Immigrant Integration in Canada and the United States

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In Will Kymlicka’s spirited defense of Canadian multiculturalism, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (1998), the author writes:

> Canada does better than virtually any other country in the world in the integration of immigrants. The only comparable country is Australia, which has its own multicultural policy—one largely inspired by Canada’s, although of course it has been adapted to Australian circumstances. The two countries that lead the world in the integration of immigrants are countries with official multiculturalism policies. They are much more successful than any country that has rejected multiculturalism.

The observation is but one slice of a broad and intriguing discussion of the prospects for multiculturalism among national minorities—Aboriginals and Quebecois—as well as immigrants. Yet Kymlicka is not alone among social theorists in his belief that multiculturalism is a Canadian distinctive. Even the Canadian government endorses his reading of official multiculturalism as the source of Canada’s superiority in immigrant integration.

Given that the United States is a parallel North American settler society, one subject to similar waves of immigration as Canada, Kymlicka refers to the American experience more than that of any other country in support of his thesis that Canadian multiculturalism is responsible for high levels of immigrant integration. He cites growing rates of naturalization, the lack of ethnically-based political parties, expanding immigrant demand for courses in English and/or French as a second language, ethnic residential dispersion, and an increasing incidence of ethnic intermarriage since the advent of multicultural policy in 1971 as among the principal evidence of the Canadian advantage. In Kymlicka’s view, Canada is more successful on almost all of these measures than countries, the United States prime among them, which have not made an official commitment to multiculturalism. Indeed, he asserts that “Canada fares better than the United States on virtually every dimension of integration.”

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Inasmuch as Kymlicka's argument is one of the most formidable offered by theorists of Canadian multiculturalism, it merits examination. In the process of doing so, I wish to offer a preliminary comparative reconnaissance of the Canadian and American experience of ethno-racial diversity, particularly that generated by immigration. Because Canadian multiculturalism addresses not only the integration of immigrants but of all visible minorities, on occasion the analysis considers racial minorities who are not of recent immigrant vintage or immigrants in the ordinary sense—i.e. the majority of African-Americans. This slight muddying of the water is unavoidable if one is to make concurrent assessments of multiculturalism and immigrant integration in North America.

With respect to the U.S., I believe that Kymlicka's assertions about the relative virtue of the Canadian record regarding integration are exaggerated. When Kymlicka writes that "immigrant groups integrate more quickly and effectively today than they did before the adoption of the multicultural policy, and they do so more successfully in Canada than in any country that does not have such a policy," he mistakes causation for association. One may agree that multicultural policies in Canada have a largely integrative intent, but that does not mean that multiculturalism should get the lion's share of credit for immigrant integration. If anything, integration may be more a consequence of the process of immigration itself.

The Meaning of Multiculturalism

Canadians can most likely agree with the American sociologist Richard Alba when he observes that multiculturalism is fundamentally about the acknowledgment by the cultural majority of the equal worth of minority cultures, that the characteristics shared by a specific ethno-racial group—its language, religion, moral values and ways of life—are important sources of personal identity, worthy of public respect, encouragement, and recognition. Nevertheless, without offering a full-blown etymology of multiculturalism, it should be said that the circumstances surrounding the concept are different in the U.S. and Canada.

Kymlicka concentrates on concrete policies of what in Canada is called "official multiculturalism." Constitutionally entrenched in section 27 of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), the common denominator of this Ottawa-centered reading of multiculturalism is that
it “should assist and encourage the integration (but not assimilation) of all immigrants.” As an integrative strategy, official multiculturalism emerged out of a concern to coalesce, socially and politically, the ethnically diverse population introduced into Canada as a consequence of twentieth century—especially post World War II—immigration. In the wake of an Official Languages Act (1969) that affirmed the linguistic dominance of French and English in Canada’s public institutions, in 1971 the Trudeau government introduced multiculturalism as a way to make immigrant-stock individuals of other than Anglo-Irish or French lineage feel that they, too, were fully part of the Canadian political community. Initially, the policy had four stated objectives: the removal of cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society; cultural exchange and appreciation; official language training for immigrants (i.e., in English or French); state funding for cultural maintenance activities (e.g., support for ethnic minority associations, for ethnic expression in the visual and performing arts, ethnic heritage festivals, and, to a much smaller extent, training in heritage languages—those other than English and French). By the mid-1980s, however, the emphasis shifted to encompass racial equality as well as cultural diversity. A fillip was the changing composition of the Canadian population. In 1965 more than 80 percent of immigrants to Canada were from Europe or were of European origin; presently, 70 percent of all immigrants are from Asia, Latin America and Africa, 43 percent from Asia alone—an expanding population, since during the 1990s three-quarters of all immigrants were from visible minority groups. Consequently, the Canadian government turned its attention to the situation of visible minorities via the creation of a Race Relations Unit in the federal Multiculturalism Directorate (in 1981), the Federal Employment Equity Act of 1986 (reiterated in a similar measure, Bill 79, passed by the Ontario government in 1993), and most famously the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act, in which cultural maintenance and the fight against racial discrimination received equal billing.

American multiculturalism, by contrast, gained public prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, long after the idea had made its mark in Canada. In the U.S. multiculturalism is rooted in the race issue, specifically the failure of African-Americans to gain full inclusion the American polity. If American multiculturalism has moved beyond that ambit, to champion the social, economic, and political integration of all ethno-racial minorities, including those Asians and Hispanics who are the overwhelming majority among recent immigrants to the U.S., it is
still first and foremost about the prerogatives of African-Americans, the larger part of whom trace their lineage to Africa via the slave trade and thus are not immigrants in the conventional sense. Most notably, the U.S. does not have an explicit constitutional commitment to multiculturalism as does Canada. For that reason, the debate over multiculturalism in America tends to be dominated by academics and focuses on the introduction of ethno-racial diversity into university and public school curricula. The Canadian dialogue generated by multiculturalism is more explicitly political and popular, given that the essence of Canadian national identity, as acknowledged via the commitments of the federal government, is at stake. Good reason, then, to be cautiously comparative.

According to Kymlicka, official multiculturalism affirms immigrant and visible minority groups in Canada by integrating them into common Canadian institutions without fear of disadvantage or stigma. Immigrant-stock minorities may express their ethnic identity, if they choose, without feeling the pressure of the Canadian host society, the dominant French and English speaking societal cultures, to assimilate. More tangibly, he relates thirteen public initiatives, existing or proposed, as characterizing Canadian multiculturalism: affirmative action programs; guarantees of a certain number of seats in the Senate to ethnic minorities; revisions to the history and literature curricula; flexible work schedules to accommodate the religious holidays of immigrant groups; flexible dress codes; anti-racism educational programs; workplace and school harassment codes; cultural diversity training for the police and health-care professionals; Canadian Radio and Television Commission regulatory guidelines regarding ethnic stereotypes; government funding of ethnic cultural festivals and ethnic studies programs; programs to help adult immigrants acquire literacy in their mother tongue, prior to or in conjunction with learning the dominant host society languages; bilingual education programs for the children of immigrants; and Black-focused public schools. Kymlicka maintains that the first ten of these programs are expressly integrative in that they seek the full participation of immigrants in Canadian society, whereas the last three policies affirm transitional institutional separateness to the same end.

If these policies are the larger part of Canadian multiculturalism, there is not much to distinguish the application of multicultural ideals in Canada and the United States. Precisely because ethnicity counts in the United States, myriad public and private agencies classify Americans
according to ethno-racial criteria. A minimum of five racial categories are included in the 2000 Census—White, Asian, Black/African-American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native—as well as an ethno-linguistic category—Hispanic/Latino. Affirmative action is the way in which such distinctions have mattered dramatically for American public policy, but it is not the only way. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 authorizes legislative redistricting and electoral reform in the interest of empowering racial and ethnic minorities, whereas amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1975 require that linguistic minorities are accommodated in the publication and dissemination of U.S. election materials. Federal funding to meet the language needs of immigrant-stock students has been on offer since the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (and several state laws affirmed bilingual education long before that) a commitment reinforced by the Supreme Court in its seminal decision of Lau v. Nichols (1974). U.S. courts regularly confront issues that a multicultural society raises, of preferential hiring strategies, of public funding for parochial schools, of culture used as a legal defense. Broad protections for religious expression at work, the "reasonable accommodation" standards, are secured by Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as consequent American case law. U.S. government guidelines on freedom of religious exercise and expression in the federal workplace have been in place at least since the Clinton administration. American educational institutions, too, concede the special claims of race and ethnicity, whether through admissions offices concerned to recruit a representative student body—a practice, it must be admitted, that has come under judicial challenge—or a curriculum that aims at sensitizing Americans to the dynamics of a multicultural society. Indeed, on the evidence of certain comparative surveys, most famously, perhaps, those related by Reitz and Breton in their Illusion of Difference, Americans are even more likely to support the retention of ethnic cultures than are Canadians.

American public policy does not lack for multicultural nuance. This should come as little surprise. In many respects, Kymlicka's version of multiculturalism is the natural and appropriate response of liberal-democratic states, too often observed in the breach, to the ethno-racial diversity produced by immigration, a means of making good on liberal promises of personal freedom, economic opportunity, and justice irrespective of skin color or ethnic background. Even if one were to accept Kymlicka's claim that immigrants to Canada are more integrated than
are their foreign-born American counterparts, the factual similarity of multicultural policy in Canada and the U.S. means that Canadian multiculturalism's peculiar contribution to that integrative outcome would have to be diminished. That said, on the count of integration, immigrants to America fare far better than Kymlicka allows.

The Concept and Measure of Integration

Every state requires its members to make sacrifices for the good of the whole. If the state is to fulfill its agenda, it must have the compliance of those who do not immediately profit from its assistance. Modern democratic states are in particular need of mutual sympathies. If the democratic ideal of popular sovereignty, thus richness of civic participation, is to be approximated, the cohesion of the citizenry must be especially high. It will be evidenced by a willingness to trust in the good intentions of fellow citizens, even those with whom one profoundly disagrees, on the basis that they are colleagues in a joint political process. That attitude is afforded by the reciprocal commitments entailed in a collective political identity. It is this sense of a shared political fate that is at the heart of the term national integration.

Institutional Integration

Among social scientists whose objects of study are settler societies like the United States and Canada, national integration is often approximated by measuring immigrant participation in the central institutions of the host country. Kymlicka takes this approach, though he concedes that institutional integration is an imprecise way to determine the extent to which newcomers to Canada are allegiance or embrace a specifically Canadian identity. In Kymlicka's view, lack of ethnically-based political parties, ethnic residential dispersion, increased levels of ethnic intermarriage, heightened rates of naturalization, and growing demand for courses in French/English as a second language since the advent of official multiculturalism in 1971 are primary indicators of Canada's integrative superiority to the U.S.

Absent context, such observations are brittle. Comparisons of institutional integration between the U.S. and Canada are delicate because the particulars of immigration-produced ethnic pluralism in the two countries are not quite the same. Certainly the shared border between the United States and Mexico and thus the overwhelming dominance of
Hispanics in the immigrant population of the U.S., an immigrant group the demographic importance for which Canada has no equal, is responsible for several of the differences in institutional integration that Kymlicka cites—lower naturalization and dominant language acquisition rates in the U.S., for instance. More than this, it is not clear that official Canadian multiculturalism is responsible for the integrative successes that Kymlicka relates. With respect to the absence of ethnically-based political parties or partisanship in Canada—that is to say a party politics inspired by the perspective of cultural groups other than the two founding European peoples, English and French—the explanation appears more basic. For reason of demography, at the federal and provincial level of government that brand of party politics would fail. In Canada, as in other advanced industrial democracies, an ethnically-driven partisanship requires a territorially specific and sufficiently sizable ethnic electorate to have any chance at legislative success. Immigrant minorities in Canada largely do not fit the residential profile. Ethnically informed politics are not absent from the Canadian scene, but are more salient at the municipal level, particularly in Canada’s three leading immigrant receiving cities, Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, where a concentrated minority might wield a measure of electoral clout. (Ujjal Dosanjh’s brief premiership in British Columbia was a notable exception.) As students of urban political machines know, city politics in the U.S. display these same ethno-racial influences. In both countries, though, ethnic minorities have overwhelmingly participated in politics via established mainstream political parties.

It is true that more immigrants have seats in the Canadian House of Commons, where 44 of 301 members are foreign-born, than in the American House of Representatives, where only 8 of 435 members are immigrants. One may speculate as to the reasons: relatively more disciplined and robust Canadian national political parties making modest personal wealth less of a barrier to office; perhaps a multicultural ethos encouraging greater public sensitivity to the political ambitions of immigrant citizens. But the Canadian lead does not translate into an edge in the representation of ethno-racial minorities in the legislature. Only 11 of the 44 foreign-born individuals in the Commons are visible minorities and only 13 members of Parliament in all. As a percentage of the national population, a higher proportion of racial minorities sit in the U.S. House than the Canadian Commons. African-Americans and Asian-Americans comprise 9.1 percent, or 40 of 435 of its members, of
the present House of Representatives, as opposed to 15 percent of the population of the entire United States. By contrast, in the current Canadian Parliament visible minorities represent only 4.3 percent of the Commons' total membership, compared to an estimated population share of 9.4 percent.24

On occasion American electoral districts have been gerrymandered to increase minority representation. Over the past decade the U.S. Supreme Court has become unsympathetic to the most egregious examples of this practice (Shaw v. Reno [1993]). Nevertheless, if minority status can no longer be the predominant factor in legislative redistricting, according to the Court (Miller v. Johnson [1995]; Hunt v. Cromartie [2001]) it is yet proper for it to be one factor. It is still the case that redistricting plans must not dilute the voting strength of a minority group to the degree that members of that group are prevented from electing the candidate of their choice. In practice such schemes must aim at rough proportionality between minority constituents and the percentage of minority representatives in a given legislative body. Not so in Canada, where an unvarnished single member plurality system of voting makes the chances of a racial minority's electoral breakthrough all the more difficult—a point that Kymlicka concedes.25

Kymlicka's contentions about relative degrees of ethno-racial residential separation must be similarly qualified. To begin, it is important to remember that ethnic ghettos are not necessarily a sign of prejudice on behalf of the native-born population or their resistance to immigrant integration. Rather they may be a means whereby immigrant stock populations negotiate the economic and social peculiarities of the host society. According to the 2001 census of Canada, 85 percent of all immigrants, and 94 percent of those arriving in the 1990s, live in a census designated metropolitan area—this compared to 64 percent of the Canadian-born. Nearly three quarters of recent immigrants live in Toronto, Montreal, or Vancouver. In the U.S., too, immigrants tend to gravitate toward preexisting urban ethnic communities. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 2000 seven in ten immigrants to the U.S. were located in just six American states and that five metropolitan areas are home to half of the U.S. foreign-born population. Traditional theories of spatial assimilation, whereby newly arrived immigrants concentrate in socio-economically disadvantaged ethnic enclaves, dispersing to more affluent neighborhoods when economic and cultural circumstances permit, can apply to immigrants on either side of the border: Blacks and
South Asians in Canada, for instance, Hispanics in the U.S. Nevertheless, research on the spatial impact of U.S. immigration during the 1990s concludes that significant residential polarization is not the result. Preliminary results from the 2000 U.S. census confirm that recent immigrants to the U.S. are displaying wider geographic dispersion than ever before. Modern transportation and communication networks, as well as increasing aggregate levels of socio-economic standing among discrete immigrant groups, are in large part responsible.

With respect to residential segregation among all visible minorities, immigrant and non-immigrant alike, the legacy of American slavery continues to have a dismal effect. Over the last two decades African Americans have experienced modest but consistent declines in residential segregation, but African Americans continue to live in considerably more isolated enclaves than do other Americans or Black Canadians. However, according to the 2001 Canadian census, 73 percent of visible minorities in Canada live in just three census metropolitan areas—Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal—more than twice the proportion of the Canadian-born population there, and 61 percent of visible minorities in Canada live in Toronto or Vancouver alone. Studies of settlement patterns in these Canadian cities confirm a moderate to high degree of residential separation for visible minority ethnic groups—the “dissimilarity index” in the vocabulary of demographers—albeit a segregation that in the aggregate, though not necessarily for any specific group, appears to be declining. With the exception of African Americans, the findings are analogous to those drawn from the 2000 American census. For instance, Asians in Canada and the U.S. have similar levels of residential concentration—in fact there is evidence to suggest that Asian Americans are less socially segregated than their Canadian co-ethnics.

In the U.S. as in Canada, the percentage of inter-ethnic and interracial marriages has grown significantly. Precise comparisons are difficult given the disparate means whereby government agencies and social scientists in the two countries measure the concepts at issue. The American record is tarred by judicial acceptance, until 1967, of state mandated legal prohibitions against racially exogamous marriages; to its credit, Canada has never had such a law. No doubt the social taboos against interracial marriage have been relatively stronger in the U.S. as well, the cause and effect of long standing legal proscriptions. Yet Americans express increasing social acceptance of mixed marriage. A recent Washington Post/Harvard University poll reveals that almost 60 percent of Americans
have no problem with racially exogamous marriage, including 54 percent of white Americans—this compared to the 40 percent of whites who approved of such marriages in polls taken less than twenty years ago.\textsuperscript{33} Over the last generation the proportion of racially mixed marriages in the U.S. has increased from approximately 3 percent to 5 percent of the total. It is precisely to accommodate the offspring of such unions that respondents are permitted to indicate more than one ethno-racial affiliation on the U.S. census form. Indeed, the 2000 American census data indicate that 40.7 percent of Asian-Americans and 37 percent of Hispanic-Americans have married outside their ethno-racial groups.\textsuperscript{34} By contrast, Canada has proportionately fewer inter-racial marriages—3.1 percent of the total as indicated by its 2001 census. This should not be taken to mean that the U.S. is necessarily more integrative than Canada with regard to the marital status of visible minorities. Exogamy varies between ethno-racial groups given their size, generational composition (in the case of immigrant-stock groups), average level of education, linguistic capabilities, and economic standing. But if Kymlicka is right to suggest that the U.S. is a laggard when it comes to black-white relations, he is too quick to claim integrative superiority for Canada when it comes to the marital status of other ethnic and racial groups.

Kymlicka and others suggest that Canadian multiculturalism signifies an institutional commitment by the Canadian government to promote citizenship among culturally diverse foreign-born residents.\textsuperscript{37} Citizenship acquisition among the foreign-born is considerably higher in Canada than the United States. By 2001, 74 percent of foreign-born residents eligible for Canadian citizenship possessed it as opposed to 37 percent of their counterparts in the U.S. in 2000. The process of naturalization may be less onerous in Canada—the minimum waiting period to be granted citizenship is briefer, three years as opposed to five—and the ethos of the government more encouraging. Nonetheless, the architecture of naturalization in the two countries is much the same. Candidates for citizenship must be permanent residents, 18 years of age or older, without outstanding criminal offenses, pass a test assessing ability to communicate reasonably well in one of the principal national languages, pass a further test demonstrating knowledge of the history and political structure of the country of adoption, and indicate a commitment to the country's defining values (which in Canada includes multiculturalism). A principal difference is that, unlike Canada, the U.S. does not permit dual citizenship among naturalized individuals, a symbolic guarantee of
the political allegiance of newcomers. Lower rates of naturalization in the U.S. must be seen in the context of the sheer number of immigrants to America over the last thirty years. The foreign-born population in the U.S. increased by 191 percent between 1970 and 2000, from 9.7 million to 28.4 million; by comparison, immigrants to Canada increased by 65 percent between 1971 and 2001, from almost 3.3 million to 5.4 million. Not only has this introduced considerable administrative burden in processing American citizenship applications—the fallout from September 11 presents further complications—but the changing composition of the U.S. immigrant population has meant a greater proportion of recently arrived individuals in the foreign-born cohort, a primary factor depressing naturalization rates. The 2000 U.S. census reports that individuals who have lived in the country for five years and less constitute almost 22 percent of all immigrants, compared to the 17 percent of the Canadian foreign-born related in the 2001 Canadian census. Also relevant is the preponderance of Mexicans in the contemporary American immigrant stream, more than one-quarter of the total. This is a cohort who enter primarily under the family reunification provisions of American immigration law and who, in the measure that naturalization is correlated with a certain set of personal skills and resources, may be less well suited in terms of language, education, and wealth, to become citizens. Mexican immigrants have a consistently lower proportion of naturalized individuals than the total U.S. foreign-born population when considered according to period of residence. Relative ease of access to the country of birth is a disincentive to naturalize. Given the proximity of the homeland, Mexican immigrants are more inclined to see themselves as “birds of passage” than permanent residents of the U.S. It is no surprise, then, that the 2000 census cites not only Mexicans (20.3 percent) but Canadians (43.1 percent) as among the foreign-born groups with the lowest percentage of naturalized individuals; for similar reasons, qualified Americans have the lowest rate of naturalized Canadian citizenship (54 percent in 2001). Immigrants to Canada may achieve citizenship more quickly than their American counterparts, but in all events disparate naturalization rates between Canada and the U.S. dwindle as time in the country increases.

As Kymlicka indicates, immigrants in Canada have impressive rates of official language acquisition. The 2001 Canadian census reveals that just over a tenth of the population report a non-official language as the principal language of their home. By comparison, the 2000 U.S. census
relates that a higher proportion of the American public (17.8 percent) speak a language other than English at home. In both countries the proportion of non-principal language speakers has increased over the past decade, the consequence of large waves of recent immigration. Reflecting the leading sending states over that period, Chinese is the largest non-official home language spoken in Canada, constituting 17 percent of the total, whereas almost three-fifths of non-English home language speakers in America use Spanish. Once more, the relative significance of Hispanic immigration in the U.S. is striking, a circumstance for which Canada has no equal.

Public provision for learning the principal language of the host country is effectively the same on either side of the border. Federal and state/provincial monies are made available for language instruction for immigrant children in the public schools, states and provinces having ultimate responsibility over curricula that can vary considerably between school districts. Government support is also made available for special adult immigrant education classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) in the U.S.—a program whose federal funding has steadily expanded over the past twenty years—and Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada. With respect to adult immigrants, in each country the assumption is that language acquisition is a voluntary affair, one that new arrivals should regard as an investment in the labor market. Just as Kymlicka allows that there is high demand for official language instruction in Canada, so is there demand for English in the U.S. The National Center for ESL Literacy Education in the U.S. reports that many classes have months long waiting lists; in 2000, over 1.1 million adults enrolled in ESL programs. Finally, in the U.S. as well as Canada there is a strong tendency among second generation immigrant stock individuals exclusively to speak the dominant language. As literature on language adaptation in America indicates, "(H)ome-country monolingualism seldom outlasts the first generation,...English monolingualism is the dominant trend among the second generation, and...preservation of fluent bilingualism is an exceptional outcome." Again, the integrative differences between the U.S. and Canada are not marked.

It is a curiosity that several of Kymlicka's indices of institutional integration seem to cut against the multicultural grain. Rates of intermarriage, for example, are an ambiguous sign of the vitality of Canadian multiculturalism. To the degree that multiculturalism aims at integration without assimilation, assimilation in the sense of the
absorption of a cultural tradition other than one's own, the rising number of ethnically and racially mixed marriages in Canada threatens the very cultural pluralism on which the multicultural ethos is predicated. Sociologists consistently note that intermarriage is the greatest single leveler of ethnic particularity, a mark of the social assimilation of immigrant groups par excellence. Multiculturalism may make inter-ethnic/racial marriage more likely, but in so doing, it may sow the seeds of its own demise. The same dynamic is at work with respect to heightened rates of residential mobility and dominant language acquisition among immigrant-stock individuals. All of which is to say that questions can be raised about the long-term viability of multiculturalism if this means social incorporation without assimilation.

No doubt multiculturalism communicates an important message—that immigrants can be considered Canadians in good standing whether or not they trace their lineage to the historically dominant Anglo-Canadian and Franco-Canadian communities, and that ethno-racial minorities should be able to express themselves culturally without fear of majority reproach. But if the point is to open up greater institutional contact for ethno-racial minorities with those majority groups, ironically multiculturalism makes minorities more prone to the forces of assimilation that will erode cultural particularity. So, when Kymlicka says that multiculturalism is not about maintaining social separation and cultural distinctives, rather that it renegotiates the terms of social and political integration by supporting poly-ethnicity in Canadian institutional life, he implies that multiculturalism has a transitional, thus ultimately an assimilative, emphasis.

The problem with juxtaposing Canadian multiculturalism and assimilation is that it suggests the latter is necessarily antagonistic to cultural diversity. But assimilation is not a uni-directional all or nothing process whereby ethnic minorities become replicants of the majority. Culture is never static, in the United States or Canada. Just as the cultural distinctives of ethno-racial minorities are vulnerable to the assimilationist pressures of the majority, so the majority culture will be reformulated by the cultural contributions of the minority. Neither can the pluralism promised by multiculturalism escape the fluidity of cultural boundaries. That ethnic and racial categories are socially constructed is a well-established premise of modern sociological thought. The paradox is that the more that multiculturalism brings majority and minority groups into contact by promoting social acceptance of the other, the more it unleashes
forces of assimilation to which, on the official Canadian view as well as that of Kymlicka, it would seem to be opposed. One is entitled to wonder, therefore, whether shopworn distinctions between a multicultural Canada, which encourages cultural diversity, and a melting pot United States, which allegedly seeks to assimilate newcomers, are overwrought not only because the United States is more solicitous of cultural diversity than this suggests but because Canada is no less prone to forces of assimilation.

In all events, on the central measures of institutional integration that Kymlicka places in evidence of Canada’s commitment to diversity, the U.S. fares quite well. With the important and lamentable exception of black-white relations, a function of America’s unique racial history, there is little to choose between the two countries as regards the incorporation of ethno-racial minorities, especially immigrant minorities, in the associational life of the polity.

**Psychological Integration**

Institutional indicators of integration are necessary but insufficient. A more profound mark of a well-integrated polity is the strong sense of belonging felt by its members. Deep conceptions of personal identity are at issue, typically those expressed in terms of love for and loyalty to one’s country as well as solidarity with one’s fellow citizens—an attitude that Durkheim called the “collective conscience.” A fundamental integrative question about immigrants, then, is whether the newcomers’ understanding of themselves—their idea of “us”—includes the host society.

For the social scientist, this psychological measure of national consolidation must be distinguished from and take priority over institutional ones. To realize why, consider two of Kymlicka’s standards for the institutional integration of immigrants in Canada—naturalization and fluency in the host country’s language(s). For many newcomers a desire to learn the dominant language and to become a citizen is a simple matter of rational adjustment to the society of settlement, in that economic opportunity and material well-being will be enhanced if an immigrant becomes a citizen and can converse in English or, in Canada, in English or French. Kymlicka understands the economic import of this as well, acknowledging that an immigrant’s economic prospects depend on participation in a societal culture, “a territorially concentrated culture centered on a shared language that is used in a wide range of societal institutions, including schools, media, law, the economy, and
government." When I speak of the 'integration' of ethnic groups," Kymlicka continues, "I mean integration in this very specific sociocultural sense: the extent to which immigrants and their descendants integrate into an existing societal culture and come to view their life chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions, based on a common language, which define that societal culture." The problem with this is that if integration without assimilation, the ethos of Canadian multiculturalism, simply indicates the functional adaptation of ethnic minorities to an open economic marketplace, that they must learn the majority language, social conventions and commercial culture in order to feed their families, then as a matter of necessity everyone will be integrated to greater or lesser degree and integration as a political concept will have little meaning. Kymlicka accepts that institutional integration is an imprecise way to determine the extent to which newcomers to Canada are politically allegiant or embrace a specifically Canadian identity. He produces no hard evidence that immigrants do in fact strongly identify with the Canadian polity, neither that they fail to identify with the United States. But he maintains that by increasing immigrant participation in the central institutions of a host society, multiculturalism deepens an immigrant's visceral commitment to Canada:

(M)ulticulturalism makes explicit the principle that the interests and lifestyles of immigrants are as worthy of respect (and accommodation) as those of the people descended from the country's original colonists....(W)e have recognized and affirmed the fact that Canada is a multiracial, polyethnic country, in which full citizenship does not depend on how close one's ethnic descent or cultural lifestyle is to that of the historically dominant group. This may seem of merely symbolic value, but the symbolism is very important, and is genuinely appreciated by those immigrant groups that historically have been the object of racial exclusion and cultural oppression.\(^1\)

Immigrants welcome multiculturalism as a means whereby they can retain their cultural distinctives if they choose and simultaneously be good Canadians—psychological integration without resort to bad old policies of cultural assimilation.

i) The U.S. and psychological integration

If one accepts Kymlicka's premise that a commitment to multiculturalism distinguishes Canada and the U.S., and that immigrants
to Canada have higher levels of institutional integration than their American counterparts, then one must also expect that immigrants to the U.S. will have lower levels of psychological integration to their host country than do Canadian immigrants. In fact, there is reason to believe otherwise. Qualitative data gleaned from oral histories as well as the testimony of immigrants in open-ended interviews, when supplemented by a consideration of the political behavior of immigrants in America—their overwhelming readiness to support the U.S. in times of war, to use a most dramatic example—indicates that the majority are eager to assume the rights and responsibilities of an American identity and understand themselves as solidly part of the American nation.

The quantitative evidence necessary to generalize such insights is in shorter supply. Few opinion surveys are designed specifically with an immigrant constituency in mind. An important exception is a 2002 poll of more than one thousand foreign-born U.S. residents undertaken by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan, nonprofit public opinion research organization. In this survey, the affective commitment of immigrant interviewees for America is clear. Eighty percent of respondents allow that they consider the U.S. "to be a unique country that stands for something special in the world." Impressive majorities say they are happy with life in the United States (96 percent), that if given the chance they would emigrate to America again (80 percent), and find it improbable that their children would wish to live in the country of origin of their parents (70 percent). As Table 1 reveals, over three-quarters of the immigrants polled attest that they have assumed, fully or in part, an American identity. Moreover, Table 2 indicates the seriousness with which the foreign-born view their political and social obligations as Americans. Overwhelmingly, immigrants affirm the importance of learning the host society's dominant language, of economic industriousness, of an embracing spirit when it comes to U.S. ethnic and racial diversity, of civic involvement to the point of military service. The relative intensity of such commitments is suggested in a separate Public Agenda poll, administered in 1998 and cited in Table 3: immigrants are even more eager than native-born Americans to encourage public probity on matters of welfare, language, patriotism and ethno-racial toleration.

In light of the multicultural concerns of the present essay, it is especially interesting that immigrant interviewees in the 2002 Public Agenda survey feel little pressure to jettison traditional ways of life in return for becoming American. Whereas 42 percent of respondents
TABLE 1: American Identity: Which of These Statements is True for You?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total immigrant</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Non-Mexican Latino</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>East Asian</th>
<th>Caribbean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I mostly think of myself as an American</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mostly think of myself in terms of the country where I was born</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both equally</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 2: How Important Is It That Immigrants do the Following When They Come to Live in the U.S.?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak and understand English</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and stay off welfare</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a citizen</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep fully informed about news and public issues</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve in the military if drafted</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer time to community services</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


maintain that “I have become an American,” almost the same percentage (41 percent) say that, “I act like an American on the outside, but at home I keep my own culture and traditions.” Only 14 percent maintain that although they live in the United States, they don’t consider themselves to be American. Indeed, over 80 percent of those surveyed concurred with the statement (55 percent strongly so) that “It is easy for me to hold on to my culture and traditions in the U.S.” 56 Contrary to Kymlicka,
TABLE 3: What if a Person...? Would You Consider Them to be a Bad American Citizen? Percent Saying "Yes, a Bad Citizen"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>U.S.-born</th>
<th>Foreign-born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lives on welfare though they can work</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuses to work with people of different ethnic or racial backgrounds</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settles in U.S. but refuses to learn English</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a point never to stand for the national anthem at public events</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


there is little in the testimony of such immigrants to suggest that the U.S. "repudiates" multiculturalism.57 🔊

Corroborative evidence of U.S. immigrants' psychological integration is offered in the Latino National Political Survey of the early 1990s, one of the most comprehensive efforts to map the political orientations of an immigrant-stock ethno-racial minority.58 A large majority of the more than 2500 Hispanic respondents in this poll—Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican Americans, citizens (most of whom were likely to be first or second generation immigrants) and non-citizens (all of whom by definition were immigrants)—expressed high levels of pride in and love for the United States and trust in the American government. As the results in Tables 4-6 indicate, not only do Hispanics indicate a strong sense of commitment to and confidence in the United States, but their enthusiasm for America sometimes exceeds that of their Anglo-American compatriots. Reflecting on the balance of the survey, its authors note that Latinos are extremely patriotic, without any inclination to favor their country of origin over the U.S. Ideologically, they are moderate to conservative—albeit with a slightly greater tendency to look to government to solve pressing social problems than do Anglos—an orientation that is reflected in how positively Latinos view American society. The authors conclude that "these groups are well within the mainstream of the nation's politics. There is no evidence here of values, demands or behaviors that threaten the nation's cultural or political identity."59

Prima facie survey evidence suggests that in word and deed immigrants are strongly committed to the United States. Large majorities are persuaded that the U.S. is a peculiarly estimable place, worthy of their
Immigrant Integration in Canada and the U.S.

affection and loyalty. They consider themselves to be American, an identity that in their view does not require the abandonment of private cultural norms. Often they are more condemnatory than the native-born of the kinds of behaviors or attitudes that might be thought inappropriate for conscientious and allegiant Americans. If Kymlicka is correct, and immigrant integration into the central institutions of the host society is conducive to psychological integration, the U.S.'s relative success on the former measure—a point which, to be sure, Kymlicka does not concede—is the portent of its success on the latter. All of this without benefit of a constitutional commitment to Canadian-style multiculturalism.

TABLE 4: Love for the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 5: Pride in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Pride</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Cuban</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


TABLE 6: Trust in Government to Do What Is Right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Trust</th>
<th>Mexican-citizen</th>
<th>Mexican-non-citizen</th>
<th>Cuban-citizen</th>
<th>Cuban-non-citizen</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just about always</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost never</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Latino Political Survey, 1989-1990
ii) Canada and psychological integration

If in the case of the United States the causal connection that Kymlicka makes between multiculturalism and psychological integration is suspect, so, too, with respect to Canada. To explore that relationship, I draw on a sample survey of 2001 immigrant and native-born Canadians that I co-authored with Environics Canada and which Environics administered in the summer of 1997 as part of its quarterly Focus Canada report.*

Immigrants to Canada who were canvassed for the Focus Canada study clearly display signs of psychological integration. Most say that they have assumed a Canadian identity. Almost half describe themselves as "mainly Canadian," including 32 percent of those immigrants of non-European and non-North American origin, subsequently referred to as "Others" (Table 7). Given that the policy of official multiculturalism affirms and legitimates ethnic distinctions and that many immigrants, especially the more recent arrivals, may still view themselves as guests of a host society, one would not expect immigrants to identify exclusively with Canada. As opposed to individuals who were born in Canada, immigrant interviewees are more likely to think of themselves first and foremost in ethnic terms—33 percent of all immigrants and 45 percent of Others do so. Yet such perspectives are not much different than those given by immigrants in the U.S. as related in Table I. In both cases a majority of respondents say that when compared to their ethnic identity, their national identity, Canadian or American, is of equal or greater psychological importance.

Table 8 reveals the esteem for Canada expressed by relative newcomers. There is little appreciable difference between immigrant and native-born respondents' pride in being Canadian, as both groups indicate high levels of pride. If there is a significant variation on this measure, it is between groups of immigrants. Considerably more European than Other immigrants claim to be very proud to be Canadian, though when the somewhat proud responses are included, the gap disappears. Further, the Focus Canada survey certifies the commitment of immigrants, via law obedience, political awareness, and military service, to supportive civic engagement. It also confirms a level of immigrant trust in the Canadian government that exceeds that of native-born Canadians.62

To what extent is multiculturalism responsible for such responses? Table 9 discloses that immigrants approve of multicultural policy to a
TABLE 7: Ethnic/Canadian Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace:</th>
<th>Mainly Ethnicity, then Canadian</th>
<th>Mainly Canadian</th>
<th>Both equally</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Focus Canada, 1997-2. The author has re-coded the Focus Canada variables so that (1) the Canadian-born category does not encompass U.S.-born respondents, as in the original Focus Canada report; and (2) British-born and other European-born respondents, considered separately in the Focus Canada report, are now collapsed into a single European cohort.

TABLE 8: Proud to Be Canadian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace:</th>
<th>Very Proud</th>
<th>Somewhat Proud</th>
<th>Not Very Proud</th>
<th>Not At All Proud</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


higher degree and are more intense in their support than native-born Canadians. Other immigrants are particularly committed. Since Others are most often distant from an Anglo-Canadian or Franco-Canadian cultural norm, they may be keener to endorse a multicultural policy that promises them ethnic integrity and security. As recent immigrants are more likely to be of non-European and non-North American origin, it may be that Others have also been more influenced by the contemporary efforts of the Canadian government, such as citizenship training courses and materials, ministerial pronouncements, and so on, to promote multiculturalism as an integral part of Canadian identity and an asset to national unity.63

Interviewees in the Focus Canada poll tend to understand multiculturalism as gently integrationist. When asked about the objectives
of multicultural policy, the top five answers given by Canadian-born and immigrant respondents are cultural retention, toleration of diversity, immigrant adaptation, ethnic appreciation, and anti-discrimination against ethnic minorities. The most expansive interpretations of multiculturalism, that it aims at positive discrimination in the interest of ethnic minorities and power sharing among diverse ethnic groups, are the options respondents regard as least characterizing the concept.

General approval among Focus Canada respondents for multicultural policy is most likely related to this narrow reading of what official multiculturalism requires. The Focus Canada data confirms that in many respects immigrants are keen to retain their cultural heritage. When asked whether it would be best for Canada if immigrants forgot their cultural backgrounds as soon as possible, Table 10 relates that 67 percent of immigrants and 73 percent of Others disagree. That 68 percent of native-born Canadians follow suit is testimony to popular acceptance of this

### TABLE 9: Approve of Multicultural Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace:</th>
<th>Strongly Approve</th>
<th>Somewhat Approve</th>
<th>Somewhat Disapprove</th>
<th>Strongly Disapprove</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 10: Immigrants Should Forget Their Cultural Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Immigrant Integration in Canada and the U.S.

TABLE 11: Employment Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-bom</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthplace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Focus Canada, 1997-2.*

aspect of multiculturalism. Alternatively, whereas the Department of Canadian Heritage cites passage of the Employment Equity Act (1986) as part of the legislative framework for Canadian multiculturalism, and Kymlicka includes affirmative action as an integrative feature of multiculturalism, Table 11 indicates that neither Canadian-born nor immigrant respondents support the idea that employees should be forced to advance non-whites to higher positions. European immigrants are intensely opposed, 55 percent strongly disagreeing with such a practice. Other immigrants are more positively inclined, though even in this instance more respondents regard employment equity unfavorably than endorse it. If the *Focus Canada* survey is at all representative, for the sake of official multiculturalism's popular legitimacy it may be a blessing that only a small fraction of immigrants see the policy as touching on such matters.

No doubt for many immigrants assuming a Canadian identity is not an either/or proposition. As advocates of multiculturalism advise, in the immigrant view it may be possible to maintain the rudiments of one's own culture and simultaneously be a good Canadian. Still, it is important not to devalue the latter part of the bargain, to think that immigrants are keen to preserve a distinctly ethnic way of life at the expense of belonging to Canada. It is not surprising, then, that immigrant perspectives on such matters are conflicted. As conveyed in Table 12, considerably more immigrants—especially Other immigrants—than native-born Canadians believe Canada would be a better place if ethnic groups would keep their way of life. Yet more than half of all immigrant
TABLE 12: Ethnic Groups Should Keep Their Way of Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


respondents disagree with the same statement. Table 13 shows that a large majority of immigrants (83 percent) maintain that ethnic groups should try as much as possible to blend in to Canadian society and not form a separate community. In fact, by a small margin, immigrants express a greater intensity of conviction about this than do native-born Canadians. Even Other immigrants follow suit, 50 percent strongly agreeing with what would appear to be the assimilationist position on this measure.65

The survey marginals suggest that immigrant opinions of multiculturalism are too mixed to be the decisive factor behind immigrant commitment to Canada. Proponents of multiculturalism often argue that the policy's solicitousness of cultural diversity is not only appealing to immigrants but that newcomers to Canada prefer integration without assimilation.66 Yet it is by no means clear that multiculturalism is what immigrants want. Immigrant expressions of political allegiance to Canada may be a matter of behaving as newcomers think the host society expects them to behave, of playing the "immigrant role." But they appear wary of multiculturalism insofar as it suggests that they do not need to play that role.67 Regardless of origin, immigrants are largely opposed to employment equity, the more ambitious aspect of a multicultural policy agenda. And although immigrants applaud official multiculturalism's emphasis on the preservation and cultivation of ethnic heritage, at the same time strong majorities of newcomers, Europeans and Others, are persuaded that they should blend in to Canadian society, thereby calling into question an anti-assimilative multicultural norm. In light of this data, should multiculturalism have a part in strengthening immigrant identification with Canada, it seems at best a supplementary part. Multiculturalism may ease the cultural transition for newcomers to Canada.
Immigrant Integration in Canada and the U.S.

TABLE 13: Ethnic Groups Should Blend into Canadian Society and Not Form a Separate Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>DK/NA</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


and attempt to advance their economic prospects but it cannot bear the full weight of the integrative task.

Concluding Observations: A Counter-thesis?

On institutional as well as psychological criteria of immigrant integration, Canada’s distinctiveness vis-a-vis the United States is not as Kymlicka would have it. Official multiculturalism apart, the substance of multicultural policy is not much different in the two countries. The signs of institutional integration that Kymlicka places in evidence of the Canadian advantage have American referents as well. Preliminary evidence indicates that immigrants to the U.S. are no less psychologically integrated than their Canadian counterparts. Either the United States is not much different than Canada when it comes to the rudiments of multicultural policy, in which case Canadian multiculturalism’s distinctive contribution to immigrant integration must be diminished, or the U.S. is different in its alleged devaluation of multiculturalism, in which case America’s success at immigrant integration must have an alternative explanation. Kymlicka cannot have it both ways.

If U.S. and Canadian policies are not markedly different when it comes to issues of ethno-racial diversity, might Canada be advantaged nonetheless by the symbolic resonance of official multiculturalism—a constitutional and statutory commitment for which there is no precise American equivalent? Critics point to the disjunction between official multiculturalism’s aspirations and its reality, absent a genuine redistribution of public power in Canada. But even as a political totem, official multiculturalism is of uncertain benefit to immigrant integration.
Should official multiculturalism heighten the relative awareness of Canadians to the need for immigrant group uplift and accommodation, one would expect Canada's record on the institutional incorporation of immigrant minorities to be better than that of the U.S. Based on the findings of the present essay, such is not the case. Inasmuch as the idea of official multiculturalism has a salutary effect on the political affections of immigrants to Canada, one would anticipate that the psychological integration of new-comers into the Canadian political community would be greater than that of their American counterparts into the U.S. political community. Again, the data cited here shows no evidence of a Canadian edge. That same data raises doubts about the unqualified support of immigrants to Canada for a policy intended to serve their interests. Immigrants applaud multiculturalism as a norm of cultural tolerance and appreciation, though not as an alternative to a common Canadianism.

Regardless of Kymlicka's failure to recognize de facto multicultural practices in the U.S., it could be argued that immigrant integration in America is yet the product of multiculturalism's consolidating power, in that the U.S. has many of the essentials of Canadian multiculturalism as well as robust levels of integration. Granting that, it would undermine Kymlicka's thesis that an official public commitment to multiculturalism is a prerequisite of high levels of immigrant integration, likewise the singularity of the Canadian record in North America. Of equal importance, it is unclear whether immigrants in the U.S., as in Canada, are completely persuaded about multiculturalism. For example, a 1995 Gallup survey finds immigrants to the U.S. hesitant about multiculturalism's encouragement of cultural diversity if this comes at the expense of an American identity: when foreign-born interviewees were asked whether it was better for immigrants to blend into American culture by giving up some important aspects of their own culture, or to maintain their own culture more strongly even if it meant that they did not blend in as well, 59 percent gave the assimilationist response; only 27 percent of immigrants, though 32 percent of native-born respondents, said it was more important to maintain one's own culture.\(^{70}\) The evidence is largely impressionistic. But it calls into question an easy relationship between an immigrant's institutional integration, arguably advantaged by any multicultural sensitivities in a country's public policy, and an immigrant's psychological integration, which may occur independently of and with reservations about such policies.
The point is not that the U.S. is more politically receptive to immigrants than Canada. It is not that multicultural policy in Canada, as Kymlicka defines it, is especially counter-productive to national integration—though its high profile in discussions of Canadian identity complicates the situation of national minorities, Quebecois and Aboriginals, who are not simply ethno-racial communities but founding peoples of Canada. Rather, the problem is one of emphasis. Kymlicka credits multiculturalism for immigrant integration when one suspects that a force more basic may be at work: the push and pull of the migration process. If immigrants to Canada and the United States express a firm emotional connection to their country of settlement, in large part this may be due to the reasons why they leave their homeland as well as the nature of their reception in North America.

That immigration has been the primary cause of ethno-racial diversity in Canada and the United States is a factor so fundamental as to be easily overlooked. But as an explanation of the two countries’ relative success in integrating diverse populations, immigration may be the more significant common denominator than multicultural practice. A full exploration of the relationship is beyond the reach of this essay, but one can sketch the fundamentals. Kymlicka himself captures the idea when he observes: “Why have immigrants historically accepted integration? One reason is that they have already voluntarily left their own cultures with the expectation of integrating into a different national society. That’s just what it means to immigrate; if they found the idea of integrating into another culture repugnant, they would not have chosen to leave their homelands.”

Two centuries ago, Crevecouer observed of America that *Ubi panis ibi patria* (“where there is bread, there is my country”) was the motto of all immigrants. Contemporary immigrants to the U.S. appear similarly persuaded. Assessed from the benchmark of what life was like in the homeland, the attraction of American (and, presumably, Canadian) society, the general conviction that it is a place of freedom and opportunity or that it offers superior social and economic benefits, solidifies a political commitment that many newcomers are already eager to make. Comparative data drawn from the 2002 Public Agenda survey is illuminating. On all measures save basic social mores (“people being nice to each other”), immigrants maintain that the U.S. is superior to their country of birth. They may be inclined to see things this way. To think otherwise would be to question the wisdom of having migrated in
the first place, a journey which may have involved considerable personal
sacrifice. Still, it is instructive that the variety of ethno-racial pluralism
which Canada and the U.S. have had the most difficult time
accommodating is precisely that produced by conquest—Quebecois and
Aboriginals, African Americans and Native Americans. By contrast,
voluntary immigrants come ready-made for psychological integration.

Multicultural policies may be important to the degree that the
character of the receiving country, the pull factor in the migration process,
generates a feeling of belonging among newcomers—that they are made
to feel welcome. That is particularly the case with respect to institutional
integration, when the proactive efforts of a government sensitive to ethno-
racial diversity are required, such as anti-discrimination laws, culturally
responsive workplace rules, an embracing public school curricula, and
affirmative action in employment and university admissions. In this
manner multiculturalism can ease an immigrant’s process of cultural
transition. Yet this is not the whole of the immigrant story. Insofar as
immigrants are persuaded of the relative advantages of the host society,
and the circumstances of migration will incline them to see things this
way, they will express a natural patriotism, a deep and fundamental sense
of attachment to the country of settlement that is the most compelling
standard of integration. No doubt loyalties created by the immigrant
experience will not last forever. As the years pass and memories of
difficulties in the homeland become less vivid, the country of adoption
will be evaluated less and less on comparative grounds. But political values
can stick across generations, especially if those values have been fashioned
according to subjective impressions of economic scarcity. Considering
the economic and political status of many immigrants, their belief that
the host society offers deliverance and thus merits their commitment
should have a certain durability.

If this is a fair reading of immigrant political culture, then in lauding
Canadian multiculturalism and assigning it primary responsibility for high
levels of immigrant integration, psychological as well as institutional,
Kymlicka has the wrong end of the stick. By all means Canada should be
congratulated. Not so much for its less than distinctive endorsement of
multiculturalism as for its relatively generous immigration policy. The
key to Canadian—and American—success in integrating an ethnically diverse
population may lie more in the latter commitment than the former. A
useful reminder, in an age when advanced industrial states are turning their
face against the foreign-born, that immigration carries political benefits.
NOTES


3. Department of Canadian Heritage, “Multiculturalism: A Public Policy Issue,” www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/reports/ann97-98/multic_e.cfm. As Kymlicka notes in the acknowledgment to Finding Our Way, the book grew out of discussions with, as well as a series of papers written for, the Department of Canadian Heritage.


13. All provincial governments except Quebec have followed federal suit in affirming multiculturalism, political unity in ethno-racial diversity, as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian identity. Quebec maintains its own version of the commitment—interculturalisme—albeit one that notes the primacy of the French language for newcomers to the province.


16. Under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, the Bilingual Education Act has been renamed the English Language Acquisition Act, to reflect an emphasis of the Bush Administration. The best means of teaching “English Language Learners” has been the subject of no small controversy in the United States, specifically as regards the amount of native language instruction that should be included in the curriculum—a debate not unknown in Canada.

17. See, for instance, the essays in the Labor Law Journal 49, no. 6 (June 1998).

18. Jeffrey G. Reitz and Raymond Breton, The Illusion of Difference: Realities of Ethnicity in Canada and the United States (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1994), ch. 2. A 1998 poll for the Ford Foundation confirms strong American support for multiculturalism initiatives, especially in education. Among respondents 91% agree that “our society is multicultural and the more we know about each other, the better we get along,” 71% say “college students should learn more about other ethnic groups as a way of bringing the nation closer together,” and 69% say “courses and campus activities that emphasize diversity and diverse perspectives” have more of a positive effect on students. Reported in Samuel Fulwood III and Kenneth R. Weiss, “Public Values: Ethnic Diversity,” Los Angeles Times, 7 October 1998.


22. The 2001 Census of Canada reports that individuals of United Kingdom ancestry are the largest immigrant group proportionately, representing 11.1% of all foreign-born in Canada; immigrants from China are a close second with 10.5% of the total. The 2000 American Census, by comparison, indicates that individuals from Mexico are the largest
Immigrant Integration in Canada and the U.S.

foreign-born contingent in the U.S., representing 27% of all immigrants, the majority being resident in the southern and western American states.


31. See Iceland et al., p.96.


34. See Reitz and Breton, pp. 80-82.


39. Immigrants who have been in the U.S. nine years and less—39.5%; in Canada ten years and less—33.5%; U.S. immigrants with a length of residence between ten and nineteen years—28%; in Canada between ten and twenty years—19%.


41. Mexican naturalization as compared with the total immigrant population: 13.2% v. 6.2%, respectively, for residence of five years and less, 29.4% v. 14.2% for five to nine years. Schmidley, p. 20.

42. Bloemraad, "The North American Naturalization Gap."

43. In light of this essay’s concerns, it is interesting to note that Title III of the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act
Immigrant Integration in Canada and the U.S.

of 2002, which authorizes funding for limited English proficient and immigrant students, lists “multicultural understanding” (section 3202) as a primary educational objective.


53. The survey was conducted between 24 October and 18 November with 1002 foreign-born adults, aged 18 or older, who came to live in the U.S. when they were at least five years old. Years of arrival for respondents: 1990s or later, 36%; 1980s, 26%; 1970s, 18%; pre-1970, 18%. The margin of error for the aggregate responses is plus or minus three percentage points. Parkas, et al. pp. 41-42.

54. Parkas, et al., pp. 51, 45, 63. Strength of immigrant commitment to the U.S. is further confirmed in a 1993 Gallup poll of foreign-born Americans. Large majorities in the Gallup survey indicate a belief in the “American Dream” of economic opportunity and prosperity for themselves and their children, that they feel welcome and wish to remain in the U.S. even if they could secure the same standard of living in their countries of birth, and say that such positive feelings toward the U.S. have grown over time. Lydia Saad, “Immigrants See U.S. as Land of Opportunity,” The Gallup Poll Monthly, no. 358, July 1995, pp. 19-33.
55. Reported in Daniel Yankelovich and Cyrus R. Vance, "Distinct Views on the


58. Data are reported in Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Louis DeSipio, F. Chris Garcia,
and Angelo Falcon, Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Perspectives on American

59. de la Garza, et al., p.16.

60. No question on pride in America was asked of non-citizen Latinos.

Toward Issues Relating to Citizenship and Multiculturalism." Survey results are derived
from 2001 interviews carried out in the homes of respondents between 7 and 30 July,
1997: 270 in the Atlantic Provinces, 493 in Quebec, 534 in Ontario, and 704 in the
Western Provinces. The margin of error for a stratified probability sample of this size is
estimated to be +/- 2.2%age points, 19 times in 20. Only those questions and results
pertaining directly to multiculturalism are reported. The sample is drawn in such a way
that it represents the Canadian population aged 18 or over, with the exception of those
Canadians living in the Yukon or Northwest Territories or in institutions. The margin of
error increases for results pertaining to regional or socio-demographic sub-groups of the
total sample. A note of caution: the Focus Canada survey does not stipulate a minimum
amount of time for immigrants to be in Canada before being eligible to take part in the
survey, nor does it offer data on the length of time that immigrant interviewees have been
in the country.

62. As reported in Environics, Focus Canada 1997-2, 64% of immigrants (74% of
others) v. 62% of the Canadian-born say it is more important to obey the law than question
it; 74% of immigrants say that they are interested in Canadian politics v. 66% of the
Canadian-born; 54% of immigrants say they are willing to fight for Canada v. 55% of
Canadian-born respondents; and 46% of immigrants (55% of others) v. 32% of the
Canadian-born say that the Canadian government can be trusted.

63. A 1996 strategic review of multiculturalism programs, authorized by the
Department of Canadian Heritage, recommends that "(e)very minister of the government
should undertake to explain Canada's unique character as a "multi-national" and
"polyethnic state." Canadian Heritage, Corporate Review Branch, Strategic Evaluation of

64. As reported in Environics, Focus Canada 1997-2,

65. The findings are not atypical. Reginald Bibby reports that 88% of respondents
in his 1995 poll maintained that "immigrants to Canada have an obligation to learn
Immigrant Integration in Canada and the U.S.

Canadian ways," including 80% of those who had come to Canada since the 1960s. In Bibby, The Bibby Report, p. 39. A similar result occurs in a 1995 Gallup poll of immigrants to the United States: 58% of immigrant respondents who had been in the U.S. for fewer than 10 years said it was important to "blend-in" to American culture as opposed to 27% who said it was important to maintain one's own culture. Among the native-born, 32% replied that it was important to maintain one's own culture—as in the Focus Canada survey, a higher percentage of anti-assimilation responses than among immigrants. Lydia Saad, "Immigrants See U.S. as Land of Opportunity," Gallup Poll Monthly, Issue 358, July 1995.

66. See, for example, the Economic Council of Canada, New Faces in the Crowd: Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991), p. 31ff.

TABLE 14: "What are the aims of the Canadian government policy of multiculturalism?" (Top eight replies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural retention</th>
<th>Canadian-born</th>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toleration of ethnic diversity</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant adaptation</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic appreciation</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-discrimination</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment equity/quotas</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse discrimination</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic power sharing</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


75. The results of the Public Agenda poll, November 2002:

TABLE 15: When it comes to the following, which is better? The U.S., the country where you were born, or are they about the same?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Of immigrants who say</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Country of birth</th>
<th>About the same</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More opportunity to earn a good living</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s rights</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making good health care available</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a legal system you can trust</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an honest government</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a good education system</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having respect for people with very different lifestyles and backgrounds</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a good place to raise children</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating new immigrants well</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letting people practice the religion they choose</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People being nice to each other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>