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IMMIGRATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND CITIZENSHIP

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The Canada-United Kingdom Colloquium on immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship was held at a propitious time, with both countries engaged in a process of redefining their laws and policies on these matters. Governments in both countries share a sense that immigration is a vital ingredient in future economic development, and that multiculturalism facilitates the settlement of immigrants and gives societies made up of many cultural groups a sense of cohesion. Heightened interest in these issues also, of course, follows the events of September 2001, which focused on the link between security and the movement of people across national borders (whether as immigrants or more temporary visitors). There was a sense of urgency in the deliberations of this Colloquium, therefore, with participants understanding the relevance of immigration and multiculturalism to the national agendas of Canada and the United Kingdom.

It is actually worth reflecting on this point at the outset of this report. One of the most interesting findings of our Colloquium was the pronounced similarity in the ways that immigration and multiculturalism are framed in the two countries. As a member of the Canadian "side", for example, I found a sense of familiarity in the presentations made by participants from the UK, and I noticed the reverse was also true. Nothing said by anyone from either country seemed "foreign". This point was made in a somewhat different way in the final presentation of the Colloquium, by Meyer Burstein, who argued that there is a convergence in immigration policies within the countries of the global north. Increasingly, selection systems in Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand prioritize high skills and entrepreneurial promise. In most cases, the desire for skilled immigrants reflects declining fertility and emerging shortages in the labour market.

In this brief report on the Colloquium, my comments are organized around two principal themes in the Colloquium, though it would be unwise to think of them as mutually exclusive: conceptual issues surrounding the study of immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship; and appropriate policies to maximize benefits (broadly conceived) from immigration and to enhance the social inclusion of cultural minorities. I will conclude with a few personal observations about the event.

Conceptualizing immigration, multiculturalism an citizenship

One of the most prevalent themes of the Colloquium was that of citizenship and how it should be designed and fostered. This issue was stressed by Lord Dholakia in the inaugural presentation of the meeting, when he argued that citizenship should be the vehicle for accommodating diverse populations. This point was echoed by Minister Hughes, who charted a basic set of links between (a) effective and fair asylum and immigration policies; (b) the active citizenship of newcomers; and (c) a sense of social cohesion tying together 'new' and 'old' citizens. Her government hopes that its recent legislation on asylum and immigration will become the "front end" of this process. Citizenship, for both speakers, is about more than passports and nationality, but refers to the sense that citizens *belong* in a society that is built—as Minister Hughes argued—on the twin pillars of shared values on the one hand and on the other a respect for distinctiveness. Suzanne Pinel added a dimension to this definition by noting that citizenship should be seen as a prized possession that carries both rights and responsibilities. However, Morton Weinfeld introduced a sobering note on the concept of citizenship, explaining that there are fundamentally different ways of defining it. He particularly focused on the ideal types of libertarian and communitarian citizenship. The former exists when all members of a society are entitled to express their individuality as they see fit. This type of society engenders little commonality but accords maximum personal freedom. In contrast, communitarian societies value consensus and social cohesion at the expense of personal freedom—the extreme position of this would be the kind of totalitarian world described in *1984* or *The handmaid's tale*. According to Weinfeld we might wish to enjoy the benefits of both types of citizenship, freedom and belonging, but this balance is difficult to achieve in practice.

Given the title of the Colloquium, much of the discussion centred on multiculturalism. Harold Troper and Audrey Kobayashi both concentrated on the many layers of multiculturalism, which is on one level simply a demographic fact; that is, both Canada and the UK are made up of peoples from many cultures. It is also, as is widely known, a set of policies and programs by government, activated by a recognition that individuals and groups have a right to maintain their traditional cultures. But participants also struggled with a higher-order conceptualization of multiculturalism as a "way of being" (Kobayashi's phrase) for a society, which acknowledges no singular, core culture. As one participant put it, society must value people from diverse cultures for their "doing" and *also* their "being". As might be expected, there was a hint of Charles Taylor's concept of *recognition* in this discussion, but in some ways the call for multiculturalism as a way of being goes beyond it. In any case, as Taylor would appreciate, participants from Québec expressed an uneasiness with the rhetoric of multiculturalism, explaining the sense in that province that multiculturalism was an initiative taken by a federal government that was dismissive of Québec nationalism. As such, the word is rarely used in the province, though the preferred term of interculturalism shares many (though not all) of the objectives of multiculturalism.

Peter Li concentrated on another facet of multiculturalism, or interculturalism, the concept of integration. In the past, both Canada and the UK expected newcomers to

assimilate and to do so enthusiastically. The belief that a singular society—in the case of Canada two societies—could be maintained in the face of large-scale immigration from many countries began to break down in the 1960s. Gradually, the rhetoric of assimilation has given way to one of integration, the idea that existing residents of a country, together with newcomers, create a new society that reflects their multiple cultures. But Li speculated that the shift has been more apparent than real. He argued that the far greater political, economic and social power of mainstream society means that any cultural convergence that occurs will be on its terms, rather than those of newcomers. That is, the supposedly "two-way street" of integration, for Li, only really operates in one direction. Further, he argued that Canadian academics, in their efforts to monitor the integration process, use models and methods that are actually based on the premise of assimilation rather than integration. Li's presentation elicited spirited debate, with some participants agreeing with his analysis and others suggesting he underestimated the degree of change in Canadian society over the past few decades.

The assimilation/integration issue was repeatedly raised in another guise: the question of ethnic residential concentration or segregation. In both Canada and the UK, researchers have found that immigrants and minorities are disproportionately located in areas of socio-economic deprivation. As Trevor Hall and Minister Hughes both explained, residential concentration is associated with isolation, particularly a lack of interaction between mainstream society and marginalized groups, whether newcomers or established visible minorities. This isolation may have played a contributing role in the 2001 conflicts in northern towns in the UK. A key question, therefore, is: why do concentrated enclaves develop? In the UK, as elsewhere, they emerge out of a combination of factors, notably the desire of groups to maintain distinct cultures, and a sense of exclusion from the mainstream. This dynamic was discussed by Richard Stone in reference to Britain's Islamic communities. Given the complexity of the processes involved, ethnic enclaves can be seen as evidence of conscious choice by minorities to live separately, or as evidence of racist exclusion from the mainstream. According to Stone, exclusion is a key determinant and therefore concentrations will not dissipate unless mainstream society offers a greater sense of welcome to immigrants and visible minorities. This would likely happen if the aforementioned challenge of appreciating people for their "being" as well as "doing" was met. As Trevor Hall and a number of other participants noted, it might help if governments in Canada and the UK were more forthcoming about the rationale for immigration. That is, public attitudes might be more welcoming if there was a widespread understanding that immigration is essential to future prosperity. Meyer Burstein probably summarized the sentiment of the Colloquium on this matter best, when he stated that the management of immigration is not, first and foremost, about demographics and economics; rather, it is about the management of public opinion.

In terms of public opinion, there are two especially problematic issues related to immigration: growing sentiments that asylum seekers are deceitful, and that migrants are linked with international terrorism. Clearly, these perceptions undermine confidence in the immigration system on the one hand and the sense of welcome offered to immigrants and refugees on the other. Nick Hardwick spoke directly to the refugee issue, beginning with the observation that the UK has made numerous attempts to tighten its refugee

determination process in recent years but still the number of asylum claimants is increasing. Paradoxically, then, establishing harder rules somehow encourages more people to test them. He also attempted to dismantle several prevalent myths about asylum seekers, including the belief that most are "bogus". He concluded by outlining the enormous efforts that would be required to create a more equitable and efficient international refugee system, and explained that avoiding this issue will only add to the already growing "back door" system of human smuggling.

Constable Paul Kernaghan and Sharryn Aiken took up the equally challenging topic of terrorist activities among diasporic populations. Kernaghan spoke of the unique problems associated with policing in areas of population diversity. Difficulties arise when international struggles become embedded in local communities. This occurs, for example, when funds are raised in places like Canada and the UK that ultimately support armed conflicts in other countries. Moreover, terrorist groups increasingly use countries of the global north as a staging ground for their activities, and as we all know following September 11th, in some cases target those countries. The task for police in these circumstances is to find ways to bring terrorists to justice without alienating ordinary members of minority groups. There is also a general message to present to the wider public: "terrorists bad; immigrants good", a message that can easily get lost when sensational events take place. Aiken amplified this last point, by explaining the trade-off involved between security and democratic rights. Enhancing security frequently—as we have seen dramatically in the past year—comes at the expense of protecting human rights. And, when this occurs, immigrants and minorities suffer disproportionately; that is, their rights to privacy, mobility, and freedom of speech, are compromised in an effort to protect society as a whole.

Policy themes

Given the nature of the meeting and the participants (few are policy analysts), policy issues were mainly treated obliquely. In effect, the Colloquium provided what could be called policy reflection rather than specific policy recommendations, and many of the policy issues are included, indirectly, in the previous section. The most prominent points made by the speakers that have not yet been covered were:

- As Mohammed Ali asserted, it is pointless to tackle complex, multidimensional problems with simple measures. Trevor Hall and Audrey Kobayashi added concrete examples to this point. In both Canada and the UK, policies designed to help marginalized groups and individuals have generally provided the greatest benefits to those who are less marginalized. For example, women from European ethnic backgrounds have gained the most from employment equity policies.
- As Suzanne Pinel noted, citizenship acquisition is intrinsically linked with settlement services. That is, if immigrants are expected to participate in socio-political institutions they must learn an official language, and this will not happen effectively without proper resources in place.
- Immigration and multicultural policies are often inconsistent across different departments of the federal government, and between different levels of

government (Audrey Kobayashi). This has the effect of diluting the effectiveness of policy, and also of undermining credibility.

- Policies designed to improve the economic participation and performance of immigrants need to include at least three elements (Meyer Burstein): combating discrimination; creating opportunities; and directly influencing outcomes (e.g., affirmative action programs).

Personal reflections

The composition of the participants of the Colloquium was a major factor in its success. It is interesting to note that the Canadian contingent was more academic in character while policy makers and individuals in advocacy and service roles dominated the UK side. These included, for example, the president of a major political party, members of both houses, senior bureaucrats in charge of equality measures, a Chief Constable, and individuals occupying leading positions in non-government organizations. There was also a significant degree of cultural diversity among participants. This variety lent the proceedings a dynamic that lifted the event from a standard gathering of experts. Nearly everyone in the Colloquium, at some point, spoke out of their personal experience, and participants wove their personal stories through the discussion, stories of their own immigration, or their parents, about minority/majority social encounters, or about their jobs as citizenship judges, refugee advocates, etc. It seems to me that immigration issues bring out personal accounts more often than other questions of research and policy. Feminists have taught us that the personal is political, but in immigration and multicultural matters we can add that the personal is also analytical. That is, discussion, interpretation and analysis is grounded by everyday life. This lends credibility and urgency to analysis but also renders detachment difficult. This immediacy of the subject matter needs to be acknowledged, as it forms a backdrop for any conceptualization of immigration and multiculturalism.

I was both interested and pleased at the way the Colloquium avoided two important pitfalls. I've traveled fairly extensively during the past few years and have observed a vexing tendency in the world's most affluent countries. Increasingly the public identifies refugees—people who need the most sympathy and fair treatment—as "queue jumpers" and security risks. This is a core theme in no less than three recent reports and books on immigration in Canada, all released in the last six months. It also has coloured recent elections in a number of countries, notably The Netherlands, Australia, and Denmark, but there are many more examples. I was therefore heartened by the thoughtful presentations by Aiken, Hardwick, and Kernaghan, which debunked these views. It is also worth repeating a comment made by another participant: terrorism is in some important ways related to migration but migration doesn't cause terrorism and stopping migration won't stop terrorism. This point needs to be made loudly and repeatedly.

I was also struck by the many differences in policy and political trajectories between Canada and the UK. This, for me at least, is comforting. In the past I've been concerned that the systems that we call globalization are leading to a kind of policy straightjacket,

one that induces all states to adopt a narrow range of policy decisions. This is clearly the message of the anti-globalization movement. However, despite the forms of policy convergence (correctly) identified by Meyer Burstein, we can also see a host of differences between immigration, settlement and multicultural policies in Canada and the UK. I take comfort in the fact that two countries with, very generally, similar political and economic configurations, which are both looking outward internationally, choose different policy orientations. Perhaps there is no policy straightjacket after all.

The lack of uniform international policy on immigration, integration, and multiculturalism is echoed within nation states, and there is no better example than Canada. As noted, Audrey Kobayashi made the point that even within the Canadian federal government there are discordant voices on multiculturalism. Comments from Québec participants were also revealing in this respect, on two levels; they remind us that terminology is important, and that nation states are not monolithic in policy terms.

An issue that permeated much of the Colloquium was introduced at the outset by Lord Dholakia and Morton Weinfeld: with respect to immigration and multicultural issues, what are the proper boundaries between the state and civil society? Another way of asking this question is: what can be achieved by law and policy, and what can be left to individuals, families, and communities to deal with by themselves. Lord Dholakia reminded us of the limits to law and policy, that, for example, they can reduce the egregious expressions of racism but have had less impact on the root causes of inequality and the daily experience of subordination and marginalization felt by men and women from minority groups. These latter problems are hard for governments to "fix" as they arise in everyday civil society. As it is impossible to bring every racist comment before the courts, it is difficult to believe that laws will eradicate racism. In that case, public education is vital, as it may influence daily behaviour more profoundly than the rather blunt instrument of the law.

An intriguing element in the Colloquium was the repeated use of the rhetoric of trade-offs. This began most forcefully in Morton Weinfeld's presentation, but permeated many others and also a good deal of the discussion. Perhaps the most basic difficulty we all face is reconciling the trade-off between nationalism and internationalism. We all want the rewards and benefits of globalism and attendant diversity—we all on some level appreciate cosmopolitanism; but we also want a sense of commonality, a sense that "we're all in this together".

I will conclude by reiterating two themes that were prevalent in many presentations. The first was above all a key in Minister Hughes talk: whatever we choose to call it—multiculturalism, interculturalism, or something else—will only work if it has widespread public support. The second is that, again, whatever we choose to call it, multiculturalism must be based on a vision of equity that starts by insisting on an anti-discrimination/anti-racism agenda. But here again we are faced with a trade-off. Pushing people to "unlearn" racism, to appreciate others for their "being" as well as their "doing", is no simple matter. It takes initiative and courage to change beliefs that are often at the core of identity (psychologists have taught us that racism continues, at least in part, because it

is self-affirming to feel superior to others). It is immensely challenging to conceive of policies that will accomplish this task while also enjoying widespread public support.