality can feel secure in the knowledge that they are truly equal to all other Canadians. Thus secure in the recognition of their innate dignity, Canadians of every ethnic background can take pride in their original culture and a still greater pride in being Canadian. Section 27 strives to ensure that in this land there will be tolerance for all based on a realization of the need to respect the dignity of all.<sup>32</sup>

The *Zundel* decision may well be a bittersweet victory for freedom of expression, but it demonstrates that s. 27 can be invoked as a legal instrument to enhance the dignity and sense of self worth of every individual member of a defamed group, and thereby enhance the equality rights of society as a whole. As both *Keegstra* and *Zundel* establish, in instances where s. 27 was not even the principal clause under scrutiny, it provides a functional "interpretative prism" in which to balance individual and collective rights in the constitution.<sup>33</sup>

Outside of the courtroom the symbolic value of multiculturalism's inclusion in the Charter cannot be dismissed. Section 27 confirmed the commitment to principles supported publicly by the Canadian state in 1971. It also spoke of the effort to strike a balance between the idea of dualism and the concerns of ethnocultural communities; by

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<sup>32</sup> *R. v. Zundel*, 817-818.

<sup>33</sup> These cases confirm that it is a reality of the Charter and the legal system in Canada that judges are without precise rules to guide them in their deliberations. More than one constitutional authority in Canada has noted that the constitution is viewed as an organic document open to interpretation and capable of responding to changes in society. See *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Robert J. Sharpe, Katherine E. Swinton and Kent Roach (Toronto: Irwin Law Inc., 2002), 54. As a consequence, s. 27 can become, as Joseph E. Magnet notes, "a flexible but unpredictable tool in the hands of the judiciary." But this likely has as much to do with the issue of whether s. 27 better protects collective vs. individual rights, as with the ambiguity of multiculturalism as a concept. The inherent difficulty with multiculturalism has always been its tendency to elicit a wide variety of meanings, and its use in the Charter has not resolved its ambiguous nature. Joseph E. Magnet, "Multiculturalism and Collective Rights: Approaches to Section 27," in *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Gérald-A. Beaudoin and Ed Ratushny (Toronto: Carswell, 1989), 754.

constitutionally entrenching the official languages and educational rights of English and French-speaking minorities, while acknowledging the need to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. More to the point, the Charter was successful in establishing a measure of consistency between the ideas of bilingualism and cultural diversity through the Official Language Act and the policy of multiculturalism.

Taken as a whole, the formal emphasis on equality in the Charter communicated the desire on the part of the state to elevate the social standing of all Canadians. These measures were consistent with attempts by the federal government to integrate new Canadians into public institutions.<sup>34</sup> For ethnocultural minorities this provided needed proof that the pressing issues of discrimination and racism were given constitutional priority, but it also suggested something just as meaningful. Now that legal remedies were in place to facilitate the full participation of all Canadians, this would help create a better position from which to assert the need for sensitivity to cultural differences. In the decades to come the Charter would consequently prove an important resource as the divergence of opinion on the need to foster ethnocultural diversity would become increasingly apparent.

### *The Multiculturalism Act*

Throughout a period of nearly two decades the debate surrounding multiculturalism continued to involve calculations about the appropriate level of

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<sup>34</sup> According to Kymlicka, the commitment to multiculturalism in the Charter is an example of polyethnic rights that "help[s] ethnic groups and religious minorities express pride in their cultural particularity *without* this hampering their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society." [my emphasis] See "Citizenship and Identity in Canada," 26.

commitment to pluralism as a democratic ideal. Accordingly, the story of multiculturalism's passage from strategy to official act in 1988 had an element in common with our account of the policy's early development detailed in chapter three. As in the 1970s, even though the discourse over the symbolic and material benefits of multiculturalism policy was debated, they remained largely unchallenged at the state level. Multiculturalism was still considered a "motherhood issue" by Canada's main political parties, and the deeper consideration of how this value binds, or fails to bind the country together had not greatly influenced public policy. The end of the decade would bring with it new players and challengers to this orthodoxy who were committed to moving state policy in a new direction. Included in this mix was the Reform Party whose critique of social spending and the liberal pursuit of social justice joined a growing discourse determined to contest the merit of state activity in the realm of ethnocultural management. Public intellectuals would also play a role, debating the virtues of multiculturalism at a time when the policy was increasingly viewed as a threat to national unity. Even government commissions were destined to contribute by legitimizing a political discourse that degraded state-sponsored pluralism. For the time being, however, despite partisan differences the Progressive Conservative government was prepared to uphold the elite consensus on the merits of pluralism and accept the legacy on multiculturalism inherited from the Trudeau government.

In the absence of strong opposition to multiculturalism, and in keeping with a view of the policy that operated primarily at a symbolic level, the Progressive Conservatives were able to plot a course of modest incremental change. Ethnocultural consent would be sought, and a policy capable of being sustained across class lines would

be defended. In certain other respects the Progressive Conservatives were prepared to improve on the Liberal record. Many of the developments in their first mandate were designed to further the connection between multiculturalism and equality by emphasizing the fight against racial discrimination. Notably, the government sponsored federal-provincial conferences on multiculturalism, created a House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism in 1985, and released a progress report the same year outlining actions taken to address the recommendations in *Equality Now!*<sup>35</sup> Also new to this mix was the conscious attempt in 1986 to marry multiculturalism to capitalist morality as demonstrated by a government funded conference organized under the theme, "Multiculturalism Means Business"; with a key note address delivered by Prime Minister Mulroney.<sup>36</sup> The redirection of public attention to the role of the market place, it appeared, was to extend to the conceptualization of multiculturalism as a "business-friendly" enterprise.

For the Progressive Conservatives multiculturalism also held out the promise of serving as an important political resource. Indeed it was difficult to dismiss the judgment that the multiculturalism portfolio could operate on a practical level as an instrument to attract the votes of ethnocultural minorities. The suggestion that multiculturalism would be used as an electoral ploy in the interest of winning votes was nothing new – a similar indictment had been levelled at the Trudeau government prior to the 1972 election. What is interesting about this allegation, is that for the first time the Progressive Conservatives

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<sup>35</sup> See Daiva Stasiulis, "Symbolic Representation and the Numbers Game: Tory Policies on 'Race' and Visible Minorities," in *How Ottawa Spends, 1991-92: The Politics of Fragmentation*, ed. Frances Abele (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Stasiulis, "The Symbolic Mosaic Reaffirmed," in *How Ottawa Spends, 1988/1989: The Conservatives Heading into the Stretch*, ed. Katherine A. Graham (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), 101.



were prepared to use multiculturalism, or more appropriately, to appropriate it from the Liberals as a resource to entice ethnic voters towards the party. The Liberal record on immigration and multiculturalism had long been viewed as a critical tool in helping the party in Canada's urban and ethnically mixed areas.<sup>37</sup> In the interest of securing these Liberal friendly votes, the Progressive Conservatives were prepared to put their own stamp on the policy and end what was perceived to have been an electoral monopoly.

The timing of the Progressive Conservative government's pursuit of multicultural legislation helps to establish this point. Almost four years into, and nearing the end of the government's first mandate, the effort to provide a legislative framework for multiculturalism was revived.<sup>38</sup> The process began in 1984, when in response to the recommendations emerging from the House of Commons Special Committee Report *Equality Now!* the Liberal government had agreed to pass a Multiculturalism Act. The legislation was then viewed as an answer to the request, primarily from bodies such as the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, to formally strengthen the government's commitment to multiculturalism. While the planned legislation was considered quite limited in scope, its acceptance by most ethnocultural organisations indicated their satisfaction with state recognition of ethnocultural diversity, even as it confirmed the status of multiculturalism as a marginal policy. To their dismay, however, the Liberal government was not prepared

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<sup>37</sup> According to Pal, while multiculturalism had not been established with "narrow partisan purposes in mind," the 1972 federal election demonstrated the utility of the policy for attracting minority voters. See *Interests of State*, 119.

<sup>38</sup> As with employment equity, the decision to establish multiculturalism as a principle of law began not with the Progressive Conservatives, but with the previous Liberal government. The first Conservative minister to take over the multiculturalism portfolio, Jack Murta, had used Bill C-84 as a basis for discussions with ethnocultural organizations across the country. The Liberal legislation served as a rough template from which the new legislation could develop.

at this stage to transfer responsibility for multiculturalism from the Secretary of State to a separate department. This was followed by greater disappointment when the legislation designed to establish the Multiculturalism Act died on the Order Paper after first reading due to the impending election.

The Mulroney government's decision to formally restart the process late in 1987 was therefore encouraging but somewhat overdue. Two years earlier in June of 1985, the newly created Standing Committee on Multiculturalism had been given a mandate to "encourage and monitor the implementation of the principles of the federal multiculturalism policy throughout the Government of Canada".<sup>39</sup> In the following year there had been a promise in the Throne Speech to resurrect the legislative process begun by the Liberals.<sup>40</sup> But from the outset constitutional and economic policy programmes were more integral to federal objectives and took precedence on the governing agenda. By the end of 1984, the Progressive Conservative government had already settled on an economic plan that identified their economic priorities as deficit reduction, deregulation, and privatization.<sup>41</sup> No such extraordinary speed was devoted to passing a Multiculturalism Act. Nor could the government credibly argue that it was searching for a blueprint to create a new policy model for multiculturalism. The sincerity of any such argument is brought into question by the fact that the government chose to dismiss a great

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<sup>39</sup> Canada, House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 33<sup>rd</sup> Parliament (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1985), 1:3.

<sup>40</sup> Canada, House of Commons, *Speech from the Throne*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 33<sup>rd</sup> Parliament (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1986), 4.

<sup>41</sup> In November 1984, the Department of Finance under Michael Wilson prepared an economic policy statement, *A New Direction for Canada: An Agenda for Economic Renewal*, that formed the basis of the government's economic agenda. The Macdonald Commission would later provide the government with continental free trade as another policy direction.

deal of the policy advice it received from the first report of the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism in 1987. In particular the Progressive Conservatives rejected the idea of a separate department, arguing that such a reorganization of resources would "ghettoize" multicultural issues within one area of government. Instead they decided on a legislative course that in truth was not strikingly different from the one pursued by the short-lived Liberal government under John Turner.<sup>42</sup>

By resolving to settle for a policy agenda that had been roughly established by 1984, the Progressive Conservatives were in fact doing little to deflect criticism that their interest in a Multiculturalism Act was linked to the impending federal election.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, it appears that the timing and substance of this policy approach could not be separated from the larger Progressive Conservative election strategy. The Progressive Conservatives had won in 1984 by achieving an effective electoral coalition among Quebec nationalists and Western conservative voters, but this coalition showed many signs of instability during the government's first term. By mid-1986, the government had experienced a drop in national support which left the party trailing the opposition Liberals in public opinion polls for the first time.<sup>44</sup> Even the modest popularity of the impending free trade deal with the United States negotiated by the Progressive

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<sup>42</sup> On balance the proposals for action within the Standing Committee's report had echoed previous calls for new legislation and a separate department. See Canada, House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism, *Building the Canadian Mosaic* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1987).

<sup>43</sup> *Interests of State*, 140.

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence LeDuc, "The Canadian Voter," in *Introductory Readings in Canadian Government & Politics*, eds. Robert M. Krause and R. H. Wagenberg (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991), 312. As the author points out, the recovery of the Progressive Conservatives in the polls in the last three weeks of the campaign, combined with the volatility of the NDP vote, demonstrated that the outcome of the election was in doubt until the very end.

Conservatives was not considered, nor initially designed as, a campaign strategy to set the government clear of its rivals. As Timothy Lewis has argued, this led the Progressive Conservatives to craft an election strategy that was designed to entice voters by downplaying the urgency surrounding the deficit and by announcing new spending in various program areas.<sup>45</sup>

Set against the backdrop of a looming election the decision to proceed with multiculturalism legislation was conspicuously packaged with several other timely announcements. In late May of 1988, minister of state for multiculturalism Gerry Weiner announced that the government would inject an additional \$62 million into multiculturalism over five years, increasing the annual expenditure for programs to \$42.2 million by the 1992-93 fiscal year from \$29.8 million in 1988-89.<sup>46</sup> In July the Multiculturalism Act was passed. In September, two months short of the federal election, the government made two important decisions. In a minor cabinet shuffle with major implications for multiculturalism, the Progressive Conservatives now seemingly relieved of their earlier concerns about a separate department, announced the elevation of multiculturalism to full cabinet level. The new Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship which would become operational in 1991, would oversee an annual budget of \$130 million. Furthermore, towards the end of September and less than two weeks before calling a federal election, the prime minister announced an agreement worth \$288 million to provide redress for the internment of Canadians of Japanese ancestry during the

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<sup>45</sup> According to the author, from late 1987 until the budget of 1988, the “political business cycle had kicked in” with noted increases in program spending announced (some of it to be cancelled in the next parliament). See Timothy Lewis, *In the Long Run We're All Dead: The Canadian Turn to Fiscal Restraint* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2003), 127-128.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Gessell, *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 31, 1988, A4.

Second World War. As a remedy the government offered each individual \$21,000 for injustices suffered, \$12 million to the Japanese community, and the creation and funding of a Canadian Race Relations Foundation.<sup>47</sup>

The core strategy on multiculturalism, however, was the successful passage of Bill C-93, the Multiculturalism Act. Even the prime minister appeared to acknowledge the controversy surrounding the timeliness of the government's agenda. In a news release, the prime minister told reporters, "you can quarrel with the way it was done, and when it was done, but it was overdue."<sup>48</sup> Mulroney's somewhat light-hearted assessment also reflected the character of the debate within the legislative committee hearings into Bill C-93. Specifically, all efforts by opposition members to strengthen the wording of the bill were rejected by the Progressive Conservative controlled committee. Additionally, rather than sending the Bill to the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism which appeared to be the logical destination, the government saw fit instead to send it to a simple legislative committee. One might surmise that this decision was at least partially motivated by political considerations. Although the Standing Committee had demonstrated the breadth of its expertise through the release of *Building the Canadian Mosaic*, with an election in the not too distant future it appeared that the government was concerned both with the speed with which it could send the legislation back to the House, and perhaps more importantly, the substance of any potential policy recommendations.<sup>49</sup> Among the

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<sup>47</sup> Val Sears, *Toronto Star*. Sep 15, 1988, A30. Japanese-Canadian redress payments would comprise the majority of departmental expenditures from 1988-90. See Canada, Secretary of State, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, *Annual Report, 1989-90* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), 51.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Drolet, "New department meant to woo ethnic vote," *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 16, 1988.

<sup>49</sup> The Standing Committee held 16 public meetings and heard from a variety of witnesses throughout its two year investigation. In comparison, the smaller budget allocated to the House legislative committee

numerous proposals made by the Standing Committee in *Building the Canadian Mosaic*, had been the request to position Canada's cultural agencies under the jurisdiction of a proposed new multiculturalism department. The initial rejection of this recommendation by the government may have established the view that support for the policy would be extended when it operated primarily on a symbolic level. But as Stasiulis argues, it confirmed that the "chiefly symbolic and piecemeal character" of the Conservative approach to multiculturalism was in line with a neo-liberal agenda that was preoccupied with deficit reduction and generally reluctant to expand the size of the federal bureaucracy.<sup>50</sup>

From the first day of its operation, it became clear that the Progressive Conservative members of the legislative committee were focused on returning Bill C-93 to the Commons as quickly as possible. They appeared to share the concerns of at least one witness, Dr. Louis C. Melosky, National President of the Canadian Multiculturalism Council, that the quicker the Bill moved through the committee, the better it would look for all concerned. For Melosky, however, there appeared to be no partisan considerations behind this desire. The longer the Bill stayed before committee, he calculated, it was more likely to provoke "misunderstanding in the country as to what it really signifies."<sup>51</sup> Even the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, which initially had argued that the Bill was

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would not permit them to travel, nor would it allow them sufficient time to allow for extensive testimony on the part of witnesses. Canada, House of Commons. *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-93*. 33<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, April, 18, 1988, 2:21.

<sup>50</sup> Stasiulis, "Symbolic Representation and the Numbers Game: Tory Policies on 'Race' and Visible Minorities," 131-132.

<sup>51</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-93*, 2:21.

principally a symbolic gesture, eventually acquiesced and called for its quick passage.<sup>52</sup> Most of the ethnocultural organizations that would speak on the legislation gave the impression that an imperfect and limited design was still better than no legislation at all.

Unlike immigration or bilingualism, the legislative hearings into the Multiculturalism Act did not seem to capture the public's attention. When Bill C-72, the new Official Languages Act, was being studied by a Commons committee, dozens of groups opposed to the bill either appeared or sought to be heard by the committee. In contrast, not a single dissenting voice was raised against multiculturalism in hearings on Bill C-93; in fact, virtually everyone who appeared was from an ethnocultural group.<sup>53</sup> The fact that the legislation was largely viewed as a symbolic statement and an exercise in public relations was not dispelled by Minister of State Gerry Weiner. In the House of Commons during debate on the bill, he argued, "The passage of this bill will send a signal to every corner of the globe that Canada truly is a land of equality and opportunity. We will show clearly that Canada is a land which respects and cherishes individual liberty and allows every person the freedom to cherish and maintain his or her own heritage."<sup>54</sup>

As passed by parliament in July of 1988, the Multiculturalism Act comprised a preamble and nine separate sections. The intent of the preamble was to situate the Act within the broad framework of civil, political, social and language rights which have been entrenched in the Constitution. Other pieces of landmark legislation, such as the Official Languages Act, the Citizenship Act, and the Canadian Human Rights Act, are also cited

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<sup>52</sup> Canada, House of Commons. *Debates*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, March 15, 1988, 13745.

<sup>53</sup> Daniel Drolet, "Multiculturalism policy adopted without debate," *The Windsor Star*, August 6, 1988.

<sup>54</sup> *Debates*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, July 11, 1988, 17428.

as sources from which the Canadian Multiculturalism Act drew its inspiration. The most important part of the legislation, Section 3, set out ten general policy objectives. They oblige the government to work in several areas: 1) to foster and promote multiculturalism through encouragement and assistance rather than through coercive measures; 2) to affirm that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of our Canadian identity; 3) to identify barriers of discrimination and prejudice which limit participation and to eliminate such barriers; 4) to increase public awareness of the contributions made by ethnocultural communities, and to enhance their development and full participation; 5) to underline the commitment made in Sections 15 and 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights; 6) to recognize that all institutions within Canadian society can benefit if they respect and respond to this country's rich cultural diversity; 7) to recognize that the social, economic and cultural life of the country is strengthened by bringing together Canadians of different backgrounds; 8) to assist Canadians to understand and share the many cultural influences across Canada; 9) to preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French; 10) and to clarify that the policy of multiculturalism is to be implemented in a way that complements Canada's commitment to its two official languages.<sup>55</sup>

The bill fell short of opposition expectations in two key areas: the absence of a government-appointed commissioner (along the lines of the Official Languages Commissioner) to monitor treatment of Canadians from ethnocultural groups and the much sought after full government department to oversee multicultural affairs.

Ultimately, both opposition parties supported Bill C-93 as part of a unanimous vote in the

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<sup>55</sup> Canada, *The Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada (Ottawa, 1988). For the act in its entirety see Appendix 2 of this thesis.



House of Commons, despite concerns that it was weak. This, along with the relative smooth sailing of the legislation through the committee stage reinforced the idea that multiculturalism was still viewed by the main political parties as a "motherhood issue".

In the end, Bill C-93 had laudable objectives and was a modest improvement over the policy legacy inherited by the Liberal government. In particular it affirmed that all ministers and federal institutions have a responsibility to advance multiculturalism. As such, it raised the federal government's capacity to play a more active role in the promotion and defence of ethnocultural equality. But it does fall short in certain areas. The Act requires the federal government to work in a manner consistent with Canada's multicultural character, but such a promise is quite vague. Although it recognizes that Canada is indeed multicultural, the legislation does not provide a clear indication of what multiculturalism means, or how to be consistent with it. In this sense it does little to counter the perception that multiculturalism is an abstract concept with little substantive merit over and above its symbolic functions. Further, while it says the government should ensure that Canadians of all origins have equal opportunity to work and be promoted in federal institutions, it does not say how this will be accomplished. The most significant requirement of the Multiculturalism Act is for the government to provide annual report detailing how they have been "multicultural" over the past year. But there are no specific guidelines, no penalties for failure, and no *significant* efforts to link multiculturalism to a wider discourse.<sup>56</sup> More significant structural reforms aimed at making multiculturalism an operating principle of the Canadian state and private institutions, such as the Standing

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<sup>56</sup> Audrey Kobayashi, "Multiculturalism and Making Difference: Comments on the State of Multiculturalism Policy in Canada," *Australian-Canadian Studies*, Vo.17, No.2, 1999, 35.

Committee's recommendation to place the major Canadian cultural agencies under the jurisdiction of the proposed Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, were rejected by the Progressive Conservative government.<sup>57</sup> In practice, the legislation confirmed the increasing institutionalization of multiculturalism, but did so without deviating from a vision of the policy that operates primarily to affirm the existence of ethnocultural diversity in the symbolic realm. Nonetheless it conveyed the desire on the part of the state to elevate the cause of ethnocultural groups in the federal policy process. This had the net affect of extending material (albeit modest) and symbolic benefits of citizenship to politically marginalized identities.

#### *4.2 Contesting Ideas*

The commitment to the equity through the Charter process and the cautious continuation of multicultural support through the Multicultural Act demonstrated a willingness on the part of the Canadian state to embrace ethnocultural diversity. But even the limited and largely symbolic success of these commitments is brought into question when held up against other and often concurrent policy decisions made during the 1980s. These decisions, on issues ranging from employment equity to constitutional reform exposed the degree to which the government was prepared to wilfully contain the role of the federal state in dealings with the private sector and in the interests of national unity. Equity and support for multiculturalism would not be abandoned, but it would have to compete with a discourse that viewed ethnocultural diversity as a challenge, if not a

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<sup>57</sup> Stasiulis, "The Symbolic Mosaic Reaffirmed," 103.

burden. As the next issue shows, the passage of employment equity legislation in the late 1980s was designed to project an image of a national government sensitive to Canada's ethnocultural reality, but in a direction that displayed an unwillingness to jeopardise the market oriented strategies that had become such a central feature of its political agenda.<sup>58</sup>

### *Employment Equity*

Unlike the Charter process, which originated independently of the desire to evaluate or strengthen the representation of ethnocultural identities, multiculturalism was linked to employment equity as a means of orienting the policy towards new priorities while responding to its perceived shortcomings. In particular multiculturalism would be connected to employment equity as a means of furthering federal efforts to counter discrimination. Similarly, employment equity began an extension of the Liberal agenda in areas of social policy to promote greater social justice through equality of opportunity. In keeping with this program, in its 1983 Throne Speech the last Trudeau government said it was time to expand the emphasis on equity by creating the "Just Society for women". The Charter had begun the process by constitutionally affirming the right to equal protection and benefit of the law, and guaranteeing that such protection did not preclude affirmative action programs. But despite the emphasis on equality in the Charter, discriminatory practices did not cease to exist, and more importantly the nature of the Charter did not offer specific prescriptive remedies. Designed as a passive instrument subject to

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<sup>58</sup> Stasiulis and Abu-Laban argue that multiculturalism and employment equity gave the Progressive Conservatives "an image of being a government of liberal conscience on race and ethnic issues." See "Ethnic Minorities and the Politics of Limited Inclusion in Canada", in *Canadian Politics: An Introduction to the Discipline*, eds. Alain G. Gagnon and James Bickerton (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), 598.

limitations – secs. 1 and 33 – the equality clauses of the Charter do not require governments to promote equality. As David Matas notes, it does not oblige them to do something, it just prevents them from doing certain things; governments that do nothing to improve the plight of minorities are in full compliance with the Charter.<sup>59</sup>

In response to these shortcomings, especially the absence of a proactive instrument to build equity, the case for employment equity legislation was made. As an institutional approach, any prospective policy tool would need to examine the composition and treatment of the workforce, and remedy some of the disadvantages that led to the unfair treatment of certain groups. The overall goal would be to legislate fair treatment and equitable representation in the workplace, with an understanding that employment opportunities have a significant impact on a person's life chances and social position.<sup>60</sup> While research in the social sciences had supported this hypothesis, what was needed was the political will to operationalise the underlying principles. In effect, support for employment equity would stand as a clear test of the resolve to implement the Just Society; to demonstrate the link between social rights on the one hand, and individual freedoms and guarantees such as those found in the Charter on the other. This depended on accepting that employment equity was a commitment to the social and economic rights of welfare distribution and without these guarantees, rights with respect to the state would diminish in importance.

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<sup>59</sup> David Mattas, "The Charter and Racism," *Constitutional Forum*, 2:82, 1990, 84.

<sup>60</sup> See Hermann Kurthen, "The Canadian Experience with Multiculturalism and Employment Equity: Lessons From Europe," *New Community*, 23(2): April 1997, 255.

Throughout 1983, the Liberal commitment to this relationship was evident through a number of decisions.<sup>61</sup> The government instituted an affirmative action program introduced to bring about the equitable representation and distribution of women, Aboriginals, and persons with disabilities in the federal Public Service.<sup>62</sup> The House of Commons established a Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society, which made its report public in March 1984. The report *Equality Now!*, called for the removal of obstacles that prevented the full participation of citizens in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the country.<sup>63</sup> Anticipating the response of the Committee, the Liberal government established in July of 1983 a Royal Commission chaired by Judge Rosalie Abella to thoroughly investigate equal employment opportunities. Towards the end of 1983 these initiatives were augmented by the National Strategy on Race Relations established through the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Department of the Secretary of State. As further evidence of the government's willingness to promote social justice, the Strategy was designed to develop and implement programs aimed at eliminating racial discrimination in Canadian institutions.<sup>64</sup> The purpose here

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<sup>61</sup> One could certainly argue that the Liberals waited until very late into their mandate to move on employment equity, thereby leaving, as fate would have it, a new Progressive Conservative government to implement one of the cornerstones of the equity agenda.

<sup>62</sup> Pilot projects were first introduced by the Treasury Board in 1980, experience from these projects was used to establish the guidelines adopted on a wider scale in 1983. A recent survey of employment equity in Canada since its inception is, Annis May Timpson, *Driven Apart Women's Employment Equality and Child Care in Canadian Public Policy* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001).

<sup>63</sup> Canada, House of Commons, *"Equality Now!, Report of the Special Committee on Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society, 32<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 1983-1984* (Ottawa, 1984), 1.

<sup>64</sup> The commitment to social justice during the Trudeau era is evident in the confluence of policies in areas of immigration, multiculturalism, and citizenship according to Charles Ungerleider. See "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship: The Development of the Canadian Social Justice Infrastructure," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 24: 3, 1992.

was in keeping with the dominant paradigm supported by an activist state; “enhancing the role of the federal government in setting examples and playing a continuing role in promoting institutional change to eliminate discrimination based on race.”<sup>65</sup>

The Liberals were, however, unable to pursue their strategy any further. In the fall of 1984, the Progressive Conservatives under Brian Mulroney were elected with a substantial majority government and a broad neo-liberal agenda. Even in its infancy it became possible to discern a governing agenda that called for a reduced role for the state in the economy and in Canadian society.<sup>66</sup> The central tenets of this strategy, borrowed from British and American politics of the late 1970s and early 1980s, rested largely on market-based ideas of efficiency, productive growth, innovation and risk, individual opportunity and responsibility.<sup>67</sup> More than a casual convergence of economic policies, the new government’s embrace of neo-liberalism rested on the fundamental belief that a reduction in the scale of public spending could control inflation and rescue the economy from an overly intrusive state.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, this meant subscribing to the premises of monetarist economic ideas, with a series of extensive measures to widen the scope of markets in social life as the natural result. These measures would come to include deregulation, privatization, tax cuts, dismantling of social services, campaigns of state

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<sup>65</sup> Canada, Multiculturalism Canada, *National Strategy on Race Relations* (Ottawa, Dec. 1983), 4-5.

<sup>66</sup> As Michael J. Prince reports, in the months after coming to power in September 1984, the Mulroney government undertook a series of initiatives designed to scale back the size and influence of the federal government. See “The Mulroney Agenda: A Right Turn for Ottawa,” in *How Ottawa Spends, 1986-87: Tracking the Tories*, ed. Michael J. Prince (Toronto: Methuen, 1986), 6.

<sup>67</sup> M. Burke, C. Mooers and J. Shields, eds. *Restructuring and Resistance: Canadian Public Policy in an Age of Global Capitalism* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> For a perspective on the economic ideas of the Mulroney government see the contributions to *Canada Under Mulroney: An End of Term Report*, eds. Andrew B Gollner and Daniel Salée (Montreal: Vehicule, 1988).

deficit and debt reduction, the opening of doors to foreign investment, and attacks on trade-union rights.<sup>69</sup>

Social justice, to the extent that it could be pursued through public policy, would not be a central concern of the incoming prime minister. Rather, the newly elected government was primarily interested in social policy through an attack on universality as an effective means to address the deficit and rein in high government spending. This conception of social policy implied a "residual" role for the state; providing direct services to individuals when the family, local community, and market economy proved ineffective at mediating relations and redistributing wealth.<sup>70</sup> This differed appreciably from the Liberal government's approach under Trudeau and then John Turner, which in spite of having governed through a recession, had argued that major reforms in social spending would endanger any economic recovery.<sup>71</sup>

On employment equity, therefore, the Progressive Conservatives were at best reluctant participants. Events, nonetheless, had a way of forcing the new government's hand. A year after their election victory the Abella Commission's report, *Equality in Employment*, was tabled before Parliament. Pressure from women's groups, the disabled,

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<sup>69</sup> William K. Carroll and Murray Shaw, "Consolidating a Neoliberal Policy Bloc in Canada, 1976 to 1996," *Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, 2001, 196.

<sup>70</sup> Rather than an issue of equity, the newly elected government was chiefly interested in social policy to the extent that the "defeat" of universality would be an effective means to address the deficit and rein in high government spending. See Ernie Lightman, *Social Policy in Canada* (Toronto: OUP, 2003), 154.

<sup>71</sup> Initial assessments that the Progressive Conservatives were not interested in deviating from the Liberal record were wrong, but can be understood in light of comments made by Mulroney as he entered the leadership race in 1983. Speaking against the economic policies of Ronald Reagan, Mulroney argued: "This is not the United States. We have evolved over the years our own society which has always been hallmarked by a degree of compassion which should under no circumstances ever be vitiated." Quoted in, Michael J. Prince, "What Ever Happened to Compassion? Liberal Social Policy 1980-84," in *How Ottawa Spends, 1984: The New Agenda*, ed. A. M. Maslove (Toronto: Methuen, 1984), 113.

and visible minorities to implement the recommendations within the report could not easily be discounted or ignored.<sup>72</sup> The Commission had effectively set the focus of public discourse by arguing in favour of an interventionist strategy that emphasized government leadership in policy-making. The report consequently viewed employment equity as a strategy needed to “open equitably the competition for employment opportunities to those arbitrarily excluded”.<sup>73</sup> In addition it expressed the belief that all individuals, regardless of their personal characteristics, should be treated fairly in recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, dismissals, and any other employment decisions. Most importantly, it argued that systemic discrimination was creating employment barriers that could only be dismantled through instructive policy action.<sup>74</sup> In effect, legislation was needed to replace inefficient and voluntary good faith efforts to remedy workplace inequality.

Following the report the Progressive Conservative government issued its response in which it accepted the need to develop a legislative response to discrimination in the workplace.<sup>75</sup> Their suggested course of action, however, fell short of agreeing to all of the commission's recommendations. While they were sympathetic to the idea that measures were needed to remove barriers within the federal public service, they were hesitant to interfere with private sector employers. After all, at a time when Canadian firms were being encouraged by the new government to become more competitive internationally,

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<sup>72</sup> Cecille Marie DePass, *From Periphery to Periphery: Employment Equity for Visible Minorities in Canada* (Ph.D. diss., University of Calgary, 1988), 196.

<sup>73</sup> Canada, *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*, Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (Ottawa, 1984), 1.

<sup>74</sup> Systemic discrimination can be understood as the unintentional consequence of employment practices and policies that have a differential effect on specific groups.

<sup>75</sup> Canada, *Employment Equity. A Response to the Abella Commission of Inquiry on Equality in Employment. General Summary* (Ottawa, 1985).



how would the business community perceive the imposition of further regulation on private industry? Impressions aside, the decision to move carefully on employment equity reflected the prevailing neo-liberal philosophy within the government that viewed private enterprise as the engine of economic growth, and a sphere already restrained under the burden of excessive state interference. In fact the growing disposition of the Mulroney administration was that government itself was a problem. The degree to which government was held responsible for inefficiency and mismanagement of the public purse reflected the Progressive Conservative administration's view that, at a minimum, its primary responsibility was to limit its negative impact on the economy. For Mulroney, a bloated and unwieldy bureaucracy exemplified the problems of an interventionist and free-spending government, and should in most matters take a cue from the private sector rather than prescribing that it follow it. As Donald Savoie notes, wanting the bureaucracy to behave more like private firms the new prime minister "took dead aim at the civil service, arguing that it had become unresponsive, costly, and largely ineffective. Like Thatcher and Reagan, Mulroney wanted a public sector that emulated the private sector."<sup>76</sup>

Launched on a course they had not chosen, the Progressive Conservative government became focused on casting any prospective employment equity policy in the best possible terms.<sup>77</sup> This meant "spinning" employment equity as an exercise designed

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<sup>76</sup> Donald J. Savoie, *Thatcher, Reagan, Mulroney: In Search of a New Bureaucracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 10. Although not as ideological as either Reagan or Thatcher, Savoie points out that the course charted by Mulroney was strikingly similar to theirs.

<sup>77</sup> It is likely that rejecting a policy viewed as a strategy to eliminate the effects of discrimination (or that individuals be treated fairly in the workplace) would have resulted in strong opposition among the public, and thereby would come at a high political cost.

to promote equal opportunity rather than affirmative action. Lessons from the American experience with affirmative action, a history recorded in the report of the Abella Commission, had exposed the controversial nature of any effort that was perceived by the general population as intervening to improve the equality of a target group at the expense of merit.<sup>78</sup> It was therefore not unexpected to hear Flora Macdonald, then Minister of Employment and Immigration, in statements before the House of Commons speaking of employment equity in the context of “fair access to training and development” – avoiding wherever possible making reference to the notion that the policy would lead to mandatory preferences in hiring.<sup>79</sup> This deliberate stance reflected the government's predisposition towards a passive and minimalist view of government responsibility to redress a widely acknowledged and historically based systemic problem of exclusion. It also reinforced the growing perception that policy innovation and leadership from the Progressive Conservatives in matters of social policy would be conspicuously absent.<sup>80</sup>

Even though the Progressive Conservatives were willing to move forward on employment equity, the sincerity of their commitment came into question when countervailing decisions appeared to minimise the strength of their resolve. At the same

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<sup>78</sup> For a survey of employment equity programs in comparative perspective see Harish C. Jain, Peter J. Sloane, and Frank M. Horowitz, *Employment Equity and Affirmative Action: An International Comparison* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

<sup>79</sup> Flora Macdonald, Statement to the House of Commons, March 8, 1985, quoted in DePass, *From Periphery to Periphery: Employment Equity for Visible Minorities in Canada*, 204.

<sup>80</sup> Although it might be argued that the Liberals, had they been in power at this time, would have engaged in a similar attempt to defuse opposition to employment equity, such a defence misses a central point. There is a difference between trying to market a policy to the widest possible constituency, and defending a policy because the central ideas that it embodies are believed to be intrinsically defensible. Often a measure of the commitment a government has to a policy is the degree to which it is in keeping with their guiding philosophy (if any), or at least an underlying principle to which they subscribe. On this mark the Conservative agenda does not display a particularly strong synergy with the principles espoused by employment equity.

time as the government was considering employment equity legislation, significant reductions in the public service were being planned. One of the consequences of these reductions, as revealed at the time by Swimmer and Gollesch, is that employees let go would be classified as surplus, thereby allowing them to have priority over any new jobs for which they were qualified over the next four years. With a significantly higher proportion of men in the existing federal workforce, this meant that a predominantly male surplus pool of employees would still have precedence over new jobs before women could be considered under employment equity legislation. As the authors admit, "the priority system is a humane way to deal with potential layoffs but it further reduces job opportunities for women. Whatever the merits of a smaller government on grounds of restraint or ideology, its impact on affirmative action will be devastating. In this context, the debate of whether targets are "quotas" is largely beside the point. The "targets" in most affirmative action plans cannot be met."<sup>81</sup>

The view that the government was interested in promoting equal opportunity was strengthened by action in 1985 to include visible minorities as a designated group in the Public Service.<sup>82</sup> Here the government effort was largely confined to mandating departments to establish and implement "action plans"; no quotas, however, would be fixed on the numbers to be hired. As a response to discrimination, the use of administrative policy in this way can be an acceptable means of promoting equity, but as

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<sup>81</sup> Gene Swimmer and Darlene Gollesch, "Affirmative Action for Women in the Federal Public Service," in *How Ottawa Spends, 1986-87: Tracking the Tories*, ed. Michael J. Prince (Toronto: Methuen, 1986), 248.

<sup>82</sup> Under the guidelines, federal departments were to draw up action plans to offset discriminatory practices, establish numerical targets, and establish temporary measures to redress past discrimination. While most government department were covered by this program, the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP, Crown corporations and federal agencies with few employees, were not. See Canada, *Equality for All*, Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights (Ottawa: October 1985), 107.

the Abella Commission pointed out, mandatory programs that have the weight of law behind them do more than simply encourage voluntary compliance, they have the chance of greatest success. This stems from the view that the benevolence of employers and the discretion of administrators cannot be entrusted with remedying obstacles in the workplace that are daunting and self-perpetuating. In the face of these assumptions the Abella Commission had put forward an extensive list of recommendations – 117 in total – the essence of which called for legislation requiring: all federally regulated departments to implement employment equity; a requirement to collect and submit data concerning the participation rates, occupational distribution, and income levels of designated groups; and an enforcement mechanism.<sup>83</sup> The resulting federal legislation, Bill C-62, introduced before parliament in 1985 and passed in the following year would incorporate some of these recommendations, but ultimately failed to capture the spirit of the Abella report.

On the surface the main objective of the legislation echoed the recommendations of the Abella Commission:

To achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability... and to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, in a visible minority in Canada, by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.<sup>84</sup>

Apart from its symbolic message the legislation was far from successful in providing substance and compliance for designated groups in the workforce. Among its major

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<sup>83</sup> Canada, *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*, 255.

<sup>84</sup> Canada, House of Commons, Bill C62, *An Act Respecting Employment Equity*. First Session, 33<sup>rd</sup> Parliament. Introduced June 27, 1985, Passed April 23, 1986.

limitations was its failure to incorporate an effective monitoring and enforcement capability, sanctions for failure to implement employment equity, and the absence of programs such as public day care and training.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, while the Abella Commission had argued for mandatory employment equity legislation for both the federally regulated private sector and the federal public service, the legislation applied only to federally regulated firms with more than 100 employees – which at the time comprised approximately five percent of the total Canadian labour force.

One of the most contentious provisions of the legislation dealt with reporting procedures and enforcement of federal guidelines. Large companies under federal jurisdiction were to file yearly reports on the number of women, Aboriginals, members of visible minorities, and disabled people they employed, along with their corresponding occupational and salary levels. In the event that some chose not to comply, they *could* be fined up to \$50,000. The Canadian Human Rights Commission was to enforce compliance by examining the companies' reports. Those found to be discriminating against members of the target groups could then be the subject of a complaint.

This arrangement had never satisfied the groups the law was supposed to have helped, leading some to call the legislation a "toothless sham" which politely asked employers to voluntarily hire women and minorities.<sup>86</sup> Unlike the policy of multiculturalism, where targeted groups had rallied in support of government action, the Employment Equity Act was opposed by a coalition of 20 organizations, including those who represented constituencies that were meant to benefit from the legislation, such as

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<sup>85</sup>See Patricia McDermott, "Pay and Employment Equity: Why Separate Policies?" in *Women and Canadian Public Policy*, ed. Janine Brodie (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 96.

<sup>86</sup> "Take another stab at job equity law"; Editorial, *Toronto Star*, Mar 24, 1986, A12.

the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Canadian Labour Congress. They viewed the potential \$50,000 fine for non-reporting as little more than a distraction for major companies who would regard the figure as a cost of doing business. In point of fact the legislation imposed a penalty *only* if the employer failed to report, nothing prevented the employer from indicating that no progress on employment equity had been made. No matter how dismal an employer's record with respect to hiring practices were, nothing in the legislation obliged it to improve. The government's strategy was ostensibly designed to increase the representation of targeted groups through voluntary "good faith" efforts. Even the Canadian Human Rights Commission found fault with the logic of the approach. In its 1988 Annual Report to Parliament, they argued:

A complaint-driven mechanism may be effective where discrimination is an exception to normal behaviour, and can be identified as such and remedied accordingly. But experience has shown that in certain sectors, sex-based pay inequities are the rule rather than the exception. Complaint initiation alone cannot resolve this kind of problem... The evidence, in our view is clear that, without a positive obligation to develop and implement pay equity plans, employers will continue to show no more than half-hearted compliance.<sup>87</sup>

The criticism of the legislation also extended beyond stakeholders to include, most notably, the Liberal opposition under the leadership of John Turner. At the Liberal national convention in 1986 he argued, "[t]here is no enforcement mechanism. It's like mobilizing a policy against stealing and then proposing no penalty against it when somebody is caught. And what is worse, now that the legislation is there it's been used as an excuse to do nothing more. That's not good enough."<sup>88</sup> Although clearly partisan in the

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<sup>87</sup> Canada, Canadian Human Rights Commission, *Annual Report 1988* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1989), 34.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in, "Delegates Watch A Revitalized Leader Who's Been Transformed By The Test Turner, The 'Reformed Bum-Patter' Impresses At Women's Meeting," *The Whig – Standard*, Nov. 28, 1986, 1.

debate over employment equity, the Liberal response was to call for strengthening the enforcement procedures and extending the reach of the legislation beyond its original scope and application. The party would have to wait until their return to power before new legislation could clarify and strengthen employment equity.<sup>89</sup> Whereas the original 1986 statute depended to a considerable extent on the complaints of discrimination brought under the Canadian Human Rights Act, the revised Employment Equity Act in 1995 would place the onus to achieve representative workplaces on employers by creating compliance monitoring through a number of obligations.<sup>90</sup> In comparison, this has led some to suggest that apart from the creation of a data bank on federally regulated employees, the impact of the 1986 Employment Equity Act was largely symbolic.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the efforts of the Progressive Conservative government to mitigate opposition to the policy, some of it reportedly within its own cabinet, the legislation was still regarded as a failure in consensus politics.<sup>92</sup> By enacting a weaker statement on employment equity than had been called for by the Abella report the Progressive Conservatives had hoped to appease two constituencies. But for opponents of

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<sup>89</sup> The new legislation in the form of Bill C-64, approved on December 15, 1995, would contain three main elements to amend the original Employment Equity Act, namely: the inclusion of the Federal Public Service under the Act; the clarification and guidance regarding obligations of employers; and the creation of a mechanism to gain compliance and employment equity. The inclusion of the Federal Public Service under this Act increased its coverage to approximately 900,000 employees or about 8 percent of the Canadian Labour Force. The history of employment equity in Canada is chronicled at, <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/lp/lo/lswc/we/information/history.shtml&hs=wzp>

<sup>90</sup> On the changes to Employment Equity in the 1990s see Kim England and Gunter Gad, "Social policy at work? Equality and equity in women's paid employment in Canada," *GeoJournal*, 2002, Vol.56, Issue, 4.

<sup>91</sup> M.S. Mentzer, "The Canadian Experience with Employment Equity Legislation," *International Journal of Value-Based Management*; 2002; 15, 1, 38.

<sup>92</sup> The policy apparently had few supporters in the federal cabinet. See, for example, *Toronto Star*, Editorial, Mar 24, 1986, A12.

employment equity the mere suggestion of federal legislation was cause for alarm, while for its supporters legislation "without teeth" was an expression of weakness in the face of corporate pressure. More to the point, the Progressive Conservative incursion into employment equity revealed that the government chose not solely to downplay the strength of equality through its legislation; they chose to do so in a way that limited the terrain of government intervention. Although the Employment Equity Act demonstrated that the national government *did* have a role to play in promoting equity, it was understood that the public interest would not be accorded more weight in policy calculations than private interests. In effect it demonstrated that under Mulroney, the Progressive Conservatives were prepared in certain policy realms to transfer autonomy to the market and thereby support the logic of a limited interventionist state.<sup>93</sup>

### *The Meech Lake Accord*

The Charter process and the Multiculturalism Act demonstrated the willingness on the part of the Canadian state in the 1980s to recognize ethnocultural diversity. But true to form established in the Trudeau years, the acceptance of multicultural principles under the Progressive Conservatives would have to be measured against the requirements of national unity. The message from Ottawa was that the future of Canadian federalism

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<sup>93</sup> Herein is one of the first lessons of public policy under the neo-liberal state. As Jessop maintains, while the state under neo-liberalism continues to be responsive to democratic pressures and will engage in a dialogue on the need to protect and promote the material well-being of individuals, it is nevertheless prepared to subordinate social policy to the demands of labour market flexibility and structural competitiveness. See "Towards a Schumpeterian Workfare State? Preliminary Remarks on Post-Fordist Political Economy," *Studies in Political Economy*, 40, 1993, 9. This view was reinforced by the prevailing private sector argument during the first Mulroney term that public policy was insufficiently attuned to the need for efficiency and increased productivity. A case in point can be found in the 1986 policy paper of the Business Council of National Issues, in which the senior voice of business in Canada argues for major reforms in social policy. See *Social Policy Reform and the National Agenda* (Ottawa, December, 1986).



required efforts to reconcile national or linguistic cleavages. This meant that programmes designed to recognise ethnocultural identities would not be accorded more weight in federal policy calculations than initiatives designed to manage the ongoing, and by the late 1980s growing, constitutional crisis involving Quebec. Multiculturalism during this period was not seen as undermining social cohesion and a sense of community; rather it was viewed as peripheral to federal efforts designed to enable the government of Quebec to give its willing assent to the Constitution. To a lesser degree, attempts to minimize discussion of multiculturalism at the national level would have the additional benefit of deflecting a challenge to the Quebec government's desire to be recognized as a distinct society. As a consequence, multiculturalism could only exist in a constitutional context in which the traditional two-nation concept of Canada would not be sacrificed.

Support for bilingualism, for example, was defended by the Mulroney government in part because it was viewed as serving rather than hindering the *de facto* special status that Quebec had secured in the Canadian polity.<sup>94</sup> If one of the goals of the new Progressive Conservative prime minister was to reintegrate Quebec in the constitutional family with “honour and enthusiasm”, to secure *de jure* special status, then it made sense at a very basic level to demonstrate to Quebecers the commitment of the federal government to protect and support the French language throughout the country.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> For instance, program spending for multiculturalism in the first four years of the Conservative administration, although higher than under the Liberals, would still approximate the support for multiculturalism relative to that of bilingualism under the Trudeau government – at no time during the first term did it rise above eight percent. Based on public account figures reproduced in Daiva Stasiulis, “The Symbolic Mosaic Reaffirmed,” 95.

<sup>95</sup> Mulroney's campaign in the 1984 election opened the door to debate about the need to induce Quebec to formally (i.e. constitutionally) accept the Canada Act which it had not signed in 1982. This meant, of course, going beyond bilingualism which from the perspective of most French-speaking Quebecers was

During the constitutional debate over the Meech Lake Accord the extent to which the Progressive Conservative government and the Prime Minister were prepared to uphold the traditional English-French cleavage of power in Canadian politics in their quest to restore national unity was made clear. The story of the Meech Lake Accord from the perspective of multiculturalism is consequently about the degree to which the policy was relegated to the background in debates about the redesign of the constitutional order.

One of the familiar opinions about the successful negotiations that came to be known as the "Quebec Round" was that the constitutional agenda was intentionally limited by the provincial premiers and the federal government to Quebec's demands.<sup>96</sup> The exclusion of other items and interests from the 1987 Constitutional Accord, such as multiculturalism, was therefore not to be taken as proof that issues not dealt with had been ignored, rejected or deemed unimportant. Multiculturalism and Aboriginal rights in the Charter of Rights were to be afforded some measure of protection by the Accord – a protection that was not part of the original document. Specifically, the proposed amendment to section 2 in the *Constitution Act, 1867* that stated that the constitution would be interpreted in a manner consistent with the linguistic duality of the country and Quebec as a distinct society, was to be held in check by the inclusion of a protective clause added subsequent to the meeting of the first ministers. Section 16 of the Accord was to detail that constitutional provisions relating to multiculturalism and Aboriginal

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never interpreted as a sincere gesture on the part of the Trudeau government to recognise Quebec's special constitutional status. But bilingualism as a matter of principle would still have to be defended.

<sup>96</sup> Those demands were the following: the constitutional recognition of Quebec as a distinct society; the right to opt out of new federal programs with full financial compensation; an expanded provincial veto for constitutional amendments; a role in appointments to the Supreme Court; and the constitutional entrenchment of Quebec's role in immigration. Other provisions in the accord, such as Senate reform, were not among the demands from Quebec but came chiefly from the Westerns premiers.

rights, including two provisions of the Charter, would not be altered by the proposed section 2. Appearing before the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the 1987 Constitutional Accord, Senator Lowell Murray, then Minister of Intergovernmental Relations, sought to justify section 16 on the grounds that it was an overly cautious measure that would offer some comfort to those concerned about the impact of distinct society on the interpretive clauses of the Charter. He noted, "Frankly, we do not think the interpretative clause respecting the distinct society or the linguistic duality of Canada could conceivably detract or diminish from those other recognitions in the Constitution. But because multiculturalism and native peoples related to groups with a cultural aspect, it was thought appropriate to put in that nonderogation clause."<sup>97</sup>

This view of section 16 was challenged by Dalhousie University law professor Wayne MacKay who claimed that the provisions dealing with Canada's multicultural heritage and with Aboriginal peoples conflicted with distinct society. He argued:

It [section 16] states that section 2, distinct society, will have no impact on multiculturalism and no impact on native rights. I think this is unlikely to be true. I think what is going to happen is that the courts are going to have to make some difficult value choices in many cases between promoting a distinct society in Quebec and in doing so limiting the rights of certain ethnic groups or multiculturalism in Canada. In some cases there may be difficult choices between the rights of aboriginal people in Canada and the distinct society in Quebec. The nature of these principles in constitutional law is that they do conflict.<sup>98</sup>

Although direct evidence of the impact of section 16 is a matter of judgment, there is established proof that ethnocultural groups viewed the 1987 Constitutional Accord with both reservation and disappointment. In their protestations one is

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<sup>97</sup> Canada, *The 1987 Constitutional Accord, Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons* (Ottawa, 1987), ch.6, sec. 42.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, sec. 38.

immediately struck by the similarity with the objections raised by ethnocultural groups during the hearings convened by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s. The issue of contention was not that the Meech Lake Accord described linguistic duality as a fundamental characteristic of Canada; nor was it that Quebec's position within the federation merited some type of special recognition. The major concern for ethnocultural organizations was that the definition of Canada being advanced by the constitutional process included linguistic duality but made no mention of multiculturalism. Moreover, it identified Quebec's distinctness as a central feature of the country's identity but was silent on the contribution made by Canada's ethnocultural mosaic; thereby effectively placing linguistic duality above the multicultural reality of Canadian society. As the committee would note: "Some saw this as a "backward step" from the notion of bilingualism and multiculturalism to bilingualism and biculturalism. Others see the lack of mention of multiculturalism as either an intentional downplaying of Canadians whose ethnic origin is neither English nor French, or as a telling lapse which indicates that Canada's political leaders are insufficiently sensitive to present cultural realities."<sup>99</sup>

The remedy advanced by the Canadian Ethnocultural Council was to amend section 2 to include reference to the multicultural nature of the country, or alternatively to add a new subsection that would also recognize multiculturalism as an interpretive principle within the Constitution. This position was directly supported by the Ukrainian Canadian Committee and implicitly followed the sentiments of the German Canadian Congress and Chinese National Council, who in noting the powerful symbolic role of the

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid. ch. 5, sec. 97.

constitution argued that insofar as the distinct society clause attempted to define Canadian reality it was imperfect and erroneous. The Special Joint Committee politely dismissed these concerns by deferring the consideration of multiculturalism's omission from the Accord to a later time and place, and judged the document worthy of support in its existing form. It noted:

“We see no reason to doubt that First Ministers, all of whom have expressed strong support for multiculturalism, will address this topic in their further constitutional discussions and we have no hesitation in recommending that this topic be added to their agenda at one of their forthcoming conferences. In the interim we do not believe that adoption of the "linguistic duality/distinct society" rule of interpretation will transform our cultural mosaic into a melting pot and we would not recommend rejecting the 1987 Accord because its framers did not go beyond their agreed upon agenda to give multiculturalism the prominence it may one day achieve.”<sup>100</sup>

In the end, it appears that in the debate over the substance of the accord the architects of the deal were preoccupied foremost with recognizing Quebec through special powers in the service of constitutional peace. In other words, in order to facilitate a deal the prime minister and provincial premiers were willing to accept that the province of Quebec was primarily responsible for protecting its culture and people, and its government was to be empowered with specific responsibilities that other provinces might not otherwise want to exercise.

The failure of the 1987 Constitutional Accord – in somewhat dramatic fashion as the self-imposed deadline to unanimously approve it expired in the summer of 1990 – can not be explained simply by the relative indifference to multiculturalism demonstrated throughout the constitutional process. Although many English-speaking Canadians had come to identify with multiculturalism as one of the defining elements of their political

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. ch. 5, sec(s). 102-103.

culture, for them the accord was not a direct repudiation of multicultural principles.<sup>101</sup> Their opposition to the accord and its eventual demise was due to a number of factors, including the process that had created it – negotiations among first ministers behind closed doors. But from the outset, the most disconcerting part of the accord for many Canadians, especially in English Canada, was the distinct-society clause. For people who subscribed to Trudeau's version of federalism that promoted the equality of provinces, the distinct-society clause went too far by creating a special legislative status for one province.<sup>102</sup> This opposition also included those who championed the benefits of multiculturalism and those who thought the distinct society clause threatened the integrity of the equality provisions of the Charter. This helped to make clear that the acceptance of distinct society by constituencies outside of Quebec in the future would have to be balanced against the support the symbolic affirmations and legal protections the Charter had created. But the greatest hostility to special status for Quebec emerged from the principle of equality as the cornerstone of Canadian federalism – a position in the 1990s increasingly articulated by Canada's premiers who would be involved in future constitutional negotiations. It would take another two years before the Progressive Conservative government would be prepared to formally test the depths of this resistance.

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<sup>101</sup> Pierre Fournier makes the case that the Accord failed, in part, due to certain attitudes in English Canada that directly challenged distinct society. Among these attitudes he singles-out multiculturalism, along with American influence and the free trade deal with the United States. As suggested above, although the vision of Canada that most Canadians subscribed to included multiculturalism, it is difficult to accept as the primary impetus behind the refusal to accept special status for Quebec. Pierre Fournier, *Autopsie du Lac Meech: la souveraineté est-elle inévitable?* (Montréal, VLB, 1990).

<sup>102</sup> Clearly many of the opponents framed their opposition to the Meech Lake Accord in terms of the Trudeau vision, notably Clyde Wells. Then premier of Newfoundland, Wells became the most articulate and vocal supporter of the Trudeau vision and opponent of the accord. His cross-country tour in the months before the deadline to approve the accord was designed officially to explain Newfoundland and Labrador's opposition, but it functioned as a demonstration of the degree to which the Trudeau vision had taken root in English Canada and would be defended by the political elite.

### *Conclusion*

Our effort in this chapter was primarily directed at understanding the *pattern* of policy making under the Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments. We maintain that the course of multiculturalism policy in the 1980s followed a fairly routine practice where any innovation followed existing policy processes. There is a high degree of continuity in most public policies and multiculturalism is illustrative of this point. Adjustments to various aspects of the policy took place without *radically* altering the overall configuration of the policy regime. This is vastly different from the type of policy change characterised by an abrupt departure in how a policy is conceived or implemented. This does not imply that ideological considerations were absent from policy calculations about what action, if any, should be taken on multiculturalism. We are mindful the mid-1980s were a transition period for Canadian politics and in particular for multiculturalism. New ideas and agendas were introduced into the policy milieu that set out to challenge established principles. It took time for these ideas and arguments to work against the status quo, and to sufficiently influence the institutional and behavioural legacies of the past. Therefore, while at the policy level multiculturalism experienced incremental change, a sustained critique was being developed that would only later influence policy-making more profoundly and reshape the government's orientation towards ethnocultural diversity.

Nonetheless, in the second half of the chapter we documented instances that have the affect of prompting a qualification to the conventional view of multiculturalism as a policy on the rise. More directly, we demonstrated that the Mulroney government chose consciously to limit its freedom of action in several policy endeavours. An examination

of the debate surrounding the Employment Equity Act exposed the degree to which the government was prepared to wilfully contain the role of the federal state in dealings with the private sector. As for the Meech Lake Accord, the constitutional bargain undertaken with Quebec was seen by ethnocultural groups as challenging the multicultural legacy enshrined by the Charter of Rights and extended through the Multiculturalism Act. Even the limited (i.e. largely symbolic) success of the Multiculturalism Act is brought into question when held up against a standard that seeks to measure the Progressive Conservative government's overall commitment to equality. When viewed in this way the accomplishments of multiculturalism in the latter part of the 1980s diminish in value.

The linkage between multiculturalism and citizenship included other policies and initiatives such as immigration, human rights and social justice. Yet it was multiculturalism more than any other which focused on advancing respect for cultural diversity that came to be identified as one of the central pillars of Canadian citizenship. But by weakening the basis of social assistance through a mixture of social policy "clawbacks" and the abandonment of universality, the interface between multiculturalism and citizenship was compromised. If multiculturalism is about equality, as successive Canadian governments have claimed, then attempts to alter the basis of membership in related policy areas detracts from the overall condition of equality in society. There is, in other words, no separating multiculturalism from other pillars of Canadian citizenship similarly committed to fostering a sense of solidarity and belonging between citizens. And even though the market-driven agenda of the Progressive Conservatives in the 1980s did not especially impact multiculturalism, any diminution in the force of social, political and economic equality rights has the affect of compromising the intent and force of



multicultural accomplishments. For instance, proclaiming that visible minorities should be treated equally while at the same time undermining social programs does not render the work on eliminating racism useless, but it compromises the full impact of social justice.

What is undeniable about the Progressive Conservative agenda is that its retrenchment efforts to dismantle social citizenship rights were inspired by the presumed faults of the alternative paradigm. The Keynesian notion of government regulation and intervention led the new government to blame the country's poor economic performance on an ideology they believed to be outdated, and overly sceptical of the value of the market and the power of private industry. The full weight of these ideas had yet to significantly alter the course of multiculturalism and the all party consensus that existed on the value of ethnocultural pluralism. By the end of the 1980s, the governing Progressive Conservative Party was still publicly defending multiculturalism as policy that contributed rather than detracted from national unity. Their actions, like those of the Liberals before them, demonstrated that the management of ethnocultural diversity was appropriately viewed as an arena in which the state should be involved.

As the next chapter details, by the early 1990s the Conservative neo-liberal agenda carried many more implications for multiculturalism as new political parties and influential players joined the debate over the course of the policy. Paramount among these was the pressure from the Reform Party to end state support for multiculturalism. Reform had staked its claim in federal politics, in part, out of its critique of Canada's pursuit of social justice which they felt undermined individual freedom. This argument was added to the powerful and ongoing discourse about the deficit that would come to

form an important tool to blunt Canada's social programs. For multiculturalism, this meant not only would the cost of the policy become the subject of scrutiny, but it engendered a more fundamental debate on the very rationale for ethnocultural support. The door being opened, the long-standing all-party commitment to multiculturalism was broken, with the policy increasingly cast in some quarters as a threat to social cohesion and national unity. What follows is the account of how a public philosophy and programmatic ideas came to redefine the official multiculturalism agenda towards a new path that ultimately served to contest its legitimacy.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Redefining the Multicultural Agenda: The 1990s**

#### *Introduction*

By the early 1990s, the political consensus in Canada underpinning support for multiculturalism showed signs of coming apart. The market-driven agenda that sought to contain the role of the state provided the Progressive Conservative government with a coherent ideological frame by which it could recast social policy.<sup>1</sup> The government's view of state-society relations was no longer group-based; it had become individual and therefore "diversity" would also be de-collectivised and made more individual. But beyond that, and supporting an attack on multiculturalism, there was the question of national unity. Debate ensued within the agenda-setting network on the proper scope and nature of state activity in the realm of ethnocultural management. Was the government justified in encouraging the pursuit of multicultural identities through the state in an era when multiculturalism was increasingly viewed as a threat to national unity? At the same time, given its pre-existing commitment to foster and promote multiculturalism, how best for the government to organize policy instruments to avoid eliminating multiculturalism altogether? The next decade was devoted to working out these questions and by fixing on a policy adjustment discourse that provided a rationale for multiculturalism reform and in turn contributed to the alteration of the post-war commitment to social citizenship.

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in Chapter 4 the blueprint for this public philosophy was articulated by the Macdonald Commission. On the influence of the Commission see Jonathan R. Kesselman, "Labour and Social Policy Impacts of the Macdonald Commission Report," Prepared for the conference on The Macdonald Commission Report 20 Years On: Its Recommendations, Subsequent Experience, and Lessons for the Next 20 Years, Toronto, C.D. Howe Institute. December 9, 2004.

The purpose of this line of inquiry is to establish a measure of logical congruence. Congruence refers to the connection between focusing events and ideological paradigms that lead to institutional reform.<sup>2</sup> Our objective in this chapter is therefore to locate a degree of inferential correlation that allows us to understand alterations in multiculturalism policy. In sum, this analysis is directed at understanding how policies like multiculturalism are variable in their content and subject to reformulation when new ideas and circumstances reopen debate among individuals and groups within the agenda setting network.

After 1990, three sources of ideas would emerge to dispute the entrenched policy rationale for multiculturalism: political parties, government commissions, and intellectuals. In the first instance, responding to a changing national unity environment and a perceived failure of the policy, the Bloc Québécois added its voice to the longstanding debate on the merits of multiculturalism. Also entering the fray was the Reform Party which argued against the management of ethnocultural diversity based on its critique of the liberal pursuit of social justice, and for scaling down the role of the state. Within the institutions of the federal government, the search for answers in the wake of the failure Meech Lake Accord that led to the Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future, and ultimately the Charlottetown Accord, provided a wealth of ideas that helped crystallize the concerns of various social forces into coherent policy directions. Public dissenters also weighed-in by contesting the design and implications of multicultural

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<sup>2</sup> The logic of such a connection, according to Kenneth Hoover, "resides in the pattern of the congruence, and the fact that the fit is not contradicted by significant evidence." What Hoover introduces as "developmental turning points," we have substituted our use of the concept "focusing events". See "Ideologizing Institutions: Laski, Hayek, Keynes and the Creation of Contemporary Politics," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, February, 1999, 4 (1), 87-115.

legislation. By the mid-1990s, these mobilizations and the ideas that flowed from them began to acquire a certain resonance with the federal party system that came to challenge the orthodoxy of multiculturalism policy. The evolution of these ideas and the policy consequences they provoked are the main subjects of this chapter.

Also central to the course of policy in these years was the arrival in power of a new Liberal government in 1993. Committed to a political agenda remarkably similar to that of their Progressive Conservative predecessors, the Liberals restructured the delivery of social programs in a wide range of areas. The rhetoric behind this effort varied little from one policy field to the next. Reductions in spending or the elimination of programs, the Department of Finance under the Liberals argued, reflected the public's desire for better management of limited financial resources.<sup>3</sup> Multiculturalism policy thereafter was shaped by the sensitivity of the government to the political atmosphere conditioned by the most recent national unity crisis, and the attention to deficit and debt reduction that became the primary focus of the new government's programme. As a consequence, in the spring of 1995 the new federal ministry responsible for multiculturalism, the Department of Canadian Heritage, launched a comprehensive examination of multicultural activities, the first of its kind since the policy was introduced in 1971. Although there have been periodic evaluations of specific programming activities, the latest review was a major development.<sup>4</sup> The main thrust of this process was carried out through an external review in March of 1996 that called for significant changes in the way the federal government

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<sup>3</sup> Such was the tone and justification for "structural change" within the federal budget. Canada, *Budget speech by the Honourable Paul Martin*, Minister of Finance, February 27, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> The release of the *Brighton Report* (so named because it was conducted by Brighton Research, Ottawa) coincided with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of multiculturalism as official state policy in Canada.

both promoted and administered multiculturalism.<sup>5</sup> The redesigned multiculturalism program that emerged in April of 1997 incorporated several of the proposed changes and drew inspiration from the report's theme of renewal.

Tracing the ideas which guided the adoption of a new direction in multiculturalism policy is the focus of this chapter. The first section identifies the introduction of ideas, with attention to the way various actors framed multicultural issues and advanced policy arguments that were linked to a set of beliefs associated with political and economic models of development. These policy paradigms or interpretative frames gave direction and purpose for those advocating a new policy course. The second section considers the adoption of ideas at the federal level, analyzing the strategic choices made in linking ideas to politics. Here we track the process of recasting multiculturalism policy as a reply to political mobilization and a discourse highlighting the viability of ideas in the Canadian political system.

### ***5.1 Introducing Ideas: Multiculturalism and the National Mood***

The 1990s were a period of significant adjustment for the Canadian economy and society. The inflation of the 1970s and 1980s, and the failure of the attendant fiscal instruments designed to fight it, further weakened the grip of the Keynesian economic model within the Canadian state. By the recession of 1990-1991, the leading narrative on the subject of macroeconomic policy in Canada was the need to reduce public spending.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs*, Final Report (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Even before the Macdonald Commission had engaged the Mulroney government on the need for retrenchment efforts, the Liberal government identified public spending in 1978 as a leading cause of

Emphasizing the limits of Keynesianism, the new national economic policy discourse identified excessive government spending as a significant drag on the economy and responsible for an unsustainable level of public debt.<sup>7</sup> At the root of the crisis, it was argued, were welfare state policies that strained the public purse and contributed to a culture of dependency. Canadians, as Lois Harder reveals, had therefore to be convinced that "their personal well-being was a matter of individual responsibility [and] the best thing that governments could do to protect the interests of citizens was to safeguard the market".<sup>8</sup> In political terms, deficit reduction was therefore cast as a painful though necessary redemptive exercise the country needed to follow.<sup>9</sup> Facilitating this course of action in Canada was a shift in the "national mood" towards an understanding that fiscal prudence played a key role in the return to economic prosperity and future stability.<sup>10</sup>

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economic under-performance. For an examination of the impact of this discourse on Canadian income security policy see, Stephen Harold Phillips, "The Demise of Universality: The Politics of Federal Income Security in Canada, 1978-1993," (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the challenges posed to Keynes' model and the welfare state in general see, Michael K. Brown, "Remaking the Welfare State: A Comparative Perspective," in Michael K. Brown, ed., *Remaking the Welfare State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> Lois Harder, "Whither the Social Citizen," in *Reinventing Canada: Politics in the 21st Century*, eds. Janine Brodie and Linda Trimble (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2003), 181.

<sup>9</sup> The Liberal government defended its budget-cutting programme in the mid-1990s as a response to a serious financial crisis with only one responsible course of action. See Canada, House of Commons, *Budget 2000: New Era...New Plan, Report of the Standing Committee on Finance* (December 10, 1999) 36<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 1999). For a critical assessment of these policy choices see G. Swimmer, "Seeing Red -- A Liberal Report Card," in *How Ottawa Spends 1997-98: Seeing Red - A Liberal Report Card*, ed. G. Swimmer (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997), 1-22; and M. J. Prince, "From Health and Welfare to Stealth and Farewell: Federal Social Policy, 1980 to 2000," in Leslie A. Pal (ed.) *How Ottawa Spends 1999-2000, Shape Shifting: Canadian Governance Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), 151-196.

<sup>10</sup> Unlike the influence of causal ideas and beliefs, or what we introduced as ideas in good currency in Chapter 2, the national mood reflects a sense of change in a set of ideas among the public registered through public opinion that become accepted as the prevailing standard. As Leslie A. Pal notes, ideas in good currency may not necessarily (at least initially) reflect widespread consensus among the public; whereas the national mood refers to ideas that have *successfully* captured the attention of the public and are viewed as plausible. See, *Beyond Policy Analysis*, 21.

The impact of this consensus has been significant for policy discussions at the national level. As Leslie A. Pal explains:

If the deficit is the problem, then it implies that government itself is the problem, since the deficit is a reflection of government activity and management. No ministerial musings on the deficit, from Canada to the United Kingdom to New Zealand, have been complete without an explicit attack on the style of government that produced it. The ferocity with which government itself is attacked as a source of problems varies from conservatives to liberals, but the general view is that a minimum, government should "get itself right," and in doing so will provide the best "solution" to its negative impact on the economy and society.<sup>11</sup>

Adding to this narrative in the 1990s was the supporting dialogue about globalization. The power of globalization as an adjunct to the discourse on deficit reduction resided, in part, in its emotive force. While debate continues on the merits and the inevitability of globalization, by the 1990s few Canadians were unaware of the role it played, particularly as an economic force, in reshaping the lives of citizens throughout the world.<sup>12</sup> For policy makers, the power of the conventional story line associated with globalization and its focus on the emergence of a single transnational liberalized economy served to reinforce free market ideas at play in domestic budget-reduction measures. Emphasis on the global "competitiveness" of the Canadian economy, in short, became an attractive backdrop from which governments could pursue market liberal principles of governance. Although an agenda that chose deficit reduction still required that policy ideas be framed and defended, the rhetorical narrative of globalization gave the policy claims of the federal government further corroboration.

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<sup>11</sup> Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis*, 122-123.

<sup>12</sup> This is one of the conclusions reached by Anthony Giddens in his brief book on globalization, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2003).



Against this backdrop the Progressive Conservative governments of the late 1980s and early 1990s moved decisively to entrench market liberalism by negotiating a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement first with the United States and later with Mexico, and by opting for a comprehensive reformulating of social policy.<sup>13</sup> The Progressive Conservatives did more than set their sights on restraining and reducing expenditures in the name of economic renewal, they sought to free the state imprisoned by its activism by limiting its intervention in areas of social policy. What was far-reaching about the Progressive Conservative agenda, therefore, were not the "quantitative" cutbacks of social services but rather the "qualitative" attack on them.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of their first term, the Progressive Conservative government had opted for a comprehensive reformulating of social policy as part of its new fiscal agenda. The principles guiding this program were consistent with the neo-liberal disposition of the government. They included removing work disincentives from social programs and targeting the truly needy; and reducing overall public expenditures.<sup>15</sup> By the time the Progressive Conservatives left office the cumulative result of these initiatives was a significant reduction in federal social programs. Rather than presenting a departure from this practice the new Liberal government accelerated the pace of change by making

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<sup>13</sup> As Steve Patten notes, in the areas of social policy the Conservatives moved with greater purpose in their second term. "By terminating Family Allowances, abolishing the universality of Old Age Security, placing a ceiling on funds transferred to selected provinces under the Canada Assistance Plan, and ending federal contributions to Unemployment Insurance, the Mulroney Conservatives set in motion in a series of fundamental changes to Canada's social welfare policy regime". "Toryism and the Conservative Party in a Neo-liberal Era," in *Party Politics in Canada*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. eds., Hugh Thorburn and Alan Whitehorn (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 1991), 139.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen McBride and John Shields, *Dismantling a Nation: The Transition to Corporate Rule in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997), 23.

<sup>15</sup> Neil Bradford, *Commissioning Ideas: Canadian National Policy in Comparative Perspective* (Toronto: OUP, 1998), 121.

deficit reduction a priority over the maintenance of the social safety net. Determination to reduce the deficit through spending reductions in the social policy area resulted in declining federal transfers to the provinces, thereby dissolving much of the glue that bound citizens together. Although claiming to revitalise social programs, the Liberals' objective was the same as that of their predecessors: to replace what were seen as overly generous programs and remove government from areas best left to the private sector. It became clear the government's argument that cost savings would only be a consequence of program reform, not its cause, could not be credibly sustained.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Party System*

The assumptions and prescriptions of the neo-liberal agenda provided fertile ground for policy debates in Canada throughout the 1990s. A variety of channels ultimately opened to facilitate the growth of these ideas, including the expansion of the national party system. By the 1993 general election, Canada's long standing two-and-a-half-party system had shifted toward a multi-party system with the emergence of two regionally based parties.<sup>17</sup> The success of the Bloc Québécois, which became the Official Opposition in 1993, and the Reform Party, which won the third highest number of seats, epitomized the increasingly fractured nature of the Canadian party system. Both parties flourished at the polls in the 1990s by providing a definition of politics that challenged

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>17</sup> The two-and-a-half-party system referred to above explains the appearance of minor parties alongside the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals in 1921. Throughout much of the 1990s the multi-party system can best be described as a one-party dominant system, wherein one party routinely received at least 40 percent of the national vote. For an account of the party system in the 1990s see R. Kenneth Carty, William Cross and Lisa Young, *Rebuilding Canadian Party Politics* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2000).

the established political order. The Bloc Québécois presented, on the surface, the most perceptible challenge with its support of Quebec sovereignty.<sup>18</sup>

Although the nationalism espoused by the Bloc Québécois superseded the left-right ideological appeal of the party, the antipathy demonstrated by Quebec nationalists towards multiculturalism meant that the partisan consensus on the merits of ethnocultural pluralism would at the very least come to an end. The party was vocal in its opposition to the state-funded policy, arguing that multiculturalism was designed by the federal government to negate Quebec's distinctiveness.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Bloc rejected cultural pluralism as a model for successfully managing inter-group differences in Quebec society. In its place the party advocated integration of cultural communities built around the knowledge and use of the French language. Cultural differences among citizens, they maintained, should be recognized as long as a process of adapting to the social and political life of a francophone society was not impeded.<sup>20</sup> The similarity with the

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<sup>18</sup> The party's basic motivation for running candidates federally was to defend Quebec's interests at the seat of national power. The long-standing mission of the party reflects this sentiment; « La présence du Bloc Québécois rétablit la concordance et la légitimité entre la vision d'un peuple et celle de ses représentantes et représentants élus sur la scène fédérale. Le Bloc Québécois affirme l'existence de la nation québécoise, exige sa reconnaissance et défend les intérêts de ses citoyens et citoyennes ainsi que leur droit de choisir librement leur avenir. » <http://www.blocquebecois.org/fr/historique.asp> (6 juin 2005).

<sup>19</sup> As Bloc Québécois MP Christiane Gagnon has noted, "the whole dialectic of two founding peoples with their own language and culture was submerged and diluted in this ocean of other languages and cultures" See "Bloc Québécois: Integration Rather Than Multiculturalism", in *The Battle Over Multiculturalism Does it Help or Hinder Canadian Unity?*, Volume 1, eds. Andrew Cardozo and Louis Musto (Pearson-Shoyama Institute, 1997), 43. Also, refer to section A of Bloc Québécois, *La déclaration de principe et les orientations adoptées au Congrès de 2000*, adoptés au congrès du 28 au 30 janvier, Montréal.

<sup>20</sup> Christiane Gagnon, House of Commons, Hansard, April 5, 1995. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 35<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 1st Session, 1994-1996, vol. 133, No.184, April 5, 1995 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1995). This was the Bloc's official position as recent as the 2004 election where the party noted their intent, « à continuer de promouvoir et défendre une citoyenneté québécoise ouverte, fondée sur la langue française, la culture, un héritage culturel en constante évolution et la participation des citoyens aux institutions publiques du Québec. » Bloc Québécois, *Une société inclusive à notre image*, Plate-forme à l'intention des groupes ethnoculturels, préparée par la Commission de la citoyenneté du Bloc Québécois, 2004. [http://www.bloc.org/archivage/plate\\_forme\\_ethnoculturel.pdf](http://www.bloc.org/archivage/plate_forme_ethnoculturel.pdf)

government of Quebec's official policy of integration described as "interculturalism" is not coincidental. The objective of this provincial policy, expressed by way of a written "moral contract", was designed to communicate to newly arrived immigrants that Quebec society accepted and fostered diversity yet expected that its citizens would participate in a common civic culture that is French-speaking.<sup>21</sup> For the government of Quebec, as with the Bloc Québécois, language became the central policy instrument aimed at socializing Quebecers irrespective of their origins and promoting cultural exchange between them. In this respect the Bloc's position on multiculturalism spoke directly to the imperative of securing the existence of the French language and culture in Quebec, thereby extending beyond the critique of the federal policy as a ploy to undermine Quebec nationalism by eroding support for the two founding nation's thesis.

Historically, the prospect of cultural assimilation has provided successive Quebec governments with the justification to undertake legislative measures designed to actively intervene in the process of integrating new immigrants.<sup>22</sup> In this vein the Bloc's hostility to multiculturalism, like that of many Quebec francophones, did not result from a principled opposition to state intervention in areas of cultural management.<sup>23</sup> Rather it stemmed from a profound disagreement over the terms of multicultural integration that appeared to frustrate rather than facilitate the survival of the "French fact" in North

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<sup>21</sup> The understanding is clearly outlined by the Quebec government. See <http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/francais/avantages-quebec/societe.html>

<sup>22</sup> Bill 22 (*Loi sur la langue officielle*) and later Bill 101 (*Charte de la langue française*) were conscious attempts to manage the integration of non-French speakers through the passage of language legislation.

<sup>23</sup> Insight into attempts by the Quebec government to tackle issues of diversity in the post-referendum era can be found in Micheline Labelle, "The Politics of Managing Diversity: What is at Stake in Quebec?" Paper presented at the Conference *Quebec and Canada in the New Century: New Dynamics, New Opportunities* (Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 2003).

America. Consistent with this view, the *idea* of state intervention designed to accomplish collective goals was not attacked or undermined. What remained was a critique of multiculturalism policy that was based on a nationalist discourse structured around the use of the state to promote an autonomous Quebec identity.

While the Bloc's policy stance represented the necessary conditions for launching further debate on the merits of multiculturalism, the ideas upon which the objections were based were not sufficiently influential to consolidate institutional change. The policy influence of these ideas has yet to sufficiently convince other interests in terms of clarifying goals and motivating their actions. Moreover, despite the Bloc Québécois' opposition to multiculturalism, the policy would never become a direct focus of concern. The party's most significant contribution to the debate over multiculturalism would be measured indirectly, contesting the design and implications of the federally conceived national unity projects of the 1990s. In this sphere the Bloc Québécois argued that the federal government promoted a form of centralized federalism that repudiated the distinct nature of Quebec. The net effect of this posture was to discredit the notion of a pan-Canadian identity structured, in part, around multicultural principles.

Before the constitutional battles of the decade provided an opening from which multiculturalism reform would be launched, other parties sparked by the unity issue and opposition to an interventionist-activist state were determined to have their voices heard. By the mid-1990s, the clearest expression of this discontent came from a second new player on the federal scene, the Reform Party.

Created in 1987, the Reform Party represented a direct challenge to multiculturalism through its platform of fiscal restraint and social conservatism. For

Reform, state management of diversity was problematic because it ran counter to the neo-liberal ideological variant of economic freedom that professed fiscal conservatism. This involved a preference for reductions in the level of state intervention in the area of social policy, but it stemmed from two aspects of Reform's perspective on political and social life. One was based on their critique of the liberal pursuit of social justice; the other was the party's attempt to scale-down the role of the state. As far as the party was concerned, state involvement in these naturally private activities infringed upon individual freedom. As David Laycock notes, for Reform this meant that "the market-countervailing practices of the modern welfare state were at odds with "proper" limits on public determinations of social behaviour and welfare distribution".<sup>24</sup>

At its core this thinking represented not simply an admonishment of extravagant federal spending on social policy. It signalled a more principled objection. True, the Reform Party would make the elimination of federal programs a cornerstone of its populist platform; by arguing that government had to establish a clear set of spending proprieties and live within its means.<sup>25</sup> But support for downsizing the federal state reflected a desire to rethink the very basis of social spending. Spending restraint underlined Reform's faith in the free market as the primary and most appropriate organising principle in society. While there was recognition of the need for government intervention in areas such as income support, it would be chiefly designed to provide a *minimum* standard of living. In other words, if there is to be a modern welfare state it

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<sup>24</sup> David Laycock, *The New Right and Democracy in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Reform's view of government as a restrained and conscientious manager of public finances was echoed by the C.D. Howe Institute. See Irene K. Ip, "Strong medicine: Budgeting for Recession and Recovery," *Commentary*, C.D. Howe Institute, (January 1991, no. 27).

should be a residual one in which social spending becomes the public expenditure of last resort.<sup>26</sup>

This thinking carried over to multiculturalism and led Reform initially to view the policy as superfluous both as a poor use of taxpayers' money and as counter to the view that the state was free to impose rules of behaviour that recognised or sponsored the preservation of culture. The first critique, which is essentially about fiscal management, appeared to be less of a substantive appraisal of the policy than a rebuke of public spending. In this sense there was nothing novel about Reform's objection to multiculturalism. The policy had long been the subject of controversy with the federal government having to justify on more than one occasion public expenditures in support of its approach to cultural diversity. What was new at the federal party level, however, was the coupling of the fiscal critique with the argument that the state should be neutral in matters of cultural retention.<sup>27</sup>

The intellectual foundation for this principled attack on multiculturalism rested on classical liberal thought which emphasized individual freedom of action and condemned excessive bureaucratic involvement by government in the lives of citizens. The party, and its first leader Preston Manning, would emphasize that their opposition to official multiculturalism did not mean that Reform was opposed to multiculturalism practiced by individuals. On the contrary, they agreed that Canadian society gained strength and insight from the diversity of its citizenry. What they decried was state management of

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<sup>26</sup> On this subject see Steve Patten, "Citizenship, the New Right and Social Justice: Examining the Reform Party's Discourse on Citizenship," *Socialist Studies Bulletin*, Nos. 57-58 (July-December, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> Discussion of the party's opposition to multiculturalism can be found in several documents including, Reform Party of Canada, *Principles and Policies: The Blue Book* (1991).

ethnocultural relations. Personal choice and the state's neutrality became the operative words. As Manning notes in the aptly titled *The New Canada*:

The reform Party believes that cultural development and preservation ought to be the responsibility of individuals, groups, and, if necessary in certain cases (for example, in the case of Quebec and Canadian Aboriginals), of provincial governments and local governments. The role of the federal government should be neutral towards culture just as it is towards religion. This does not mean necessarily an abandonment of the mosaic model of Canada, but a different division of labour in order to develop that mosaic. Let individuals, groups, lower levels of governments if necessary, be responsible for cutting and polishing the individual pieces. But let the government of Canada be responsible for the common background on which those pieces are to be stuck, and the glue that holds them together.<sup>28</sup>

For Manning and Reform activists, Canada had become a country not of individuals, but of nations and groups where ethnicity was reinforced by the state as the defining experience. This made their objection to multiculturalism clear, not as a policy that frustrated French/English relations in Canada, but one that hurt Canadian unity more generally by the recognition of cultural diversity at a political level. This became Reform's main attack against multiculturalism – Canada had become an ethnically divided country lacking a unified national identity. It followed from this argument that multiculturalism as a solution to the challenges of an ethnoculturally diverse society had failed.<sup>29</sup> It failed because Reform argued that multiculturalism promoted the "Balkanization" of Canadian society. In other words, the party emphasized the threat to social cohesion delivered through a divisive policy promoting group identity over

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<sup>28</sup> Preston Manning, *The New Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992), 317.

<sup>29</sup> The grassroots enthusiasm within the Reform Party required the leadership to accept policy proposals of which they were occasionally sceptical (recall and proportional representation). Such was not the case with multiculturalism. Preston Manning was firmly in line with the party view that multiculturalism eroded support for Canadian unity and should cease to exist as official state policy. On the subject of populism and its influence on the Reform Party's platform see, Tom Flanagan, *From Riel to Reform: Understanding Western Canada*, Working paper of the Fourth Annual Seagram Lecture, McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, presented on October 26, 1999, 4.



individual or societal welfare.<sup>30</sup> This view of the policy was not necessarily new, but it found fertile ground in the Reform Party which sought to openly engage Canadians in a debate about national identity.

Reform's focus on national identity was designed to appeal to the Western Canadian experience which had long been centred on protest and repeated indications that the federal system of government was biased in favour of the two central provinces.<sup>31</sup> But Reform was calling for more than an end to the perceived federal bargain that had produced the compact theory and claims of special status for Quebec. They were not, to be clear, adding their voice to the view increasingly present in English Canada which argued that a pan-Canadian identity could not rest on the idea of two distinct nations. For this view had often stressed multiculturalism as a reaction to biculturalism by Canadians who were of neither British nor French origin. Reform's position, on the other hand, was primarily concerned with advancing the proposition that diversity does not necessarily lead to unity, and may in fact endanger it.<sup>32</sup> The rejection of any type of special status for Quebec, but most importantly for ethnocultural groups, stemmed from this analysis. Deep, broad ranging diversity may be a demographic reality and an unavoidable fact in Canada, but without promoting societal homogeneity the party argued that political

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<sup>30</sup> This happens to be the view expounded by one of the most recognized opponents of multiculturalism Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. The American author and academic does concede that there are some limited benefits in the trend toward ethnic awareness; however, "pressed too far, the cult of ethnicity has bad consequences too". *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, revised edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998), 20.

<sup>31</sup> A good account of the intersections of identity, regionalism, and western alienation can be found in Roger Gibbins and Sonia Arrison, *Western Visions: Perspectives on the West in Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1995).

<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the effort to deflect accusations that the party's opposition to multiculturalism was born out of intolerance ultimately became part of the expression of resentment some within the party felt about the prominence ethnic groups were receiving.

unanimity on central issues that bind the country together could not be achieved.<sup>33</sup> In this respect Reform's position on culture was far from neutral. By denying the public significance of diversity, and in its place arguing for a government that *is* responsible for providing the "common background" and "glue" that binds Canadians together, Reform's position appeared to confuse purposeful integration with neutrality.<sup>34</sup> In truth, the party's opposition to multiculturalism was often followed by an articulation of the view that the full assimilation of immigrants into the English-Canadian mainstream was the preferred policy course to adopt.<sup>35</sup>

In short, the Reform Party's position on multiculturalism represented a significant challenge to the elite consensus on the merits of pluralism. Apart from any electoral benefit the party hoped to gain with its stance, the enduring impact on the party system would be the legitimization of a political discourse that rejected pluralism.<sup>36</sup> As a consequence, and far from an outpouring of support in defence of multiculturalism, other federal parties began to rethink their own attachment to the policy. For one, the Progressive Conservatives introduced several resolutions dealing with multiculturalism at

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<sup>33</sup> See, *Platform & Statement of Principles* (Edmonton: Reform Party of Canada, 1989); *A Fresh Start for Canadians: Blue Book: 1996-1997 Principles & Policies of The Reform Party of Canada* (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, 1996).

<sup>34</sup> Reform's message that it valued ethnic diversity was complicated by occasional intolerant comments made by party members towards visible minorities. This led Preston Manning to promise in the run-up to the 1997 election to root out racists and extremists from the party. *Edmonton Journal*, Apr 27, 1997, A.10. At the same time the leader railed against the media accusing it of engaging in "a witch hunt against Reform candidates to find evidence of racism or intolerance". *The Ottawa Citizen*, Apr 26, 1997, A.3

<sup>35</sup> See Section IV, *Charter of Rights and Freedoms Task Force Report* (Calgary: Reform Party of Canada, April 1996). This perspective on Reform's position is corroborated by Steve Patten, "The Reform Party's Re-imagining of the Canadian Nation," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1999); and Tom Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995).

their party policy convention in 1991. Among the measures adopted included an end to the policy of multiculturalism in response to the alleged need to foster a common national identity, and the abolition of the Department of Multiculturalism.<sup>37</sup> Three years removed from the passage of the Multiculturalism Act the Progressive Conservatives now accepted the notion that the encouragement by the federal government of an ethnically diverse citizenship would breed politically dangerous resentments and undermine Canadian unity. This is consistent with the PC position outlined in their 2000 electoral platform:

“Canadians broadly support and celebrate the richness of a society where people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live and work together... Nevertheless, many people feel that personal culture and ethnicity are best nurtured in the hands of individuals and families... This diversity can best be promoted and supported by dynamic community organizations as an expression of active Canadian citizenship.”<sup>38</sup>

While the other major federal party had not necessarily adopted the view that multiculturalism was a disintegrative force in Canadian society, by the mid-1990s the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien would become increasingly sensitive to the public perception that multiculturalism frustrated attempts at greater inter-ethnic toleration. Moreover, the relatively stable acceptance and defence of multiculturalism by the Liberals gave way to an increasing reluctance to defend the policy from its critics,

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<sup>36</sup> Della Kirkham, "The Reform Party of Canada: A Discourse on Race, Ethnicity and Equality," in Vic Satzewich, ed., *Racism and Social Inequality in Canada: Concepts, Controversies and Strategies of Resistance* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc., 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Progressive Conservative Party, *Resolution Guide from the 1991 General Meeting and National Policy Conference* (Ottawa: August 6-10, 1991).

<sup>38</sup> Progressive Conservative Party, *The Progressive Conservative Plan for Canada's Future* (Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, 2000), 21.

including those from within the party. John Nunziata, a Toronto-area MP and one time contender for the Liberal leadership, spoke out on several occasions about his dissatisfaction with the policy. Although a minority position with the Liberal party, Nunziata's view was that the policy had served its purpose for a limited period of time, but "instead of undercutting the concept of second-class citizenship, multiculturalism [had] encouraged it by preventing the full integration of all ethnic groups into mainstream Canadian society".<sup>39</sup>

While the growing opposition to multiculturalism among Liberals and Progressive Conservatives reflected judgements of the policy effectiveness, it also confirmed the response to gains in popular support by the Reform Party. For the Progressive Conservatives, whose traditional constituent base was a target for Reform, this was especially true. The threat posed by a new Western-based, centre-right party meant the Progressive Conservatives would increasingly be subject to criticism over the party's perceived central Canadian bias, its defence of multiculturalism and official bilingualism, and a host of social policies Reform considered objectionable. The speculation over inroads made by Reform in Western Canada in the mid-1990s was confirmed by polls showing that the surge in support had come largely at the expense of disgruntled Progressive Conservatives.<sup>40</sup> As a result, Progressive Conservative Party organisers were likely to have assessed the Reform Party as a bigger threat to their chances of forming a government than the fledgling Bloc Québécois.

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<sup>39</sup> Andrij Wynnyckyj, "Scholar and politician square off in multiculturalism prizefight," *The Ukrainian Weekly* (June 30, 1996) No. 26, Vol. LXIV.

<sup>40</sup> Neil Nevitte, A. Blais, E. Gidengil and R. Nadeau, *Unsteady State: The 1997 Canadian Federal Election* (Toronto: OUP, 2000), 90.

It followed then that when opponents of multiculturalism weighed into the debate the federal government was reluctant to offer a strong vindication of the policy. Tied up in the budget reduction exercises and national unity projects of the decade, the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals were generally unwilling to rally behind the policy. With this passivity it became obvious that the activism of the 1980s responsible for creating a Multiculturalism Act and a separate department would not be matched.

Into the first years of the decade of the 1990s, both the market-liberal philosophy of the government and the end of the all-party commitment demonstrated that the policy was under sufficient pressure to require that its premises be re-examined. The federal government which had previously committed itself to defend multiculturalism as an inclusionary political discourse than strengthened rather than undermined Canadian citizenship, appeared ill-prepared to defend the policy from its critics. Once the government began to show signs of doubt and signalled its flagging public commitment the floodgates were open to let others within the agenda-setting network question the utility of state supported diversity. In fact, as the decision to abolish the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship in 1993 made clear, the federal government not only confirmed an unwillingness to defend the policy, it became actively concerned with ways of mitigating the source of the criticism.

### *Commissions and Constitutional Accords*

In the spring of 1991, the federal government responded to the failure of the Meech Lake Accord by setting up a consultative mechanism by engaging Canadians directly on the subject of national unity. The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future was

designed to “get Canadians talking among themselves about vital issues that faced a perplexed nation: Quebec's quest for a new relationship with the rest of Canada; Aboriginal grievances and aspirations; official languages; ethnic and cultural diversity; fundamental Canadian values; the economy; and Canada's place in the world”.<sup>41</sup> The ambitious focus of the Commission, however, did not act as a medium for activating and mediating citizen input into policy development. Nor was it especially designed to focus on the main issues designed to revitalize Canada's constitution. Rather, under the leadership of Keith Spicer it sought to provide Canadians with a "sense of engagement" as well as presenting a vehicle to vent their frustrations on a range of topics.<sup>42</sup>

Notwithstanding this impression that the Commission was an exercise in public relations, the almost boundless mandate of the Commission was virtually unprecedented. Also unparalleled were the public consultations, not simply for the number of Canadians consulted, but for the divergent opinions about the sources and stresses on Canadian unity. The Commission would ultimately hear forceful representations of Canadians' dissatisfaction with their political processes and institutions. It is on the subject of multiculturalism, however, that it is otherwise well remembered. In particular, it is recognized for its somber portrayal of public reactions to multiculturalism policy, its own policy recommendations in this regard, and the personal comments of its chairperson.

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<sup>41</sup> Government of Canada, *Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future: Report to the People and Government of Canada* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1991), 1

<sup>42</sup> Such is the conclusion of Laurier Lapierre who served as the untitled "Director of Facilitation" for the Citizen's Forum. See, Institute on Governance, "The Citizen Engagement Round Table: Royal Commissions and Task Forces" (Ottawa: May 15, 1996), 3. Also, consult Leslie A. Pal and Leslie Seidle, "Constitutional Politics 1990-92: The Paradox of Participation," in *How Ottawa Spends: 1993-94: A More Democratic Canada?*, ed. Susan Phillips (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 143-202.

In June of 1991, in the face of considerable divergence on the range of issues facing the country, and an accepted lack of knowledge among Canadians of the "basic realities of this country", the Commission delivered a remarkably coherent policy proposal in the area of cultural diversity that elaborated both a new philosophy and a set of programmatic ideas for multiculturalism. Individual cultural maintenance, integration into the mainstream, and limited government intervention were the cornerstones of the Commission's articulation of public reaction to cultural diversity. In an informative section on the subject of citizenship and identity, the Commissioners related their perception that Canadians "overwhelmingly" felt that being reminded of our "different origins was less useful in building a united country than emphasizing the things we have in common".<sup>43</sup> The Commission noted, "Participants queried the focus on citizens' origins and celebrating heritage cultures, rather than embracing a uniquely Canadian national character and celebrating our Canadian heritage".<sup>44</sup> At the same time, however, the Commission argued that Canadians were generally disposed to view the country's ethnically and culturally diverse population as one of its most positive national characteristics. For the Commission this last statement did not appear to be at odds with the view that a focus on differences was less useful in building unity. Conversely, when the Commission was met with comments that suggested support for the notion that all provinces were equal, an unequivocally different approach was adopted. In Part III of the Final Report the Commission noted the, "contradictions and puzzles we have found in

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<sup>43</sup> *Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future*, 85.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

some of the things participants said they value".<sup>45</sup> It then continues by offering a brief history lesson and corrective of the "conventional understanding" of equality as applied to Quebec's place in the federation. The report notes:

Equality is a case in point. But what do they [participants] mean by equality? They stressed equality among provinces - including Quebec - apparently without knowing or recognizing that provinces are not perfectly equal, and never have been. Our provinces joined confederation at different times on different terms. Bilingualism was established by our constitution in parliament and the legislatures of Manitoba and Quebec, but not others; denominational school rights were established in Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland, but not in other provinces; there was a provision for a special property and civil rights regime for Quebec, different from the requirement in other provinces. There are special provisions in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that apply only to Quebec - and others that apply only to Newfoundland to suit particular-circumstances and needs. British Columbia joined Canada with the promise of a transcontinental railway. Thus, the notion of equality of the provinces is neither as absolute nor as unbending as some of the participants seem to believe.<sup>46</sup>

Although the Commission heard of the value attached by Canadians to cultural diversity, it saw fit to recommend that federal government funding for multiculturalism activities be eliminated. It also argued for a re-focusing of official policy with a central goal the welcoming of all Canadians to an "evolving mainstream and thus encourage real respect for diversity".<sup>47</sup> It remains uncertain what or who constituted this "mainstream", but the Spicer Commission appeared to demonstrate its inspiration by recommending that national symbols of historical value be strengthened in order to dispel the perception, especially among English-speaking Canadians, that unity was being fragmented. As Wsevolod W. Isajiw has argued, "The unequivocal implication was that the Canadian

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 129.



national symbols are the traditional Anglo symbols taken from the British colonial history and they include no room for any other ethnic symbols, save at best, for a few French ones. The other ethnic symbols threaten the stability and unity of the country".<sup>48</sup>

No such ambiguity could be found in the personal comments of the Commission's chairperson. In an article in the *Montreal Gazette* a year before the Commission was formed, Spicer equates state-funded multiculturalism with a "multicultural zoo", in which there is "an anthology of terrors: Balkanization, ethnic politicians siphoning off political protection money, ghetto mentalities, destabilization of Quebec leading to secession, reverse intolerance by immigrants for Canadian culture and institutions, [and] devaluation of the very idea of a common nationality".<sup>49</sup> The most curious feature of these revelations, however, is not that Spicer made his own prejudices towards multiculturalism known; it is the possible motivations of a government that appointed as chairperson an individual so openly hostile to the very idea of multiculturalism.

For all its reassurance that it remained committed to the policy, the Spicer Commission ended up articulating ideas that broke with long established policy thought and practice. Multiculturalism was deemed worthy, but only as "personal and individual goals". On this basis, arguments made by organizations such as the Canadian Ethnocultural Council in support of multiculturalism were to have little tangible impact. The CEC's comments, as reflected in the Commission's report, were limited and linked

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<sup>48</sup> Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "Minority Challenge to Majority Identity: Toward a Theory," Paper Presented at the XIVth World Congress of Sociology, *Social Knowledge: Heritage, Challenges, Perspectives* (Montreal, Canada, July 28, 1998), 7.

<sup>49</sup> Keith Spicer, "Ottawa Should Stop Money for Multiculturalism," *Montreal Gazette*, March 9, 1989, B3.

with efforts to fight racism and discrimination. Whenever a positive case was to be made for multiculturalism, the Commission was intent on focusing on the federal government's capacity to help minority communities play an active role in Canadian society by promoting race relations and cross-cultural understanding. Representations by groups like the CEC were also limited in their influence by the nature of the consultative process. This was not an inquiry expressly designed to solicit advice from stakeholder organizations. In fact, their voices were displaced by the approximately 400,000 Canadians who took part in discussions, and more decisively, the willingness of the Commission in matters such as multiculturalism to readily interpret their concerns.

Thus, the Commission's public philosophy was grounded in a belief in the superiority of the private maintenance of cultural diversity over public means, and a clear judgment about the flawed legacy of multiculturalism policy. Framed by this critique of the policy the Commission presented its programmatic ideas. Canadian unity, public debts and deficits, and the failure to explain the "real" requirements of ethnocultural policy, all became pretexts for an argument that there remained only one policy future for multiculturalism. This was perhaps the central lesson drawn by the Spicer Commission in its search for an accepted relationship between state and citizen, and it soon joined other voices to inform policy-makers about the course of multiculturalism in Canada.

In sum, the Commission was valuable for the government because it legitimised the view of multiculturalism as a policy that functioned primarily to battle racism and discrimination rather than cultural retention. It did this openly by making the case for private support for the preservation of ethnic heritage, but it also pointed to something equally important for a government about to engage itself in another round of

constitutional negotiations. It revealed that a "watering down" of multiculturalism could serve the cause of Canadian unity by allaying fears that government policy weakened the idea of a common nationality. Additionally, for a federal government that wanted to demonstrate that federalism was capable of reforming itself in directions that would bring about a measure of constitutional peace, innovative ideas about multiculturalism would be welcome.

Before the ink had dried on the Spicer Commission's report, the federal government hurriedly resurrected the issue of constitutional reform. In the fall of 1991, it was agreed that the federal government along with premiers of the provinces would enter into negotiations on a new constitutional package. Quebec, for its part, although invited to take part in these negotiations refused, citing the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord.<sup>50</sup> Although the original purpose of the Meech Lake Accord had been to bring Quebec back into the constitution, the ensuing public debate and opposition to distinct society exacerbated feelings of rejection and isolation in the province. The collapse of the accord in the summer of 1990 triggered a surge of nationalist sentiment in Quebec and was thereafter captured in the legislative position adopted by the provincial government.<sup>51</sup> Vowing to sit out the next round of constitutional negotiations, the Quebec government

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<sup>50</sup> Many in Quebec considered Charlottetown to be a step back not a move forward compared to Meech Lake. Sensing this, Premier Bourassa of Quebec would eventually join the negotiations. After all, Bourassa had committed his government to hold a referendum in October of 1992, and he clearly preferred to hold it on a new constitutional package rather than on sovereignty.

<sup>51</sup> Two reports were commissioned in Quebec as a result of the Meech Lake Accord's demise. The Allaire Report, a product of the constitutional committee struck by the Quebec Liberal Party, prepared proposals for the reform of the Canadian Constitution which were presented to the party's convention in 1991. The second report established by the Quebec National Assembly emerged from the work of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, which proposed a radical reduction in federal powers and responsibilities as well as calling for a referendum on Quebec sovereignty in 1992.

passed a bill in the National Assembly requiring the government to hold a referendum on sovereignty, or alternatively a deal that was considered to meet Quebec's demands for renewing the constitution by the fall of 1992. Not only did the continuing resentment at the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord fuel a sense of opinion in Quebec that any new constitutional deal would have to go beyond the substance of Meech Lake, it had significant repercussions in English Canada.

The crux of the problem for many outside of Quebec was that distinct society and the Meech Lake Accord more generally had attempted to tip the scales toward the creation not just of two nations, but two nation-states with potentially different powers of government and rights of citizenship. For those, in particular, who championed the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights the distinct society clause was especially problematic by endangering the idea of a truly national citizenship.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, it was argued, recognition of Quebec's claim for special status would inevitably break down any sense of common feeling between the two communities with the result that political independence would then seem not only logical, but inevitable.<sup>53</sup>

For supporters of renewed federalism outside Quebec, institutional changes in the Canadian polity in any new constitutional amendment would require a balancing act

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<sup>52</sup> According to Christopher Manfredi this belief stems from a general confusion in Canada between the concepts of equal citizenship and national citizenship. "The Charter undoubtedly promotes an ideal of equal citizenship, whose doctrine of the equal right to self-government leads to an argument for provincial equality. However, contrary to what many critics assume, equality does not require sameness; indeed, it is perfectly consistent with policy asymmetry." In "The Charter and Federalism: A Response to Professor Balthazar," *McGill Institute for the Study of Canada*, An occasional paper based on a seminar (September 25, 1997), 13.

<sup>53</sup> This is modified interpretation of the familiar position against asymmetry articulated by Trudeau. The former prime minister's opposition to distinct society and the Meech Lake Accord in particular is detailed in "Say good-bye to the dream of one Canada," *Toronto Star*, Wednesday, May 27, 1987; and in "A Conversation with Pierre Elliott Trudeau," *Cité libre*, Volume XXVI, No.1, February-March 1998.

between support for the concept of provincial equality in English Canada and the recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness. In order to be faithful to the prevailing public mood in Canada while still arriving at an agreeable political settlement meant that concessions were likely in order. In part, these concessions were understandable as an increasingly unpopular and embattled federal government scrambled to maintain credibility and sustain its key constitutional priorities. Moreover, such concessions underscored that the unity file was integral to federal objectives and took precedence on the governing agenda.

Joining the politicians this time around in the discussions over the Charlottetown Accord were with the leaders of the main Aboriginal groups. Their inclusion in the process demonstrated that the latest round of constitutional discussion was indeed going to be sensitive to the idea of Canada prevailing outside Quebec. This included a heightened awareness of the demands of Aboriginal peoples, especially in light of the armed standoff between members of the Mohawk nation and the Canadian military over a land claims issue near Montreal during the summer of 1990.<sup>54</sup> It also indicated the readiness of Canada's political leaders to ensure that Aboriginal issues would be accommodated alongside those of Quebec and English-speaking Canada.<sup>55</sup>

If attitudes regarding the constitutional question were shaped by the status of Aboriginal people, the public commitment to ethnocultural diversity hardly registered.

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<sup>54</sup> The Oka crisis, as it became known, helped to increase the awareness of the concerns of Aboriginal peoples and led to the establishment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

<sup>55</sup> The depth of this assurance resulted in the inclusion of several features, including: The inherent right to self-government; the recognition of Aboriginal governments as a third order of government; a definition of self-government that was related to Aboriginal land, environment, language, and culture; and representation in the Canadian Senate. See Canada, *Consensus Report on the Constitution*, Charlottetown, August 28, Final Text (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1992).

On the subject of ethnocultural diversity the federal government was only prepared to make a statement of fact about the existence of Canadian diversity, and avoid the more problematic term multiculturalism. In the Canada clause, a short section to be included as part of the revised Constitution that became a central feature of the Charlottetown Accord, the commitment of Canadians to ethnic and racial diversity would simply be acknowledged.<sup>56</sup> Absent in this preamble that acted to codify the definitive values of the Canadian character was any mention of government response to ethnocultural diversity through public policy. The complete section read, "Canadians are committed to racial and ethnic equality in a society that includes citizens from many lands who have contributed, continue to contribute, to the building of a strong Canada that reflects its cultural and racial diversity".<sup>57</sup> Comparing the treatment of bilingualism to ethnocultural diversity in the Canada clause, former chancellor of the University of Alberta Peter Savaryn observes that, "Clause (d) says that "Canadians and their governments are committed to the vitality and development of official language minority communities throughout Canada." But clauses (e), (f), (g) and (h), which deal respectively with our commitment to racial and ethnic equality, to human rights, to gender equality, and to the equality of the provinces, say only that "Canadians are committed", not "Canadians and their governments.""<sup>58</sup>

There were two other noteworthy aspects of the federal government's position on ethnocultural diversity reflected in the discussions leading to the Charlottetown Accord. The first was the government's desire to illustrate the inequity of Canada's existing

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<sup>56</sup> The Canada clause was designed to express fundamental Canadian values and guide the courts in their interpretations of the Constitution, especially the *Charter of Rights*.

<sup>57</sup> Canada, *Consensus Report on the Constitution*, Section 2 (e).

constitutional protection of group rights. While multiculturalism was entrenched in *The Charter* in 1982, no similar recognition existed for Quebec's distinct society. As a consequence, in the federal government's initial bargaining position entitled *Shaping Canada's Future Together* there would be no new commitment to multiculturalism.<sup>59</sup> Rather it spoke of multiculturalism's inclusion in the 1982 constitution ostensibly as a means of highlighting the "anomalous" omission of a similar clause for Quebec. The suggestion was that if multiculturalism (and Aboriginal rights) deserved inclusion in *The Charter*, Canada's fundamental pledge on the rights of citizenship, then surely admission and recognition of Quebec's distinct society was at least as deserving.

The other issue which drew attention was the federal government's decision to reject the more generous recognition of ethnocultural diversity endorsed by the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada. Established by parliament to solicit input and make recommendations on the federal proposals, the final text of the committee report proposed a Canada clause which included "recognition of the irreplaceable value of our multicultural heritage."<sup>60</sup> Instead, the federal government and its partners omitted any reference to multiculturalism and in its place restated the ethnic and racial equality rights already guaranteed in Section 15 of *The Charter*.

In its presentation to the *Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada* the Canadian Ethnocultural Council noted its frustration over multiculturalism's exclusion. It

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<sup>58</sup> Fil Fraser, "Why multicultural groups say Yes to accord," *Toronto Star* (Oct 8, 1992), A25.

<sup>59</sup> Canada, *Shaping Canada's Future Together: Proposals* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991).

<sup>60</sup> Canada, Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada, *Report of the Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1992), 24.

appealed to the federal government to make sure that in the present constitutional round, unlike the last, no “substantial group [was] left out this time”.<sup>61</sup> It was not simply speaking about the absence of any government commitment to multiculturalism in the text of the federal proposals; it bemoaned their absence from the negotiating table.

Dmytro Cipywnyk, president of the CEC pressed for representation in the constitutional process in three ways: through official observer status at the multilateral meeting of officials and at the subsequent first ministers conference; at a constitutional conference that should be held with input from ordinary Canadians including representation of ethnic and visible minorities; and through open sessions of the multilateral conference to discuss the Canada clause.<sup>62</sup> The request was rejected and in the negotiations that produced the Charlottetown Accord the CEC would be granted observer status only as part of the Native Council of Canada delegation.

The CEC’s main lobbying effort, however, was directed at modifying the Canada clause in order that the pluralistic and multicultural reality of Canada be recognized rather than simply the country’s commitment to racial and ethnic equality. What mattered, therefore, was not simply the recognition of Canada’s commitment to racial diversity, but that the accord was prepared to mention multiculturalism explicitly. In the context of Canada’s complicated political reality this was not merely a question of semantics. Constitutional recognition of multiculturalism would stand as a symbol of the national government’s commitment to the policy and the legacy it invoked.

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<sup>61</sup> Canadian Ethnocultural Council, *Canada for all Canadians: Building a Strong Canada through Respect for Diversity*, Submission to the House of Commons and Senate Special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada (February 1992), 1.



Ultimately, and notwithstanding their limited involvement, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the Black Coalition of Quebec, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the German Canadian Congress, the Hellenic Canadian Congress of Canada, the National Congress of Italian Canadians, all supported the accord. Although they would have preferred stronger wording on cultural diversity their overriding concern, as Dmytro Cipywnyk explained to his own membership, was to keep Canada united.<sup>63</sup> Despite the endorsement, as well as the backing of the federal and provincial governments, the national referendum to approve the Charlottetown Accord went down to defeat on October 24, 1992. Among the many obstacles the accord failed to overcome was the perception that it conferred too much power on Quebec.<sup>64</sup>

In hindsight, even though Quebec's demands were controversial they were destined to be a central focus of the negotiations aimed at repairing national unity. Not surprisingly, considerable attention during the negotiations was directed at working out a compromise position on distinct society that was amenable to all sides, but in due course Quebec's insistence that it be recognized constitutionally could not be circumvented. For the same reasons, but with clearly different results, multiculturalism was not going to be part of these negotiations. Not only was it deemed inconsequential to the larger purpose, but it potentially complicated the venture by broadening the contentious nature of the accord. Reflecting a similar point of view, Peter Russell alleges that multiculturalism's

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<sup>62</sup> "Minority groups demand status at unity talks," *Toronto Star*, June 9, 1992, A7. The CEC also wanted the notwithstanding clause to be repealed, but this demand was unlikely to have been taken seriously.

<sup>63</sup> Canadian Ethnocultural Council, *Ethno Canada*, 14 (Ottawa, 1992), 1.

<sup>64</sup> There are, of course, many other interpretations for the accord's failure. One can be found in Alain Noël, "Deliberating a Constitution: The Meaning of the Canadian Referendum of 1992," in Curtis Cook, ed., *Constitutional Predicament: Canada after the Referendum of 1992* (Montreal: MQUP, 1994), 64-81.

inclusion would have had a domino effect on like-minded constituencies. On the subject of the Canada clause he notes,

This exercise in defining the essence of a deeply diverse society was rapidly proving to be a "mug's game". [If multiculturalism was incorporated] then people with disabilities would protest exclusion of their right to equality. If the disabled had been included, homosexuals, seniors, juniors, and Lord knows who else would complain about their exclusion. Could there be any better way of stirring up suspicion and resentment than handling out dollops of ill-defined constitutional status to certain segments of the population at the beginning of a revised constitution?<sup>65</sup>

In the end, while the process that produced the Charlottetown Accord could not avoid the language and meaning of distinct society, and would even add the concept of Aboriginal self-government, it could easily make due without multiculturalism. Not even *The Charter's* recognition of multiculturalism through Section 27 was sufficient to guarantee its reappearance in the most recent constitutional round.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, while distinct society from this point forward would generate a symbolic meaning beyond its institutional content, it was clear that multiculturalism by 1992 had already achieved its own notoriety. Thereafter, both were viewed as contributing to the constitutional impasse that made unattainable efforts to reconcile the apparently divergent interests of Canada's political community.

### *Public Dissenters*

What made the diminishing support for multiculturalism defensible at a political level was that it was mirrored by wider reservations about the policy. As the Progressive

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<sup>65</sup> Peter H Russell, *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People?*, 2d ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 203-204.

<sup>66</sup> On this issue see, Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Tim Nieguth, "Reconsidering the Constitution, Minorities and Politics in Canada," *The Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 33: 3 (2000): 486-491.

Conservatives and Liberals were to discover in the 1990s, there was a growing critique of multiculturalism in the media that was shared by academic observers and often reflected in public discussions of the policy. This opposition to multiculturalism often paralleled criticism at the party level, but indicated a newly focused and determined criticism in the social sciences and popular press. In part, this reflected the development of a more resolute attack on the entire "equity agenda" in the 1990s. But it would be mistaken to characterize the trend as simply a "backlash" levelled at the changing nature of justice or resentment concerning how ethnocultural causes were seen as being privileged by the state. Intellectuals in Canada were, for the most part, engaged in a dialogue centred on the rights and obligations individuals and communities enjoy or owe.<sup>67</sup> In effect, the reality of ethnocultural diversity led to discussions about the ground rules governing membership and inclusion, but also of what kinds of matters were of legitimate public concern. While this fell short of producing a consensus on the merits of multicultural policy, consensus nonetheless existed over the need to make Canada's multicultural society work.

What made the mobilization of intellectuals in the debate over multiculturalism possible in the 1990s was the fractious debate over national unity. Constitutional failures called into question, even discredited, the notion that existing political institutions could hold the country together. Political and social commentators, mostly from English

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<sup>67</sup> They were less concerned, but keen observers, of the debate in the United States over multiculturalism's relationship to the legacy of slavery and institutional racism, or even the debate on political correctness. As Roger Hewitt notes, there were disparate but related issues in various national contexts on the question of multiculturalism, "that included responses within specific local communities to policies regarding migration, community relations and racism, as well as the competition between political groups seeking to appeal to such constituencies of interest". *White Backlash and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

Canada, took it upon themselves to offer new ideas as a way of breaching the impasse and influencing public policy. Integral to this pattern of advice was the belief that Canada stood at a crossroads; outdated images of Canadian society and associated policies stood as obstacles to needed reform. A number of themes were drawn together but rested ultimately on the assumption that multiculturalism was unsuccessful as an exercise in state sponsored social engineering.

These views were elaborated by a number of influential writers and academics through a variety of channels, including popular non-fictions writings and more directed academic investigations. Public dissenters may not have outnumbered supporters of the policy, but greater attention was focused on the critics because they were high profile members of the literary and academic community, and because their objections highlighted that the consensus on multiculturalism had clearly been fractured.

Among those voicing opposition to multiculturalism, one of the better known is the writer Neil Bissoondath. In his book *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (1994), the author equated state-funded multiculturalism with the promotion of ghetto mentalities, the destabilisation of Quebec in the federation, and reverse intolerance. In short, Bissoondath brought together many of the familiar accusations against multiculturalism in one highly publicized work.<sup>68</sup> The author's message received considerable attention when it surfaced because of its insistence that the policy was based on false pretences. It made two central claims. First, it assumed that those who voluntarily sought a new life in Canada would want to retain cultural aspects from their

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<sup>68</sup> In 1995 the Canadian literary establishment awarded the Gordon Montador Prize to *Selling Illusions* for the best Canadian book on contemporary social issues.

country of origin. And more importantly, assuming that culture could be transplanted, that it would not have the effect of blurring Canadian identity in the process.

Instead of facilitating integration necessary in even the most liberal societies, Bissoondath suggested that multiculturalism had revitalized ethnic subcommunities with their language usage and cultural patterns. The fear represented here is that Canadian culture and society was in danger of fragmenting under the weight of a multitude of distinctive cultural practices. This view was echoed by Richard Gwyn in *Nationalism Without Walls: The Unbearable Lightness of Being Canadian* (1995). In much the same language as Bissoondath, Gwyn argued that multiculturalism fostered a form of ethnic separatism amongst immigrants.<sup>69</sup> Both books were best sellers in Canada and received ample coverage in the popular media. Largely overlooked by the mainstream press, however, was a deeper discussion by academics about the limits of multiculturalism.<sup>70</sup>

Two works by prominent Canadian academics added to this debate. Focusing on problems of long-term political disequilibrium, Kenneth McRoberts in *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (1997), highlighted the state's role in influencing national unity. As for multiculturalism, state intervention in the field of cultural diversity was viewed as destabilizing an already delicate balancing act within the

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<sup>69</sup> Gwyn in fact goes much further and suggests that "Our state encourages [ethnic leaders] to maintain what amounts, at worst, to an apartheid form of citizenship". *Nationalism Without Walls: The Unbearable Lightness of Being Canadian* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 234.

<sup>70</sup> In his analysis of the newspaper coverage of multiculturalism in the latter part of the 1980s, K.H. Karim has noted that the policy was often portrayed as an obstacle to nation-building or supporting an inverse racism. The author notes that newspaper columnists often focused on the power of ethnocultural organisations and the perceived inability of individual members of minority cultural groups to advance in Canadian society without government funding. The more serious charge that multiculturalism unwittingly contributed to racism in Canada, while less exhibited, was still recognised by Karim as a discernible trend. Karim H. Karim, *Perceptions about Multiculturalism: A Content Analysis of Newspapers, Academic Briefs, Ethnocultural Organisation Briefs, Attitude Surveys, and Ministerial Correspondence*. January, 1989 (Policy and Research, Multiculturalism Sector, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada).

federation. At the intergovernmental level, constitutional deliberations were the focus of much concerted effort by Canada's politicians to balance the demands coming from Quebec with those emerging from English Canada. Complicating these negotiations, according to Ken McRoberts, was the legacy of Trudeau's national unity strategy, of which multiculturalism played a pivotal part. It weakened the cause of national unity, he argued, by simultaneously committing Canadians to the belief that no culture was distinct, while confirming for Quebec francophones the intransigence of the federal system to respond to their distinctiveness.<sup>71</sup> Here the specific charge levelled against multiculturalism was that it undermined Quebec's sense of attachment to Canada. At a time when Canadians were coming to terms with Quebec's demands for recognition as a distinct society in the constitution, the message of multiculturalism – that there are no official cultures – undermined the credibility of Quebec's demands in the eyes of English Canada. In other words, the balancing act that a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework was supposed to achieve had failed.

The problem then for those sceptical about the achievements and costs of multiculturalism is that they emphasize a definition of multiculturalism that they view as incompatible with minority nationalism. This perspective considers multiculturalism to be a political conception based largely on inherited characteristics that identifies individuals with one or more ethnically based groups seeking preservation or protection of their differences.<sup>72</sup> In short, it does not treat ethnocultural affiliation as voluntary.

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<sup>71</sup> *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (Toronto: OUP, 1997), 135.

<sup>72</sup> This is the characterization of "pluralist" multiculturalism by the American author David Hollinger. See, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

Reginald Bibby in the book *Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada* (1990), makes a much more broad charge against multiculturalism. He laments how multiculturalism is driven by the contemporary view that all cultures are of equal value. Moreover, he suggests that the “goal of a just society, [has] succeeded in providing individuals, groups and institutions with unprecedented freedom”.<sup>73</sup> This excessive individualism, he explained, coupled with subjective preferences undercut the bonds of unity and posed a serious threat to social life in Canada. This view of multiculturalism as a form of relativism is thought to relegate nation-building to a secondary, if not elusive, goal.<sup>74</sup> Like Bissoondath and Gwyn, this argument sought to cast doubt on the claim that unity could be fashioned out of diversity, and in its place maintained that if all we have in common is our diversity, do we really have anything in common at all?

In the aftermath of two unsuccessful constitutional accords, and a slim victory for federalism in the 1995 Quebec referendum, it was not uncommon for Canadian intellectuals to weigh into the debate on Canadian unity. Beyond the broad consensus on the need for new ideas and their desire to supply them, by the mid-1990s there was a general appeal by a group of dissenters to see a retooled or abandoned multicultural policy as a preferred vehicle for change. Of course these ideas were themselves

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<sup>73</sup> Reginald Bibby, *Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1990), 27.

<sup>74</sup> He suggests that in the service of pluralism we are not very loyal to anything except to a "tenuous willingness to coexist." Ibid, 95. This kind of thinking has led some commentators to hold Bibby up as a luminary with urgent advice in *many* areas. For example, Carol Goar, Toronto Star syndicated columnist submits; "Bibby...forces us to rethink our image as a nation...He helps us to understand why federalism is breaking down, relationships are disintegrating and single-interest groups are proliferating. He looks beyond our symptoms – and points to the causes of our distress." *Toronto Star* (Oct 20, 1990), D4.

contested. Several eminent Canadian thinkers, among them Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor, were prepared to make an argument that state policy could simultaneously recognise ethnocultural diversity and Canada's multi-national character. In effect, they separated the two things which the Reform Party, Bibby and other public dissenters had lumped together.

For Kymlicka, what holds multinational and multicultural nations together in the absence of any common or shared history? Their great variance in historical, cultural, and political situations suggests that no one solution is likely to apply in all cases. However, he notes: "What is clear, I think, is that if there is a viable way to promote a sense of solidarity and common purpose in a multinational state, it will involve accommodating, rather than subordinating, national identities. People from different national groups will only share an allegiance to the larger polity if they see it as the context within which their national identity is nurtured, rather than subordinated".<sup>75</sup> This situation is complicated when one introduces to multinationality a plurality of ethnic groups. In such a situation, Kymlicka admits, we need a theory of what Charles Taylor has called "deep diversity" – which revolves around the idea of accommodating not only a diversity of ethnocultural groups, but also a diversity of ways in which the members of these groups belong to the larger polity.<sup>76</sup>

These ideas, and the debates they have engendered, would become important counterweights to the perception that multiculturalism necessarily weakened national

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<sup>75</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 189.

<sup>76</sup> Charles Taylor, "Shared and Divergent Values," in *Options for a New Canada*, eds. R. Watts and D. Brown (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 75.



unity. Nevertheless, by the mid-1990s the assumptions and prescriptions of the public dissenters alongside government inquiries and constitutional failures served only to reinforce the perception that a policy review, at the very least, was inevitable.

### ***5.2 Embracing Ideas: Multiculturalism and the New Policy Consensus***

By the end of their second term in office it became apparent that the Progressive Conservative government had abandoned its commitment to a reinvigorated multicultural agenda. Alongside the interest in safeguarding their political terrain from the Reform Party, the Progressive Conservatives increasingly focused on expenditure control and reducing the role of the federal state in both the social and economic spheres. For multiculturalism, this meant a wholesale change in its profile within the federal cabinet in addition to deep cuts in program spending.<sup>77</sup> These changes were a far cry from the "real progress" in the area of equality that the Progressive Conservative Party had promised in its 1984 policy on multiculturalism, and the recommendations made by the 1984 Special Parliamentary Committee Report on Visible Minorities.<sup>78</sup> But these changes were squarely in line with the judgement within the government that multiculturalism had become problematic. A key indicator of multiculturalism's performance during this period was the 1991 national survey commissioned by the Department of Multiculturalism and

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<sup>77</sup> The reduction in spending on multiculturalism grants from 1990-91 to 1993-94 was approximately \$30 million, which represented a decline of 42%. (Canada, Spending Estimates, years 1990-1991 and 1993-94).

<sup>78</sup> Lamenting the fall of the Conservative's multicultural agenda, Andrew Cardozo head of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council argued that the party and the government eventually went "soft" on the policy that had proved politically expedient in the 1988 federal election. See, "On Guard for Multiculturalism". *Canadian Forum* (April 1994), 16.

Citizenship.<sup>79</sup> While the notion that multiculturalism hinders national unity was not supported in the survey, the more common critique in the media and among academics that the policy suffered from ambiguity was inferred from its findings.<sup>80</sup> In exploring the dimensions of multiculturalism in the survey there was undoubtedly a certain amount of confusion as to who the policy was designed to serve. Respondents offered differing interpretations, ranging from “Canadians of every ancestry” to “aboriginal peoples”.<sup>81</sup> A somewhat more disconcerting finding for the government was that fully 25% of respondents to the survey indicated no awareness of the federal multiculturalism policy whatsoever.

While the findings of the 1991 survey provided a focus for the further development and refinement of multicultural policy, the action taken by the federal government in subsequent policy decisions seemed to run counter to their meaning. Clearly the existing support for multiculturalism among respondents should have eased suspicion that the policy lacked public endorsement. Similarly, the positive view of the impact of multiculturalism on Canadian life suggested support for the notion that the policy was contributing to a sense of belonging rather than detracting from it. Moreover, it remained clear from the level of awareness and understanding of multiculturalism that still more had to be done by the federal government in the way of public education and

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<sup>79</sup> Angus Reid Group, *Canadians and Multiculturalism: National Survey of the Attitude of Canadians*, Report presented to Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, August 1991.

<sup>80</sup> Supported by a subsequent study, the evidence from the 1991 national survey suggests that attitudes towards multiculturalism were positive, and that tolerance as a whole was moderately high among Canadians. See, J.W. Berry and R. Kalin, "Multicultural and ethnic attitudes in Canada: An Overview of the 1991 National Survey," *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 27, 1995, 301-320.

<sup>81</sup> *Canadians and Multiculturalism: National Survey of the Attitude of Canadians*, 5.

communication of multicultural objectives. In this context, the elimination in 1993 of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, a visible expression of the government's commitment to supporting its multiculturalism policy, was unexpected.<sup>82</sup>

In contrast, the election of a new government in 1993 and the promise of an innovative agenda for governing suggested a return to an activist federal state and perhaps even a renewed multicultural policy focus. Relying on a policy manifesto dubbed the "Red Book", the Liberals proclaimed support for multiculturalism and vowed to take measures to combat hate propaganda and promote tolerance and mutual understanding.<sup>83</sup> While far from making multiculturalism a priority of government, the expectation of change in a number of policy fields led observers to believe that the Liberal's agenda would represent a departure from the Progressive Conservative record of deficit reduction and public sector downsizing. However, for all the talk of charting a new course the Liberals governed with a fiscal agenda remarkably similar to the one followed by their Progressive Conservative predecessors. In fact, as McBride and Shields have argued, the Liberals moved to implement a neo-liberal agenda with greater vigour than the Progressive Conservatives.<sup>84</sup>

The vehicle for this public management, the program review, heralded a major structural change in government activities. The true impact of the changes would be felt

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<sup>82</sup> The department was folded into the new super-ministry Canadian Heritage as part of the pre-election cabinet of Kim Campbell. As Abu-Laban points out, Gerry Weiner's former title "Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship" was downgraded to "Minister for Citizenship". See, "The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Immigration: The Contested Arena of Multiculturalism," in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon, eds., *Canadian Politics* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), 251.

<sup>83</sup> Liberal Party of Canada, *Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada* (Ottawa: 1993), 86.

<sup>84</sup> Stephen McBride and John Shields, *Dismantling a Nation: The Transition to Corporate Rule in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997), 11.

in 1995 with the release of the federal budget. In the document the federal government announced its decision to reduce the federal deficit by \$13.6-billion over the next two years through major cuts in spending.<sup>85</sup> In general these cuts were fiscally driven and tied to public sector reforms designed to reign in the national debt. It soon became clear that government departments in their drive to achieve more effective and efficient governance would target policy fields that were considered weak performers.<sup>86</sup>

In matters of multiculturalism, therefore, the Liberal government picked-up where the Progressive Conservatives left off. Not only did they concur with their predecessors about the need to downsize and amalgamate government departments, but they determined that there was justification for further spending cuts. Rather than restore multiculturalism to full departmental level, the Liberal government under Jean Chrétien assigned the policy area to a junior ministry known as the Secretary of State, Multiculturalism and the Status of Women.<sup>87</sup> Still within the super-ministry of Canadian Heritage, multiculturalism would now be grouped alongside a host of other policy areas relating to Canadian identity, cultural development, gender equality, heritage, national parks, amateur sport, and the arts. One of the other areas to be targeted was the funding of

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<sup>85</sup> Almost \$7 in expenditure reductions for every \$1 in new tax revenues was proposed. See, Canada, *Budget speech by the Honourable Paul Martin*, Minister of Finance, Feb. 1995.

<sup>86</sup> As Leslie Pal notes, the Department of Finance provided six test questions to guide the policy review process: serving the public interest; necessity of government involvement; appropriate federal role; scope for public sector/private sector partnerships; scope for increased efficiency; and affordability. Canada, *Budget 1995 Fact Sheets – 6*, cited in Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*, Second Edition (Scarborough: Nelson, 2001), 79.

<sup>87</sup> While part of the Canadian Ministry, the nine secretaries of state created in the first Chrétien government were not invited to Cabinet.

ethnocultural organisations through multiculturalism's program assistance.<sup>88</sup> As the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of Canadian Heritage Roger Collet was to make clear, the drop in funding reflected the downsizing pressures placed upon the department, but was also in line with efforts to gradually decrease core funding to individual groups.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, as Mr. Collet pointed out, funding was progressively directed towards race relations' initiatives, whether through projects specifically set up and recognised to that end or through anti-racism campaigns.

The diminishing level of support for individual ethnocultural organisations was indicative of the government's attempt to bring program spending in line with criticism of the multicultural sector of the Department of Canadian Heritage. In fact, on several occasions members of the department acknowledged that their efforts to redefine the multiculturalism program stemmed from a heightened sensitivity of the perceived divisiveness of the policy.<sup>90</sup> In the context of heightened criticism and mounting fiscal restraint exercised by the Department of Finance it was not surprising that the entire multiculturalism program would eventually be put to review.

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<sup>88</sup> In this respect the Liberals clearly continued the work undertaken by the Conservatives. In 1993-94, program spending accounted for \$25 million of the Canadian Heritage budget, by 1998-99 the forecast was approximately \$17 million (Canada, Spending Estimates, years 1993-1994 and 1998-99).

<sup>89</sup> Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Evidence, 35th Parliament, Second Session (March 26, 1996), 12. The drop in funding to interest and advocacy groups across federal departments is explored in detail by Andrew Cardozo, "Lion Taming: Downsizing the Opponents of Downsizing," in *How Ottawa Spends, 1996-1997: Life Under the Knife*, ed. Gene Swimmer (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996).

<sup>90</sup> Both the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister of the Citizenship and Canadian Identity branch of Canadian Heritage have emphasised before the House of Commons Committee on Canadian Heritage, that the multiculturalism program is concerned with ways of building a cohesive society in line with the comments (which included the reservations about the policy) from committee members and the public. See, for instance, Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Evidence, 35th Parliament, Second Session (March 31, 1996), and Canada, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Evidence, 35th Parliament, Second Session (March 26, 1996).

### *The New Program Takes Shape*

In the spring of 1995, an examination of multiculturalism programming activities was undertaken and included: an analysis of funding and program delivery; demographic projections; an assessment of activities across the federal government in support of multiculturalism; a review of multiculturalism policies across Canada and internationally; surveys on public attitudes; and an in-depth examination of relevant research on multiculturalism and diversity.<sup>91</sup> While the scope of this investigation was wide, it was apparent that the cornerstone of this process was the strategic review performed by the private firm Brighton Research.<sup>92</sup> A small controversy was created when a draft copy of the report was obtained by the media in October of 1996, which precipitated the public release of the final report by the government. In a news release announcing the disclosure of the document Hedy Fry, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism & Status of Women), supported the objectives of the Strategic Evaluation while distancing the government from some of its recommendations. She submitted:

This report is only one small part of a larger review of all multiculturalism programs. Program review is part of a government-wide effort of all federal departments to ensure that programs are effective, efficient and results oriented. This government is commitment to multiculturalism policy as a core component of Canadian identity. However, we need to ensure that programs keep pace with change and meet the needs of a diverse society... While I do not agree with all of the recommendations of the Brighton Report, it clearly supports the mandate of multiculturalism programs, and points out that funding should be based on ability to meet program objectives. This kind of accountability makes common sense and does not preclude ethnocultural organisations from receiving funding.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *The Context for Renewal* (April 17, 1997), 1.

<sup>92</sup> The release of the Brighton Report coincided with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of multiculturalism as official state policy.

<sup>93</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *Report on Multiculturalism Released - News Release* (October 17, 1996), 1.

Although supportive of multiculturalism, the Brighton Report was critical of a number of factors deemed to have impeded Canada's pursuit of a socially cohesive, polyethnic society. Included in this list was the suggestion that the federal government had contributed to the uncertainty and ambiguousness of the policy. Citing a lack of clarity in communicating its promises and accomplishments, the report called on the government to clearly articulate the goals of a redesigned program with particular emphasis on promoting multiculturalism as a policy that contributes to cohesion rather than separateness.<sup>94</sup> To such an end, a recommendation was made to refrain from initiatives unrelated to identity, participation and justice "because such initiatives appear to many Canadians to weaken the Canadian fabric".<sup>95</sup> The authors of the report go on to press for a refocusing of program objectives by advocating an end to direct funding for ethnocultural organisations. Quoted here at length they maintain:

Notwithstanding the desires of some community members, the funding of ethno-specific organizations should not continue in its present form. Past funding practices have reinforced the impression that multiculturalism is a "program for special interests", rather than a program for all Canadians. In distinction to what in the past has appeared to some people to be "programming for special interests", the Minister should make clear that all Canadians — rather than sub-groupings of Canadians — are the recipients of the benefits of multiculturalism. A focus on Canadians, generally, is in keeping with the value of universality which Canadians share with regard to important social programs. An important implication of the focus on all Canadians is that activities carried out under the banner of multiculturalism should be conducted by the public agencies and organizations that shape the public life of Canadians — rather than through institutions or agencies representing sub-groups within the Canadian population.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs*, Final Report, Corporate Review Branch (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996). 72. Known as the Brighton Report.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

While the familiar litany of charges against multiculturalism are evaluated (contributes to divisiveness, ghettoises ethnic communities, lacks focus, etc.), it is interesting that the authors of the report do not regard the declining level of overall funding for multicultural activities to be a serious issue — nor do they appear concerned with the reasons behind it.<sup>97</sup> Not only does the report steer clear of the fundamental issue of multiculturalism's decline, it subscribes to the view that less is more. In other words, through the elimination of direct funding to ethnocultural communities and narrowing of guiding principles, the government will be in a better position to argue that multiculturalism serves all Canadians, rather than "sub-groups" within the Canadian population.

Alarmed by the content of the Brighton Report, and concerned that its voice was being marginalized, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council sought to influence the review process. In March of 1997, the organization presented a critique of the Strategic Evaluation in which it registered a range of concerns.<sup>98</sup> One of the many problems cited was the discussion of citizenship — particularly the inability of the report to envision a model of citizenship linked with ethnocultural identity. The CEC noted:

Citizenship, according to the [Brighton] model, occurs as a result of participation, but there is no substantive indication of what this means. Presumably, the policy goal is to engage ethnocultural communities so that they may strengthen their civic identity, but this can only be achieved by acknowledging and supporting the value of culture which defines the social role of ethnocultural communities. Without this, the notion of participation in this particular case is meaningless. Additionally, given that the cultural identities of ethnic communities constitute the shared identity of all

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<sup>97</sup> It is somewhat ironic that this should be the case considering their professed aversion to the "new conservatism" which they view as another obstacle to the achievement of a multicultural society.

<sup>98</sup> Canadian Ethnocultural Council, "Multiculturalism, Citizenship and the Canadian Nation: A Critique of the Proposed Design for Program Renewal," Paper submitted to Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage, March 1997.



Canadians, there is a political and moral imperative to channelling the idea of civic participation through the filter of multiculturalism. The heritage and identity of the nation is reinforced and enhanced in this way; to ignore it, however, is to deny not only its validity but its potential as well.<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, the generally positive reception by the federal government that met with the release of the Brighton Report led the CEC to draw a broad conclusion about the ongoing commitment to the policy. Again, on the theme of citizenship it suggested:

Citizenship, to be meaningful, must emphasize the opportunities for participation, including the opportunity of cultural expression. The [Multiculturalism] Act recognizes the importance of this when it directs the Government of Canada to preserve, promote, and enhance Canadian multiculturalism. By contrast, the model for program renewal adopts a reserved, if not laissez faire, approach to civic participation. This is unfortunate but also telling. That the Government of Canada chooses to ignore the pro-active elements of the policy highlights a certain level of non-commitment. The CEC can only conclude from this shift in emphasis that there is movement away from the original policy.<sup>100</sup>

In April of 1997, with seemingly little influence from stakeholders and with the findings and observations of the Brighton Report in hand, the Department of Canadian Heritage announced its redesigned multiculturalism program. Not surprisingly the redesigned program responded directly to the key recommendations of the Brighton Report. Among the issues reflected in the new multiculturalism program is the carefully worded attempt to avoid initiatives that appear to reinforce the perception that multiculturalism weakens the Canadian fabric. This has been done primarily, but not solely, by adding to the goals of cultural retention and respect for diversity the notion of active civic participation. The Department of Canadian Heritage argued that by encouraging active civic participation multiculturalism will help foster an inclusive

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

society, yet the tone and the text of the Brighton Report is more telling in this regard and suggests another motive. By balancing its support for cultural diversity against its insistence that all citizens should participate in shaping the future of their communities and their country, the multiculturalism program can avoid criticism that it caters exclusively to ethnocultural groups or works against national unity.

A second volley of reforms was directed towards the funding of multicultural programs. Again, concerned that past initiatives have been "ghettoising" for ethnocultural minorities and have reinforced the suggestion that there are two cultural policies (one mainstream and one for ethnic minorities); the redesigned multiculturalism program would consider funding proposals based on objectives outlined by Canadian Heritage. For ethnocultural organisations who were in the past the beneficiaries of core funding, those wanting to secure funding from this point forward were likely to have to do so on a project-by-project basis.

The changes to the funding structure reveal, as suggested above, a dual strategy. Rather than being merely concerned with reducing budgets and meeting deficit reduction targets, the federal government has followed the recommendation of the Brighton Report and has changed its funding assistance in order to ensure that it is not seen as catering to special interests. Furthermore, by adhering to a practice of funding "cost-effective programs that show results", the government is able to deflect criticism from opponents of the reforms by suggesting that it is merely responding to the public's desire for better management of public finances and heightened reservations about the policy.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> There are at least two points to consider based on this strategy. First, notwithstanding the public's interest in controlling the federal deficit, it is difficult to argue that Canadians were in favour of the level and pace of cuts to social spending in the mid-1990s. The second and more important point is whether the

An interesting element of the redesigned multiculturalism program from a policy perspective is how the stated goals of the redesigned program and the language used in support of it reaffirmed the impression that multiculturalism was in a period of decline. In her own assessment, prior to the 1995 review, Abu-Laban pointed to the changing discourse surrounding multiculturalism at the federal level as one of the clear signs that the policy had undergone a transformation. In her estimation, this transformation was primarily evident in the underscoring of the "equity" as opposed to the "identity" aspect of multiculturalism.<sup>102</sup> The author suggests that this change reflects opposition to the idea of funding or maintaining the cultural identity of minority ethnic groups, as well as "opposition to the notion that a collective Canadian identity should be based on multiculturalism".<sup>103</sup> What is being abandoned in this formulation, she concludes, "is the potential to also emphasise that whatever the differences that may exist between individuals, as based on group membership, these differences should be treated with equal respect and value".<sup>104</sup>

The reluctance to emphasise the identity dimension of multiculturalism demonstrated that the promotion of diversity was viewed by the Liberal government as coming at the expense or complicating the cause of unity. In keeping with this position, the redesigned multiculturalism program went to great lengths to stress the requirement

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substance of the changes to multiculturalism, how the program was redesigned, reflected the views of Canadians. If the 1991 national survey is any basis from which to judge, it is a multiculturalism program that actively supports and promotes equality within diversity that Canadians sought.

<sup>102</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "The Politics of Race and Ethnicity," 251.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 257.

of an "active citizenship" on the part of all Canadians.<sup>105</sup> While vague on the details, presumably this was designed to encourage members of ethnocultural communities to adopt a sense of attachment and belonging to the larger (read majority) community, rather than accentuating the differences that exist between Canadians. The contrast between the redesigned program and the Multiculturalism Act is significant in this respect. While the redesigned multiculturalism program spoke of active participation on the part of Canadians, the Multiculturalism Act makes no mention of it, instead it holds that it is the policy of the Government of Canada to "promote the full and *equitable* participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society" [my emphasis].<sup>106</sup> Moreover, in accentuating the need for multicultural programs to perform an integrative function, the redesigned multiculturalism program made little mention of the value attached to diversity for Canadian society. Conversely, the Multiculturalism Act underlines the commitment of government to "promote the understanding and creativity that arise(s) from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins".<sup>107</sup>

By promoting integration and social cohesion as guiding principles of the redesigned multiculturalism program, the federal government reflected the collective anxiety of the policy's opponents. Yet, no one who supports the principle of cultural diversity believes that the government should arrange its multiculturalism policy to suit

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<sup>105</sup> Developing "active citizens" under the banner of civic participation was considered one of the fundamental goals of multiculturalism (the other goals are related to identity and social justice).

<sup>106</sup> Canada, House of Commons, *Bill C-93 An Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Passed July 12, 1988, 3(c).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 3(g).

all the differences that exist within cultures. As Anne Phillips has argued; “No society could organise its political affairs, or sustain any semblance of national unity, if it fragmented the citizens into a thousand sub-groups, each with its own claims to representation. But we do not have to choose between an unstoppable logic of further fragmentation and naïve assertions of indivisible unity”.<sup>108</sup>

But in its search for the middle ground the Liberal government threatened to erode the symbolic character of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, like other institutions designed to manage diversity, has a strong symbolic component that provides members of ethnocultural communities with a context for understanding our society’s views on tolerance, justice, and identity. It is an also environment within which individuals and groups seek recognition of their identities. By implying that the recognition of different identities is fraught with danger, or that it is not the role of government to affect the distribution of resources among individuals, a clear message was sent to those seeking inclusion about the terms of their acceptance.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter analysed the institutional-political dynamics of multiculturalism reform in the critical decade of the 1990s. After more than twenty years of debate and adjustment, a new policy model was embedded that overtook pre-existing views about the responsibility of a government to recognise and actively support Canada’s diversity. We argued that the stage for this shift was conditioned by a government predisposed to arguments about the logic of market-countervailing practices of the modern welfare state.

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<sup>108</sup> Anne Phillips, "Why Worry About Multiculturalism." *Dissent*. Winter: 1997, 61.

At the same time we demonstrated that policy outcomes are the product of a more complex logic than the automatic displacement of one paradigm by another. In the case of multiculturalism, neo-liberal ideas interacted with the growing fear about the potentially destabilising effects of multicultural recognition to produce policy change. A range of causal factors ultimately interacted with ideas to make this possible. Of particular significance was the organisation of political interests, intellectual opposition, and the constitutional battles waged on the national unity front in the early 1990s.

While the focus of state activity in the 1990s had shifted from the use of government for broad social improvement to the focus of public attention to deficit and debt reduction, the consequences for multiculturalism were not predetermined. By the mid-1990s a stream of analysis and criticism of federal multicultural policy helped to solidify the concerns of various social interests into coherent policy discourses. The coalescing of ideas within the agenda setting network acquired a certain resonance within the federal party system, allowing for a convergence of opinion among the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives on the future direction of multiculturalism.

In the years between 1991 and 1996, an appreciable decline in support for multiculturalism was the result. Despite the fanfare surrounding the establishment of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, its tenure was brief. Within two years of its creation by the Progressive Conservative government, the department was abandoned and for the first time in twenty-one years the multiculturalism portfolio was dropped from the federal cabinet. As part of a major reorganisation of government departments that ensued, the portfolios of Multiculturalism and the Status of Women were combined in 1993 and transferred to a new “super-ministry” the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Both portfolios were represented within the DCH by the newly established "secretary of state", a junior ministerial level that was not directly represented in cabinet.

Multiculturalism's move to the Department of Canadian Heritage was soon followed by the election of the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien in 1993. The return of the Liberals to power following a nine-year absence stirred debate about multiculturalism, notably about future prospects for the policy that had been subjected to budgetary pressures under the previous government. Providing additional impetus for the discussion over multiculturalism's future was the Reform Party, whose unequivocal opposition to multiculturalism would become a prominent feature of the party's platform. Reform's objection to multiculturalism combined with the spectre of further reductions to departmental and program spending by the Liberals, provided a backdrop from which to reassess the merits of the policy.

With respect to national unity, in the first half of the decade the federal government wanted to demonstrate that federalism was capable of reforming itself in directions that would appeal to Quebec francophones and restore national unity. This could only be done by challenging the perception that "status quo" federalism, or the absence of any evolution in federal-provincial relations towards meeting calls for change, was the prevailing wisdom within the central government. After the failure of the Meech Lake Accord this meant devising a balancing act between support for the concept of provincial equality in English Canada and the recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness. This agenda had no interest in promoting multiculturalism, nor the sources of ethnocultural unity which affirmed a public commitment to diversity and Canadian citizenship. Not only was the policy trivialised by the federal government in the process

that produced the Charlottetown Accord, but the Spicer Commission openly legitimised the view that multiculturalism was worthy only as a personal pursuit. And while the arguments put forward by "world class philosophers" such as Kymlicka and Taylor may have served as counterweights to the negative assessments of multiculturalism, and provided the Liberal government with an opportunity to see continued value in the policy, the perception remained that reform was needed.

Viewed from this perspective, the federal government consciously chose to reconsider the terms of ethnocultural integration by questioning whether multicultural demands posed a threat to Canadian unity. Confronted with mounting criticism and its own reservations about the policy, the federal government looked to policy review as a means by which its fiscal priorities could be achieved and its concerns about multiculturalism addressed. For multiculturalism this came to mean budget cuts – but more importantly it led to a wholesale change in its profile within the federal government. During the review of multiculturalism programs in 1996-1997, the federal government remarked that while spending was being curbed, their commitment to multicultural principles remained intact. In essence, they argued that program spending could be separated from the purely symbolic tenets upon which the policy rested. The reform measures, however, indicated a tendency to consider the symbolic/cultural dimensions of institutions and policies as secondary, as something to consider when the "real" problems and issues have been dealt with. During the 1990s, the debate over public policies in Canada, as with multiculturalism, increasingly concentrated on economic and material aspects.



Yet multiculturalism policy was altered not simply as a result of this rational analysis of economic costs and benefits. The perception that multiculturalism undermined national unity was very much part of the government's calculations, and as a consequence, the very definition of what it means to be Canadian was being rethought. Here the differences between the policy paradigms of the 1960s and 1990s are quite striking. In the 1960s, multiculturalism was born out of a desire to promote cultural differences as a public good, but also as a potential foil to Quebec nationalism. In this sense multiculturalism policy was created out of the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs encapsulated in the prevailing national unity discourse of the period. In contrast, by the late 1990s instead of recommitting itself to an inclusionary model of integration, the federal government sought to cast doubt on the idea that citizenship in Canada could be firmly rooted in the recognition of citizens with diverse origins. In its place, the new vision of a multicultural society reflected the idea that the preservation of ethnocultural identity was above all a private pursuit, and Canadians should not expect uniformity between their private identities and the content of state policy. In effect, the activist era of multiculturalism was over and with it the public commitment to reflect and respond to Canada's ethnocultural diversity.

## CONCLUSION

### **Ethnocultural Diversity and Policy Reform in the Canadian Political System**

This thesis began by indicating the disagreement over the sources of unity in an ethnoculturally diverse society. We maintained that finding morally defensible and politically viable answers to the issues (or) concerns to which diversity gave rise went beyond a philosophical task; it also required serious analytic attention to the role of public institutions. To support this position we tracked the evolution of multiculturalism policy in Canada – from generation and implementation to reformulation – across four decades. We proposed that multiculturalism has served as a vehicle for adjusting the terms of integration as well as contributing to our understanding of citizenship. This perspective was consistent with an understanding of citizenship as a system of inclusion and exclusion in which state institutions recognise different categories of citizens with particular rights and claims. We argued that changes in multiculturalism policy would therefore affect the rights exercised by a range of Canadian citizens and for their recognition as citizens by the state more generally.

To carry out the historical-institutional analysis required by this case study the policy paradigm and the agenda-setting network concepts were used to develop and understanding of policy choice and historical change.<sup>1</sup> Here the proposition was advanced that during periods of contestation policy disputes are often marked by conflicting ideas about change derived from fundamental beliefs about politics and economics. Yet we claimed that policy outcomes are also explained by a range of causal factors that interact

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in chapter 1, this study's interest in the interaction between ideas and interests in institutional settings might also be understood to follow an institutional-interpretative approach.

with ideas, including the organisation of political interests within the agenda-setting network. As such our research supported the position that ideas interact within specific institutional contexts to produce policy change.

From the standpoint of trying to explain the emergence of multiculturalism policy in the 1970s and 1980s, we focused on the role of policy-making as an exercise in political thinking. Political ideas were highlighted as an important determinant of the policy process because they influenced the conceptualisation of the problem, and underscored potential courses of action. We began by focusing on the emergence of multiculturalism as part of a larger rights framework that has evolved over time. Multiculturalism may have had its origins in the 1960s, but developments of the late 1940s and 1950s laid the basis for several important changes that have shaped the Canadian political landscape. These included; the growth of the postwar citizenship regime based on the welfare state, the rise of new forms of identity politics, and the liberalisation of Canadian society following an international trend towards individual rights. Foremost among these transformations was the debate over identity concerns and the connection to membership in the Canadian political community. As we noted, changes to citizenship and immigration policy in the 1960s were to provide a context within which citizens of an increasingly diverse society could recognise themselves. Recognising themselves in the values and meanings of these evolving institutions provided reassurance that there was a growing congruence between their own identities and public life. In short, the period demonstrated that public policy was capable of assuring those whose values it reflected that Canada was a society capable of meaningful recognition.

Our focus on the interplay between ideas and institutions also led us to direct attention to the first federal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Describing and analysing Trudeau's views on Quebec nationalism allowed us to understand the ideational framework through which a national unity strategy was constructed. Even though the national unity problem played a central role in the policy process from which multiculturalism emerged, the story of the policy's origin is not limited to a single explanation. Multicultural ideas gathered momentum and once engaged with the ideas of a Just Society fuelled an attempt to deal with matters of cultural policy by accommodating interests and filtering politics. The mobilisation of ethnocultural groups in response to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism also figured as an important causal factor. Although the presence of ethnocultural groups before the Commission may not have been sufficiently broad-based to independently move the government to action, the capacity of the groups to make their identity claims known and resonate with the Canadian state outweighed the significance of their numbers.

As introduced in the fall of 1971, the policy of multiculturalism was suggestive of an environment shaped by the postwar citizenship regime where government intervention was evident in several areas of social policy. And by the end of the 1970s, an agreement existed on the appropriateness of state support for ethnocultural groups with multiculturalism as a key element in the symbolic expressions of Canadian citizenship. This symbolic recognition, backed-up by institutional support, was significant in its own right but must be understood as part of a larger rights framework that included more than multiculturalism policy. The federal government's commitment to diversity and the idea of citizenship it supported were based on policies and initiatives such as immigration,

human rights and social justice. In essence, the ideas and agendas associated within this era did more than advance political interests, they revealed an attempt by state and societal interests to fashion a consensus on how the boundaries of membership within a polity should be defined; how the benefits and responsibilities of membership should be allocated; and how the boundaries of membership should be understood and legitimised.

In the 1980s, the course of multiculturalism policy followed a fairly routine practice where adjustments to various aspects of the policy took place without radically altering the overall configuration of the policy regime. In effect this meant that on the surface adjustments to the federal policy were often compatible with the existing policy paradigm. For the long-term stability of multiculturalism, however, we argued that the changing circumstances and ideas that were characteristic of this policymaking era would ultimately serve to inspire efforts towards more fundamental change. In this regard we saw the 1980s as a pivotal decade, one that proved not to be an era of true policy innovation, but one that triggered intellectual and bureaucratic debate around new policy goals and practices. Ideological considerations, in particular, were seldom absent from policy calculations. Quite the opposite was true. The mid-1980s were a transition period for Canadian politics and in particular for multiculturalism. We considered how new ideas and agendas were introduced into the policy milieu that set out to challenge established principles. Here the neo-liberal agenda of the Progressive Conservatives figured prominently in our analysis. What was undeniable about the government's agenda was that its retrenchment efforts to dismantle social citizenship rights were inspired by the presumed faults of the alternative paradigm. The Keynesian notion of government regulation and intervention led the new government to blame the country's poor

economic performance on an ideology they believed to be outdated, and overly sceptical of the value of the market and the power of private industry. It took time for the ideas and arguments associated with this paradigm to work against the status quo, or more appropriately, to sufficiently influence the institutional and behavioural legacies of the past. This line of argument spoke directly to the change or variability in multiculturalism brought on by its interaction within the political environment. It is at this point that we believe our study revealed the strengths of the historical-institutionalist approach. While at the policy level multiculturalism in the early 1980s experienced only incremental change, a sustained critique was being developed that would only later influence policy-making more profoundly and reshape the government's orientation towards ethnocultural diversity.

By the late 1980s, and in spite of the federal government public commitment to multiculturalism, we documented instances that had the effect of prompting a qualification to the conventional view of multiculturalism as a policy on the rise. Far from a period of policy innovation, the struggles within the Canadian political system demonstrated how the choices of state actors were bound by institutional arrangements that actively shaped their view of ethnocultural policy. More directly, we demonstrated that the Mulroney government chose consciously to limit its freedom of action in several policy endeavours. An examination of the debate surrounding the Employment Equity Act exposed the degree to which the government was prepared to wilfully contain the role of the federal state in dealings with the private sector. Although the legislation demonstrated that the national government did have a role to play in promoting equity, it was understood that the public interest would not be accorded more weight in policy

calculations than private interests. In effect it demonstrated that under Mulroney, the Progressive Conservatives were prepared in certain policy realms to transfer autonomy to the market and thereby support the logic of a limited interventionist state. As for the Meech Lake Accord, the constitutional bargain undertaken with Quebec challenged the multicultural legacy enshrined by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This evidence contributed to our view that the Canadian state was evidently willing to compromise its commitment to ethnocultural diversity. On the one hand, the federal government was prepared to recognise ethnocultural identities through new legislation in the Multiculturalism Act that was designed to bolster support for the policy. On the other hand, we exposed how multiculturalism could only exist in a policy environment in which the traditional two-nations concept was not sacrificed. This meant that initiatives designed to recognise ethnocultural identities would never be accorded more weight in federal policy calculations than initiatives designed to manage the ongoing, and by the late 1980s growing, constitutional crisis involving Quebec. It equally implied that when multicultural rights were extended, such as in the new Multiculturalism Act, they would often be limited to symbolic recognition; for fear that they would be perceived as working against the cause of Canadian unity by inflaming other group interests. For that reason, the message from Ottawa was that the cause of Canadian unity and the requirement to reconcile national or linguistic cleavages would trump multicultural recognition. Multiculturalism during this period was not seen as undermining social cohesion and a sense of community; rather it was viewed as peripheral to federal efforts to deal with amendments necessary to enable the government of Quebec to give its willing assent to the Constitution. The story of the Meech Lake Accord from the

perspective of multiculturalism is consequently about the degree to which the policy was relegated to the background in debates about the redesign of the constitutional order.

In the early 1990s, multiculturalism continued to be mediated by the broader political context as new political parties and influential players joined the debate over the course of the policy. Paramount among these was the pressure from the Reform Party to end state support for multiculturalism. This argument was added to the powerful and ongoing discourse about the fiscal deficit that would come to form an important tool to blunt Canadian social policy. For multiculturalism, this meant not only would the cost of the policy become the subject of scrutiny, but it engendered a more fundamental debate on the very rationale for ethnocultural support. The door being opened, the long-standing all-party commitment to multiculturalism was broken, with the policy increasingly cast in some quarters as a threat to social cohesion and national unity.

The final historical juncture in our study demonstrated the utility of Peter Hall's approach to explaining the diffusion of ideas within the political system. As we documented, three sources of ideas would ultimately emerge to dispute the entrenched policy rationale for multiculturalism: political parties, government commissions, and intellectuals. Our study identified the introduction of ideas, with attention to the way various actors framed multicultural issues and advanced policy arguments that were linked to a set of beliefs associated with political and economic models of development. At the party level, the Bloc Québécois added its voice to the longstanding debate on the merits of multiculturalism by responding to a changing national unity environment and a perceived failure of the policy. The party's most significant contribution to the debate over multiculturalism would be measured indirectly, contesting the design and



implications of the federally conceived national unity projects of the 1990s. In this way the Bloc Québécois argued that the federal government promoted a form of centralized federalism that repudiated the distinct nature of Quebec. The net effect of this posture was to discredit the notion of a pan-Canadian identity structured, in part, around multicultural principles.

Also entering the debate over multiculturalism was the Reform Party who argued against the management of ethnocultural diversity based on its critique of the liberal pursuit of social justice and because it ran counter to the neo-liberal ideological variant of economic freedom that professed fiscal conservatism. What was new about this opposition to multiculturalism was the coupling of the fiscal critique with the argument that the state should be neutral in matters of cultural retention. As noted, the result was a principled attack on the state management of ethnocultural relations that represented a significant challenge to the elite consensus on the merits of pluralism. Apart from any electoral benefit the party hoped to gain with its stance, the enduring impact on the party system would be the legitimization of a political discourse that downplayed pluralism. As a consequence, and far from an outpouring of support in defence of multiculturalism, other federal parties began to rethink their own attachment to the policy. Both the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberals became increasingly sensitive to the public perception that multiculturalism frustrated attempts at greater inter-ethnic toleration. In particular, when opponents of multiculturalism weighed into the debate the federal government was reluctant to offer a strong vindication of the policy. Tied up in the budget reduction exercises and national unity projects of the decade, the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals were generally unwilling to rally behind multiculturalism.

With this passivity it became obvious that the activism of the 1980s responsible for creating a Multiculturalism Act and a separate department would not be matched.

Towards the end of our final chapter we considered the adoption of ideas at the level of the federal bureaucracy, analyzing the strategic choices made in linking ideas to politics. Here we tracked the process of recasting multiculturalism policy as a reply to political mobilization and a discourse highlighting the viability of ideas in the Canadian political system. Within the institutions of the federal government, the search for answers in the wake of the failure Meech Lake Accord that led to the Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future, and ultimately the Charlottetown Accord, provided a wealth of ideas that helped crystallize the concerns of various social forces into coherent policy directions. As an agent of change the Citizen's Forum fulfilled two important functions for state leaders: legitimising a model of ethnocultural relations that lauded the private maintenance of cultural diversity over public means, and by providing much anticipated strategic direction. For a government about to ready itself for another round of constitutional negotiations the Commission readily provided a re-tooled version of multiculturalism that could serve the cause of Canadian unity by dispelling fears that the policy weakened the idea of a common nationality.

Public dissenters also weighed-in to the debate, and while challenged by supporters of the policy, were able to contribute to the search by state officials for a new policy direction to fend off charges that multiculturalism was divisive. Integral to this pattern of advice was the belief that Canada stood at a crossroads; outdated images of Canadian society and associated policies stood as obstacles to needed reform. A number of themes were drawn together but rested ultimately on the assumption that multiculturalism

was unsuccessful as an exercise in state sponsored social engineering. By the mid-1990s the assumptions and prescriptions of the public dissenters alongside government inquiries and constitutional failures served only to reinforce the perception that a policy review, at the very least, was inevitable.

Also central to the course of policy in these years was the arrival in power of a new Liberal government in 1993. Committed to a political agenda similar to that of Progressive Conservative, the Liberals restructured the delivery of social programs in a wide range of areas. Multiculturalism policy during the Liberals first term was shaped by the sensitivity of the government to the political atmosphere conditioned by the most recent national unity crisis, and the attention to deficit and debt reduction that became the primary focus of their new agenda. In the context of heightened criticism and mounting fiscal restraint exercised by the Department of Finance it was not surprising that the entire multiculturalism program would eventually be put to review. The resultant Brighton Report functioned as an institutional mechanism for non-partisan experts to reflect on the policy's failures, and generate innovative ideas in support of change. With an "authoritative" response to the policy's failings in hand the government in 1997 announced its redesigned multiculturalism program. Not unexpectedly the new policy direction echoed the key recommendations of the Brighton Report. Among the issues reflected in the new multiculturalism program was the carefully worded attempt to avoid initiatives that appeared to reinforce the perception that multiculturalism weakened the Canadian fabric. This was done primarily, but not solely, by adding to the goals of cultural retention and respect for diversity the notion of active civic participation. In this respect the contrast is sharp with the Multiculturalism Act. In accentuating the need for

multicultural programs to perform an integrative function, the redesigned multiculturalism program made little mention of the value attached to diversity for Canadian society.

It remains to be seen whether the changes to multiculturalism will erode the symbolic character of multiculturalism. Like other institutions designed to manage diversity, this thesis began by focusing on the strong symbolic component of multiculturalism that provides members of ethnocultural communities with a context for understanding our society's views on tolerance, justice, and identity. At the very least, by implying that the recognition of different identities is fraught with danger, or that it is not the role of government to affect the distribution of resources among individuals, a clear message was sent to those seeking inclusion about the terms of their acceptance. The message remains true today not simply because of the diffusion of neo-liberal ideas in the Canadian political system. Beyond neo-liberalism, multiculturalism in Canada has been shaped by the national unity debate wherein successive federal governments have opted to regard multiculturalism as a threat to national unity, rather than a way of shoring it up. Shifts in the multicultural agenda were precipitated, in part, by a view of proper state-society relations, but the perception of undermining national unity and the very definition of what it means to be Canadian remains foremost on the table. The election of the Conservative government in January 2006 has so far suggested little deviation from this trend. With an enthusiasm for tax cuts and a focus on new policy priorities there appears to be no interest in a reinvigorated multiculturalism policy.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, neither the

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<sup>2</sup> Alongside the tax cuts announced early in the new government's mandate was the decision in the fall of 2006 to reduce, or eliminate altogether, funding for policy branches within government or those outside that received government money. The program cuts are detailed in *Backgrounder – Effective Spending*, Treasury Board Secretariat (Ottawa: September 25, 2006).

Conservative Party's 2006 election platform nor the most recent Speech from the Throne made any reference to multiculturalism.<sup>3</sup>

One cautionary note here is the experience with the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Multiculturalism as a concept for understanding and promoting Canadian diversity had always been controversial, but being forced to navigate between a heightened concern about national security and a longstanding commitment to civil liberties may change the dynamics of the multicultural debate in important ways. It is possible that protest voices, the loudest of which is on the conservative right, will succeed in bringing an end to official multiculturalism policy out of fear that it deepens the divide between cultures. The policy environment shaped by concern over national security that led to the passage in December 2001 of Canada's anti-terrorism legislation, and tested most recently in the arrest of suspected terrorists in Toronto in June 2006, has likely only deepened the view of multiculturalism by these same voices as a dangerous experiment that promotes group differences and divisions.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, however, the struggle to define Canada's stance towards diversity amidst the threat of fundamentalist terrorism might succeed in inspiring policy makers to reassess their assumptions about cultural difference and recognition practices. The content of multicultural policy would then be debated and defined as a much more constructive route to increased social cohesion than has been the case in the past.

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<sup>3</sup> See Conservative Party of Canada, *Stand Up for Canada: Conservative Party of Canada Federal Election Platform 2006* (13 January, 2006); and Canada, House of Commons. *Canada's New Government – Speech from the Throne: Turning a New Leaf*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament (Ottawa: Service Canada, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> The short title of the legislation is the *Anti-terrorism Act*, otherwise known as Bill C-36. On June 2, 2006, police arrested about a dozen men in the Toronto area on terrorism-related charges. Canadian intelligence sources allege the men were part of a terrorist cell which was close to carrying out attacks on one or more Canadian targets.

## APPENDIX 1

### Announcement of Implementation of Policy of Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework<sup>1</sup>

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am happy this morning to be able to reveal to the House that the government has accepted all those recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which are contained in Volume IV of its reports directed to federal departments and agencies. Hon. Members will recall that the subject of this volume is "the contribution by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution."

Volume IV examined the whole question of cultural and ethnic pluralism in this country and the status of our various cultures and languages, an area of study given all too little attention in the past by scholars.

It was the view of the royal commission, shared by the government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly.

The royal commission was guided by the belief that adherence to one's ethnic group is influenced not so much by one's origin or mother tongue as by one's sense of belonging to the group, and by what the commission calls the group's "collective will to exist." The government shares this belief.

The individual's freedom would be hampered if he were locked for life within a particular cultural compartment by the accident of birth or language. It is vital, therefore, that every Canadian, whatever his ethnic origin, be given a chance to

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<sup>1</sup> *Debates*, 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, October 8, 1971, 8545-8548.

learn at least one of the two languages in which his country conducts its official business and its politics.

A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.

The government will support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all.

In the past, substantial public support has been given largely to the arts and cultural institutions of English-speaking Canada. More recently and largely with the help of the royal commission's earlier recommendations in Volumes I to III, there has been a conscious effort on the governments part to correct any bias against the French language and culture. In the last few months the government has taken steps to provide funds to support cultural educational centres for native people. The policy I am announcing today accepts the contention of the other cultural communities that they, too, are essential elements in Canada and deserve government assistance in order to contribute to regional and national life in ways that derive from their heritage yet are distinctively Canadian.

In implementing a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, the government will provide support in four ways.

First, resources permitting, the government will seek to assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity

to grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance, the small and weak groups no less than the strong and highly organized.

Second, the government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society.

Third, the government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity.

Fourth, the government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society.

Mr. Speaker, I stated at the outset that the government has accepted in principle all recommendations addressed to federal departments and agencies. We are also ready and willing to work cooperatively with the provincial governments towards implementing those recommendations that concern matters under provincial or shared responsibility.

Some of the programmes endorsed or recommended by the Commission have been administered for some time by various federal agencies. I might mention the Citizenship Branch, the CRTC and its predecessor the BBG, the National Film Board and the National Museum of Man. These programmes will be revised, broadened and reactivated and they will receive the additional funds that may be required.

Some of the recommendations that concern matters under provincial jurisdiction call for coordinated federal and provincial action. As a first step, I have written to the First Ministers of the provinces informing them of the response of the federal government and seeking their cooperation. Officials will be asked to carry this consultation further.

I wish to table details of the government's response to each of the several recommendations.



It should be noted that some of the programmes require pilot projects or further short-term research before more extensive action can be taken. As soon as these preliminary studies are available, further programmes will be announced and initiated. Additional financial and personnel resources will be provided.

Responsibility for implementing these recommendations has been assigned to the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, the agency now responsible for matters affecting the social integration of immigrants and the cultural activities of all ethnic groups. An Inter-Agency Committee of all those agencies involved will be established to co-ordinate the federal effort.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize the view of the government that a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively. If freedom of choice is in danger for some ethnic groups, it is in danger for all. It is the policy of this government to eliminate any such danger and to "safeguard" this freedom.

I am tabling this document, Mr. Speaker, but it might be the desire of the House to have it appended to *Hansard* in view of its importance and long-lasting effect.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members. Agreed.

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**Appendix to Hansard, October 8, 1971  
(Federal Response to Book IV Recommendations, Part A & B)<sup>2</sup>**

**PART A**

*Federal Response in General*

The government accepts and endorses the recommendations and spirit of Book IV of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. It believes the time is overdue for the people of Canada to become more aware of the rich tradition of the many cultures we have in Canada. Canada's citizens come from almost every country in the world, and bring with them every major world religion and language. This cultural diversity endows all Canadians with a great variety of human experience. The government regards this as a heritage to treasure and believes that Canada would be the poorer if we adopted assimilation programs forcing our citizens to forsake and forget the cultures they have brought to us.

The federal government hopes that the provinces will also respond positively to those recommendations which the commissioners addressed to them. The Prime Minister has written to each of the provincial premiers outlining the policies and programs which the Federal Government is initiating and asking for their co-operation. Some provinces have already taken the initiative and are responding to the recommendations directed to them.

The government while responding positively to the commission's recommendations, wishes to go beyond them to the spirit of the Book IV to ensure that Canada's cultural diversity continues.

Cultural diversity throughout the world is being eroded by the impact of industrial technology', mass communications and urbanization. Many writers have discussed this as the creation of a mass society -- in which mass produced culture and entertainment and large impersonal institutions threaten to denature and

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<sup>2</sup> *Debates*, 28<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, October 8, 1971, pp.8580-8581.

depersonalize man. One of man's basic needs is a sense of belonging, and a good deal of contemporary social unrest - in all age groups - exists because this need has not been met. Ethnic groups are certainly not the only way in which this need for belonging can be met, but they have been an important one in Canadian society. Ethnic pluralism can help us overcome or prevent the homogenization and depersonalization of mass society. Vibrant ethnic groups can give Canadians of the second, third, and subsequent generations a feeling that they are connected with tradition and with human experience in various parts of the world and different periods of time.

Two misconceptions often arise when cultural diversity is discussed.

(a) Cultural Identity and National Allegiance.

The sense of identity developed by each citizen as a unique individual is distinct from his national allegiance. There is no reason to suppose that a citizen who identifies himself with pride as a Chinese-Canadian, who is deeply involved in the cultural activities of the Chinese community in Canada, will be less loyal or concerned with Canadian matters than a citizen of Scottish origin who takes part in a bagpipe band or highland dancing group. Cultural identity is not the same thing as allegiance to a country. Each of us is born into a particular family with a distinct heritage: that is, everyone -- French, English, Italian and Slav included -- has an "ethnic" background. The more secure we feel in one particular social context, the more we are free to explore our identity beyond it. Ethnic groups often provide people with a sense of belonging which can make them better able to cope with the rest of society than they would as isolated individuals. Ethnic loyalties need not, and usually do not, detract from wider loyalties to community and country.

Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism. Indeed, we believe that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity. Every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own culture and values within the Canadian context. To say we have two official languages is not to say we have two official

cultures, and no particular culture is more "official" than another. A policy of multiculturalism must be a policy for all Canadians.

(b) Language and Culture.

The distinction between language and culture has never been clearly defined. The very name of the royal commission whose recommendations we now seek to implement tends to indicate that bilingualism and biculturalism are indivisible. But, biculturalism does not properly describe our society; multiculturalism is more accurate. The Official Languages Act designated two languages, English and French, as the official languages of Canada for the purposes of all the institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada; no reference was made to cultures, and this act does not impinge upon the role of all languages as instruments of the various Canadian cultures. Nor, on the other hand, should the recognition of the cultural value of many languages weaken the position of Canada's two official languages. Their use by all of the citizens of Canada will continue to be promoted and encouraged.

## **PART B**

### ***Policy Objectives in the Federal Sphere***

The government is concerned with preserving human rights, developing Canadian identity, strengthening citizenship participation, reinforcing Canadian unity and encouraging cultural diversification within a bilingual framework. These objectives can best be served through a policy of multiculturalism composed of four main elements.

1. The government of Canada will support all of Canada's cultures and will seek to assist, resources permitting, the development of those cultural groups which have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop, a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, as well as a clear need for assistance.

The special role of the government will be to support and encourage those cultures and cultural groups which Canadians wish to preserve.

The stronger and more populous cultural groups generally have the resources to be self-supporting and general cultural activities tend to be supportive of them. The two largest cultures, in areas where they exist in a minority situation, are already supported under the aegis of the government's official languages programs. New programs are proposed to give support to minority cultural groups in keeping with their needs and particular situations.

However, the government cannot and should not take upon itself the responsibility for the continued viability of all ethnic groups. The objective of our policy is the cultural survival and development of ethnic groups to the degree that a given group exhibits a desire for this. Government aid to cultural groups must proceed on the basis of aid to self-effort. And in our concern for the preservation of ethnic group identity, we should not forget that individuals in a democracy may choose not to be concerned about maintaining a strong sense of their ethnic identity.

2. The Government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society.

The law can and will protect individuals from overt discrimination but there are more subtle barriers to entry into our society. A sense of not belonging, or a feeling of inferiority, whatever its cause, cannot be legislated out of existence. Programs outlined in this document have been designed to foster confidence in one's individual cultural identity and in one's rightful place in Canadian life. Histories, films and museum exhibits showing the great contributions of Canada's various cultural groups will help achieve this objective. But, we must emphasize that every Canadian must help eliminate discrimination. Every Canadian must help contribute to the sense of national acceptance and belonging.

3. The Government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity. As Canadians become

more sensitive to their own ethnic identity and to the richness of our country, we will become more involved with one another and develop a greater acceptance of differences and a greater pride in our heritage. Cultural and intellectual creativity in almost all societies has been fostered by the interaction and creative relationship of different ethnic groups within that society. Government aid to multicultural centres, to specific projects of ethnic groups, and to displays of the performing and visual arts as well as the programs already mentioned, will promote cultural exchange. The Government has made it very clear that it does not plan on aiding individual groups to cut themselves off from the rest of society. The programs are designed to encourage cultural groups to share their heritage with all other Canadians and with other countries, and to make us all aware of our cultural diversity.

4. The Government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society. The federal government, through the Manpower and Immigration Department and the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, already assists the provinces in language training for adults, but new arrivals in Canada require additional help to adjust to Canadian life, and to participate fully in the economic and social life of Canada.

## APPENDIX 2

### Canadian Multiculturalism Act

1. This Act may be cited as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Interpretation*

2. In this Act, "federal institution" means any of the following institutions of the Government of Canada:

(a) a department, board, commission or council, or other body or office, established to perform a governmental function by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament or by or under the authority of the Governor in Council, and

(b) a departmental corporation or Crown corporation as defined in section 2 of the Financial Administration Act, but does not include

(c) any institution of the Council or government of the Northwest Territories or the Yukon Territory, or

(d) any Indian band, band council or other body established to perform a governmental function in relation to an Indian band or other group of aboriginal people;

"Minister" means such member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada as is designated by the Governor in Council as the Minister for the purposes of this Act.

#### *Multiculturalism Policy of Canada*

3. (1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to

(a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;

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<sup>1</sup> R.S., 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.) An Act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada [1988, c. 31, assented to 21st July, 1988].

- (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
- (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and 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;
- (d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;
- (e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
- (f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
- (g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
- (h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;
- (i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and
- (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

(2) It is further declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada that all federal institutions shall

- (a) ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in those institutions;
- (b) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada;
- (c) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society;
- (d) collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada;



(e) make use, as appropriate, of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins; and

(f) generally, carry on their activities in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada.

*Implementation of the Multiculturalism Policy of Canada*

**4.** The Minister, in consultation with other ministers of the Crown, shall encourage and promote a coordinated approach to the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada and may provide advice and assistance in the development and implementation of programs and practices in support of the policy.

**5. (1)** The Minister shall take such measures as the Minister considers appropriate to implement the multiculturalism policy of Canada and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may

(a) encourage and assist individuals, organizations and institutions to project the multicultural reality of Canada in their activities in Canada and abroad;

(b) undertake and assist research relating to Canadian multiculturalism and foster scholarship in the field;

(c) encourage and promote exchanges and cooperation among the diverse communities of Canada;

(d) encourage and assist the business community, labour organizations, voluntary and other private organizations, as well as public institutions, in ensuring full participation in Canadian society, including the social and economic aspects, of individuals of all origins and their communities, and in promoting respect and appreciation for the multicultural reality of Canada;

(e) encourage the preservation, enhancement, sharing and evolving expression of the multicultural heritage of Canada;

(f) facilitate the acquisition, retention and use of all languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage of Canada;

(g) assist ethno-cultural minority communities to conduct activities with a view to overcoming any discriminatory barrier and, in particular, discrimination based on race or national or ethnic origin;

(h) provide support to individuals, groups or organizations for the purpose of preserving, enhancing and promoting multiculturalism in Canada; and

(i) undertake such other projects or programs in respect of multiculturalism, not by law assigned to any other federal institution, as are designed to promote the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

(2) The Minister may enter into an agreement or arrangement with any province respecting the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

(3) The Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, enter into an agreement or arrangement with the government of any foreign state in order to foster the multicultural character of Canada.

6. (1) The ministers of the Crown, other than the Minister, shall, in the execution of their respective mandates, take such measures as they consider appropriate to implement the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

(2) A minister of the Crown, other than the Minister, may enter into an agreement or arrangement with any province respecting the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

7. (1) The Minister may establish an advisory committee to advise and assist the Minister on the implementation of this Act and any other matter relating to multiculturalism and, in consultation with such organizations representing multicultural interests as the Minister deems appropriate, may appoint the members and designate the chairman and other officers of the committee.

(2) Each member of the advisory committee shall be paid such remuneration for the member's services as may be fixed by the Minister and is entitled to be paid the reasonable travel and living expenses incurred by the member while absent from the member's ordinary place of residence in connection with the work of the committee.

(3) The chairman of the advisory committee shall, within four months after the end of each fiscal year, submit to the Minister a report on the activities of the committee for that year and on any other matter relating to the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada that the chairman considers appropriate.

#### *General*

8. The Minister shall cause to be laid before each House of Parliament, not later than the fifth sitting day of that House after January 31 next following the end of each fiscal year, a report on the operation of this Act for that fiscal year.

9. The operation of this Act and any report made pursuant to section 8 shall be reviewed on a permanent basis by such committee of the House, of the Senate or of both Houses of Parliament as may be designated or established for the purpose.

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