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Post-Multiculturalism?

David Ley

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David Ley
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC
Canada V6T 1Z2

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Abstract: This paper offers a defence of multicultural policy in an era when it has come under unprecedented criticism from both academic and popular sources in many immigrant-receiving countries. The argument is based upon a view of multiculturalism that is concerned primarily with the defence of group rights – in such areas as access to public services, policing, housing, anti-racism and immigration – rather than with the promotion and preservation of heritage cultures. An example of such rights-based decision-making is provided from a land use conflict in Vancouver. A concluding discussion suggests the necessity of multicultural policy in a period of continually accelerating cultural diversity.

Introduction

We live in an era of 'posts': post-industrial, post-fordist, post-modern (or is it now post-post-modern?), post-national, post-structural, post-Marxist, post-colonial and so it goes on, as theorists rush to be first to the post, in identifying a new economic break, political transition, or social transformation to warrant the creation of new conceptual and discursive space. Whether constant innovation and societal re-invention is truly our lot or whether there is a more capricious creation of discursive novelty by the chattering classes for our own purposes is a matter worthy of reflection. Nonetheless, in this essay I shall identify the existence of a multicultural world moving ideologically towards post-multiculturalism. The paper will consider the current crisis of multicultural policy in both theory and practice before presenting an empirical vignette that shows the continuing potential achievement of multicultural planning. While the argument is grounded in Canada, the condition it discusses is much broader, and in conclusion I shall launch a more general argument on the necessity for some form of multicultural governance to engage a world where growing cultural diversity *within* nation states is an unavoidable certainty.

Starting point: The theoretical assault

Intellectual response to multicultural policy has frequently been strangely ambivalent, if not hostile. From the political left has come the challenge that the posture of equality upheld by multiculturalism is a veil that conceals significant economic and political inequalities, from the right the anxiety that multiculturalism is an exercise in post-modern identity politics that fragments the national project. Both are partial truths, but as I shall try to suggest in this essay, such criticisms do not exhaust the potential capacities of multiculturalism.

Critical judgments are abundant. The charges of national fragmentation with 'the proliferation of problematic diversity' are widespread even in Canada (Day 2000), while in Britain multiculturalism is seen by some to encourage a 'competitive agenda…multicultural turf wars are everywhere' (Alibhai-Brown 2004, also 2000). In the United States, Samuel Huntington (2004) has weighed in with anxieties about the fragmentation of American identity in light of growing cultural diversity.

On another front, Lisa Lowe (1996) is one of many theorists who have argued that the gaiety of multicultural festival (in her case, in the United States) is a sedative that dulls the senses to the continuing marginalisation of immigrants from the economic and political mainstream of national life. Indeed, the celebration of cultural exoticism marks participants as ethnic exhibits in a display orchestrated by, and ultimately intended for, a mainstream Caucasian audience. To this Ghassan Hage (1998) has added an intricate Foucauldian analysis of multiculturalism in Australia as a project of the old Anglo-Celtic elite to classify and arrange the appropriate niches for new Australians. The old elite are the social and spatial engineers who continue to shape the nation and control access to its privileges. As guardians of the national space, they alone, writes Hage, claim the right to worry about the multicultural status of Australia. In a strategy of divide and conquer, new immigrants are sorted into groups predicated on cultural difference, an essentialization of identity that hearkens back to older and more pernicious models of ethno-racial classification (Anderson 1993). From this perspective, it is only a small step to see multiculturalism as a more sophisticated version of earlier racisms, "a 'racism with a distance'" akin to the imperialist approach of classification and containment of 'native' cultures (Zizek 1997; Pred 2000).

As an American scholar writing about Canada, Katharyne Mitchell (1993, 2004a) adds a separate indictment of bad faith, for beyond false claims to equality, a takeover of multiculturalism by elites has occurred for economic purposes. In a neo-liberal era, where the market has become the *force majeure,* multiculturalism is pragmatically regarded as a benefit to international trade and foreign investment, and thereby a tool that may be employed to lower barriers to capital flows (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002). Multiculturalism enables elites to play the ethnic card as a sign of a worldly cosmopolitanism, to capitalise on what the Australians call an ethnic advantage, an advantage referenced in public policy and fully deployed in Sydney's bid for the 2000 Olympic Games (Murphy *et al.* 2003).

While these theoretical challenges are true, they are not fully true, and multiculturalism may yet escape in perhaps a narrower but more precise form for its exposure to them. The attack from the right claiming that multiculturalism is an invitation to a politics of fragmentation is usually parried by the response that multiculturalism is widely regarded by the public as a distinctive Canadian value, and is thereby a source of national identity and unity, not disunity (Li 2003a). Similarly in the United Kingdom, Bhikhu Parekh's defence of multiculturalism is to argue that it comprises an integral part of British identity: "what unites us and makes us all British is…our common commitment to respect our differences and forge commonalities in a civilised dialogue" (Parekh 2005).

Second, while Lowe and others are correct to claim that cultural equality should not trump economic inequality, it is too limiting to define the symbols and practices of cultural celebration as the exclusive content of multiculturalism today. To be sure, this was its origin, but as Kobayashi (1993) detailed more than a decade ago, multiculturalism, at least in Canada, has advanced from its celebratory beginnings and has moved squarely into the territory of citizenship rights. Few Canadian critics would limit multiculturalism today to the aestheticisation of heritage cultures. Instead it enjoys the legal status afforded in the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, while it attains constitutional status in the 1982 Constitution Act, where article 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms asserts a declaration of rights "in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians". As such, multiculturalism provides an underpinning to rights-based claims before the state and civil society in such domains as welfare, policing, immigration policy, and equal opportunity in employment. Among its successes would be the 1988 Redress Settlement that included an apology and compensation to Japanese-Canadians for the abrogation of their rights, including confiscation of property and subsequent internment, during the Second World War (Kobayashi 1992).

Third, Hage's assertion that multiculturalism is simply a project of existing elites to manage unruly ethnics is weakened in Canada not only by the weighty legacy of Pierre Trudeau's inclusivity, underpinned by the institutionalization of immigrant rights (including a short three-year path to citizenship), but also by the government's practice of appointing an immigrant, including in recent years two women of color, as federal minister responsible for multiculturalism. Far from being marginalized, the immigrant voice is heard in Cabinet discussion.

Fourth, the economic appropriation of multiculturalism as ethnic advantage does not eliminate access by minorities to citizenship claims. Indeed quite the opposite, for when a state disseminates an image of itself in terms of its multicultural identity then it legitimates claims to citizenship rights on precisely those terms. Moreover, it is not only elites who profit from the commodification of multiculturalism. Minority groups are willing and able to play the same game for commercial gain, as we see daily in Little Italy, Chinatown or Olde England branding in products and neighbourhoods. For example, both historic (Anderson 1991) and contemporary (Ong 1999) immigrant cohorts from China have shown a willingness to trade in orientalist genres when it is commercially advantageous to do so.

But it is precisely this essentialization of national origins that has provided perhaps the most influential critique of multiculturalism in the Canadian context. While this objection has been raised by a number of scholars (see Abu Laban 2002 for a response), its most potent deployment has come

from more populist sources within the immigrant community. Reacting against what he sees as a multicultural requirement to display his Trinidadian background in his Canadian present, Neil Bissoondath (1994) has railed against this barrier to expressing his own identity as an unhyphenated Canadian. His challenge went to the heart of the federal bureaucracy, because so ingrained is multiculturalism in Canadian institutions that in the national census until the 1990s it was almost impossible to declare one's ancestral identity as Canadian.[1] The cues in the Census form led toward writing in an identity as a hyphenated Canadian instead. Bissandooth offered a vigorous rebuttal to government mantras, arguing that multiculturalism aids the containment, marginalization and ghettoization (1994: 111) of essentialized immigrant identities.

Such challenges led to a direct response by the Department of Canadian Heritage. In a series of releases with the authoritative title "The Evidence Series: Facts about Multiculturalism", the Department rejected the charge of "ghettoization" and offered the official position that "Multiculturalism has been a vital policy promoting citizenship acquisition, participation and integration" (Canadian Heritage 1998a). Another release in the series led with the calming message that "Ethnic identity reinforces attachment to Canada" (Canadian Heritage 1998b). Clearly the climate of public scepticism was sufficient to require this unusually direct defence.

Rallying point: Public attacks on multiculturalism

The most damaging opposition to multiculturalism has, however, been populist rather than intellectual, and has frequently been associated with the international rise of nativist parties on the right. Early more isolated events such as the Le Pen movement in France have now consolidated into major political reactions across many European welfare states, leading to political breakthroughs for anti-immigration groups in Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands, and to significant minority standing elsewhere (Baubock 2002; Joppke 2004: Joppke and Morawska 2003; Prins and Slijper 2002). Social democratic governments in Britain and even Sweden (Pred 2000) have back-peddled in the face of grassroots opposition to immigration and multiculturalism. The murder of controversial film-maker, Theo van Gogh, in Amsterdam in November 2004 by a Dutch Muslim extremist led not only to civil disorder but also to marked criticism of multicultural policy by intellectuals as well as the general public, prompting additional moves toward assimilationism by the Dutch government. The two London bombing incidents of July 2005, and the discovery that all of the bombers were

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[1] The share of Census respondents claiming Canadian identity rose from 1 percent in the 1986 Census to nearly 40 percent in 2001. An analysis of those who self-identified as un-hyphenated Canadians in the 2001 Census showed unexpectedly that the highest level of respondents was living in Quebec (Mahoney 2005).

British residents, first or second generation members of minorities from the developing world, prompted a visceral reaction by the popular media and public opinion against multiculturalism which was seen as enhancing socio-cultural segregation, shutting out 'British values' while finding space for the reproduction of a hostile alternative. Even before these catalytic events, the tide of resistance to multiculturalism had been rising (Back *et al.* 2002), and gathered around the much-publicized declaration in April 2004 by Trevor Phillips, the son of Guyanese immigrants and Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, that multicultural policy in Britain had outlived its usefulness, and was encouraging not integration but separation.

Australia followed Canada in its pursuit of multiculturalism after the abandonment of the White Australia Policy in the 1970s. By the 1990s, however, significant resistance had arisen, leading to the creation of the restrictionist One Nation Party, opposed to multiculturalism and immigration from non-traditional source counties. While a short-lived fringe group, One Nation drew sufficient popular support to drive the conservative Liberal Party, led by John Howard, further to the right, a position rewarded by success in the 1996 elections. Howard subsequently eliminated or curtailed multicultural programs, closing the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and proving so unfriendly to multicultural policy that the term was commonly referred to as the "M-word' (Ang and Stratton 2001). In the 2001 election, the Howard government skilfully if cynically used the issue of illegal immigrant boat landings as a hot button issue to galvanise electoral support (Betts 2002; Marr and Wilkinson 2003). In an anxious and badly divided nation openness to, and tolerance of, diversity – minimal expectations of multicultural policy – have been severely compromised.

North American societies are also turning to earlier models of self-identification. In the United States, public apprehension concerning immigration contributed to the punitive measures in the 1996 welfare reform legislation (Mitchell 2004b). Simultaneously the discourse of assimilation, seemingly side-lined by pluralist ideology, has made a return in academic work (Alba and Nee 2003; Brubaker 2001). Multiculturalism, frequently understood as the provision of schooling in heritage languages (notably Spanish), is associated with a dangerous tendency toward separation, even balkanization of the national territory (Clark 1998). As Roger Waldinger (2003: 23) has written, "Long in disgrace, assimilation is now back in style". The United States, of course, never made the same ideological commitment to multiculturalism as Canada, and significantly assimilation has not yet been revived in Canadian discussion. Canada after all has a Multicultural Act and a federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms that institutionalize not only respect for difference but also the rights of being different (Kymlicka 2003). Nonetheless some erosion has occurred. The federal and provincial governments have downsized, and in some cases closed multicultural offices, settlement

benefits for immigrants have been cut back, and government rhetoric has moved from multiculturalism towards a normative language of social cohesion and integration, positions that could easily blend into a disguised assimilationism (Li 2003b). Even in the nation where it was first enunciated and most fully institutionalized, multicultural policy is on the defensive.

The international withdrawal from a confident multiculturalism is illustrated by the shift in Leonie Sandercock's (1998, 2003) important work on multicultural planning. In her first book, *Cosmopolis,* published in 1998 there are a number of uplifting examples of multicultural practices drawn from cities in several continents. But by 2003 and the appearance of *Mongrel Cities*, the examples are less robust and less persuasive, and two cases nominated in the text, Rotterdam and the Aboriginal settlement of Redfern in Sydney, have seriously deconstructed in the past two years with nativist mobilization hostile to immigration in Rotterdam and an anti-police riot in Redfern. There are, it seems, few multicultural certainties that remain.

Counterpoint: The potential of multicultural policy

In this bleak contemporary period, it is important to look for more hopeful indicators as a way forward, and I wish now to develop an extended example of multicultural problem-solving in Vancouver, a Canadian city of two million, which has been transformed from a European-origin to a significantly Asian-origin metropolis in the space of 30 years. In a demographic equation that will become increasingly common in the global north, low fertility levels and limited net domestic migration mean that population growth is largely achieved through immigration, and in Vancouver that immigration has come primarily from Asia, led by population flows from the two dominant population cores of Greater China (including China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) and the Indian sub-continent (including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka). It is highly probable that this migration regime will continue for the foreseeable future.

Seeking new sources of investment during the recession of the early 1980s, Canadian policy-makers saw significant prospects in the burgeoning economies of East and Southeast Asia. A series of neo-liberal initiatives encouraged trade, investment and migration from these countries, with revisions to Canadian immigration policy that envisaged a significant stream of economic migrants, including business-class families whose entry would be fast-tracked according to the scale of their human capital measured by successful business experience and available financial capital (Ley 2003). Between 1983 and 2001, some 310,000 immigrants entered Canada through the Business Immigration Program (BIP). With Hong Kong accounting for one-third of the landings, and Taiwan and South Korea another 20 percent, business immigrants are disproportionately concentrated in the

Vancouver region. They brought significant financial capital with them. Liquid assets per household disclosed to immigration officials exceeded on average $1 million (Canadian) and commonly $2 million, leading to a burst of consumer spending on arrival.

The growth of Hong Kong in particular has been characterised as a property-based regime of public and private accumulation, with land sales and related taxes accounting for 30 percent of total government revenues in recent years, while the largest companies, with 40-50 percent of the capitalisation on the Hong Kong stock market are primarily property developers (Smart and Lee 2003). As insecurities rose with the approaching return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, wealthy households sought a safe haven, and responded to Canada's invitation to migrate. Embedded in the social, cultural and economic significance of property, wealthy East Asian families sought to deploy their assets in family and portfolio investment in the Vancouver land market. The result, particularly in the 1988-1994 period, was a staggering inflation of prices (Ley and Tutchener 2001). With understandable hyperbole, Katharyne Mitchell (2004a: 3) identified the local housing market during this period as "the hottest real estate in the world. It was a city on fire".

The wealthiest immigrant households not surprisingly sought out the blue chip, elite neighbourhoods, in particular the spacious, older central districts of Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale (Ley 1995). These areas had for decades been the untroubled home of an Anglo-Canadian middle-class and upper middle-class. Their mature landscapes were leafy and manicured, while the houses were in various European revival styles, especially the neo-Tudor that was prominent in bourgeois circles during the 1910-1930 period. Landscape and identity mutually reinforced each other in a sympathetic anglophilia. But this landscape ethic had no meaning for hypermodern business immigrants embedded in a domestic economy that firstly placed a premium on the size of residential space (Cheng 2001, Mitchell 2004a), and secondly saw property in terms of improvement and exchange value rather than of heritage and symbolic value. So old elite properties were bulldozed, gardens were clear-cut of trees and shrubs, and replaced by large, modern structures on minimally landscaped lots. So was born the 'monster house' conflict in Vancouver's old elite districts that reverberated through Canada and overseas in the early 1990s.

There is not space here to detail the ensuing conflict (see Ley 1995, Mitchell 2004a). Vigorous protests emerged among the old elite leading to unsuccessful remedial attempts by the City to tinker with existing bylaws and building codes. The failure of these efforts aggravated growing tension, as the conflict threatened to erupt into overt racialization. The old elite, however, were well-organised and in 1992, prompted by heightened anxiety and activism by long-established residents, the City called a public hearing with an intended plan, approved by the principal elite group, to aid

preservation through a down-zoning that would make housing demolition and redevelopment less economically attractive.

Due to the large number of briefs, the public hearing was stretched over several successive nights in a large hotel ballroom. The space was packed, with television cameras and national and international media creating a sense of spectacle. A totally unexpected development was the politicization and mobilization of the new immigrants. They established an *ad hoc* organisation, The South Shaughnessy Property Owners' Rights Committee, and at the hearings speaker after speaker challenged the proposed down-zoning, usually speaking through interpreters, and, emphasizing their group's self-identification as property owners with rights, they adroitly projected the conflict into the arena of citizenship rights (Ley 1995). The economic and cultural understanding of property transported from Hong Kong lent a strong orientation towards the privileging of property rights. As one speaker saw it:

> We have large lots [in Shaughnessy] and nice houses can be built on these lots. Land value is dropping and there is a reduction of deals. There is evidence investors are scared away. We have to attract more investors. We should do our best to maintain land values and all parts of the community will profit and the country will grow prosperous.

But to a neo-liberal concern with property rights and a Hong Kong preoccupation with unit size, was skilfully blended a recognizably Canadian preoccupation with democratic political rights:

> I live in Shaughnessy and we built a house very much to my liking. The new zoning would not allow enough space for me…I strongly oppose this new proposal. Why do I have to be inconvenienced by so many regulations? This infringes my freedom. Canada is a democratic country and democracy should be returned to the people.

And again:

> I oppose (the) changes. Is it right to deny the rights of these people? Is it right for government to force rights? Canada is a free country. We decided to build our own dream house for our own family needs. It was a family project. Everyone was excited by our new house. Now the children will have to sleep in the basement.

In this final rendition, the just society is defined in terms of the family unit on their own property claiming political rights against an overly intrusive state.

These interventions astutely adopted the discourse of citizenship rights, the rights of all Canadians regardless of culture or longevity of tenure. In vain the old elite presented the argument of guardianship of the landscape over the decades, of a historically-grounded authority. They claimed

too that society was defined not just by families but by neighbourhoods, that an ethic of care stretched beyond the single family lot:

> The house across the lane was bought by Orientals. Soon after they moved in, two 200-year-old Douglas firs were cut down. *It felt to me like one of my children was dying*...The English family who originally built the house and had lived there for fifty years had asked me especially to protect those trees, the tallest in the whole neighbourhood [my emphasis].

The communitarian care and anguished sense of loss in neighbourhood change, an ethic successfully argued in the past (Duncan 1994), was unable to carry the day. When Council tallied up the briefs at the end of six boisterous nights of presentations, it discovered that over 60 percent of speakers had rejected the down-zoning plan presented by City planners and approved by the old elite. The proposal could not be carried in its existing form.

The conflict, however, remained, and had indeed escalated through the existing management process, with polarized cultural groups vociferously articulating opposed positions. Dangerous charges of racism were being levelled while widespread media coverage, not merely local but also national and international, were inciting the racialization of the impasse. In the ensuing months, Council moved behind closed doors, out of media range, thereby attempting to dampen emotions that had been aroused by public deliberation. A special committee was formed that included a range of stakeholders, including not only the old elite but also new immigrants and members of the property industry. This group was facilitated in a dialogical process by city planning staff and charged to come up with a landscape solution.

After six months of committee work, and much fuller mutual understanding, a compromise solution was reached. A modest reduction in the size of new houses was agreed upon, following the direction of Council's earlier proposal, but this could be annulled by a space bonus, permitted if new house design was selected from a palette of styles drawn from the existing European revival idiom in the neighbourhood. In this scenario, builders could construct houses to the permitted maximum size, buyers could purchase new properties, and long-settled residents would benefit from landscape continuity as new houses matched the style of old timers. This outcome was also reinforced by a realisation among new buyers (and hence builders) that resistance by traditional buyers to unsympathetic boxy mansions would limit the re-sale market. At the same time to mitigate the rawness of new development, and to maintain the existing urban woodland canopy, tree protection was also secured. In the past decade the first sign of new development in Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale has been the appearance of protective orange barriers placed around trees on a lot that is to be re-developed.

This neat solution effectively ended the conflict over monster houses in Vancouver's elite districts. In 1998 a re-examination of letters to the City found fewer than ten complaints had been received in the intervening five years, in contrast to the hundreds that were sent in the tense years at the beginning of the decade (Ley 1999). Vancouver's elite districts have returned to a somnolent state, once again protected behind regulatory barriers from unwanted land use change, and the troubling ethnic division and polarization of the early 1990s have been contained. A review of the new zoning protocols in Shaughnessy, Kerrisdale and other up-market districts in 1999 pronounced them to have achieved their goals. The Mayor of Vancouver declared with relief "I'm not getting nearly as much mail as I was. There's much less anxiety and concern throughout the city… I think this has been a good program and has helped a lot" (Krangle 1999).

Endpoint: The necessity for multicultural policy

While the monster house conflict has been widely documented, much less has been said about its resolution. But in the long term it is the solution that matters more, showing as it does the potential efficacy of multicultural diversity management. The language of political compromise that achieved conflict resolution in Shaughnessy may be translated into another rhetoric, that of integration or hybridity, both of which imply a mutual adjustment of values in a multicultural society. The charge that with multiculturalism it is only the immigrants who have to make accommodations (Li 2003b), is in this instance far from the mark. The sense of disrupted identity accompanying landscape change led to a palpable sense of loss among long-settled residents. But their long-term tenure of space did not give them monopoly rights over the use of space. New Canadians were able to struggle over the definition of place precisely because they articulated and implemented the same citizenship rights. Their astute mobilisation of the discourse of property and political rights provided legitimacy in a legal and political tussle. Their claim had to be acknowledged for it was a claim that was integral to Canadian self-definition. The extension of what would have been an annoying but inconsequential clash over landscape taste into a rights-based claim to be heard at the negotiating table brought legitimacy, even though it side-tracked the arguments of an existing elite with close political relations to City Hall.

The case of the monster houses is only one local – albeit transnational – example of conflict resolution in multicultural planning. As such it is an incomplete counterpoint to the flood of opinion marshalled against multiculturalism, but it is possible to muster other cases of a messy, argumentative but nonetheless consistent move towards integration outcomes in cultural land use conflicts (Isin and Siemiatycki 1999, Germain and Gagnon 2003). There is no common template for successful

outcomes, and local micro-politics define conflict trajectories, but nonetheless in the present crisis of diversity management in the global north, such precedents are significant as case studies to show that a democratic, rights-based process leading to conflict resolution is possible within the rubric of multiculturalism.

One thing *is* certain: demographic multiculturalism will be an ever-increasing feature in cities in the global north during the twenty-first century. The extraordinary regionalization of global fertility and population growth has created an irreversible migration gradient. The spectre of underpopulation due to lack of replacement through natural increase in the global north, compared with overpopulation due to high natural increase relative to development in the global south, contains a geographic potential that will not be contained. Population decline is not a policy option entertained with any enthusiasm by national governments in the developed world, although occasionally politicians make gestures to a population steady state at some distant point in the future (Ruddick 1999); more importantly, it seems, the economy continues to need growing numbers of workers and consumers, while the state requires more tax-payers to cover its rising expenditures. Immigration from the south to the north, whether legal or illegal, is a *sine qua non* for the north's own continuing development.

Population growth throughout the global north today is being sustained by immigration. In Canada by the mid 1990s, 50 percent of population growth and 70 percent of labour force growth were attributable to immigration (Bourne and Rose 2001), and these figures are rising annually. Barriers to immigration, such as those being assembled in 'fortress Europe', provide no answer to this demographic imperative. Natalist experiments have not been successful, and without a significant re-orientation of resources to increasing local fertility, with no guarantee of success, immigration is the only route to population replacement. This is creating major social challenges outside as well as inside Europe and North America. Confronting plummeting fertility levels, Singapore is welcoming 'foreign talents' as quasi-citizens, but seriously limiting the freedoms of less–skilled workers who are granted temporary visas and minimal rights (Yeoh 2006). But it is Japan that faces the most severe challenges. With a restrictionist and nativist citizenship policy, Japan has been opposed to immigration for migrants who cannot claim some Japanese ethnic heritage. But the fertility collapse in Japan has led to an aging population and labour shortages, with a recent UN report estimating that Japan would have to admit an immigrant workforce of 640,000 every year to maintain its labour stock, or else face a 6.7 percent annual fall in GDP (Tsuda *et al.* 2003). Here then is the demographic *and* economic necessity for multicultural planning.

One response of course is to admit demographic multiculturalism but dismiss rights-based multiculturalism. This is the old and also the new model of the melting pot and assimilation. But France's assimilationist republican model with its deliberate non-recognition of cultural groups has tended to conceal immigrant inequality to a greater degree than states where there is an identification of difference (AP 2004). Employment equity policies require the identification of ethno-cultural groups who may be confronting systemic marginalisation, and the republican model has no mechanism here for remedial intervention. Moreover, while few immigrants would reject economic assimilation to the middle class, is cultural assimilation a viable option? Is a public culture of mass consumption welcoming enough to submerge divergent cultural values? With the religious tenor of so many recent immigrants, including Catholic and Pentecostal Latinos, Middle Eastern and African Muslims, and Indian Sikhs and Hindus, the promises of secular consumer culture may not be good enough. The policy of cultural recognition in Canada, extending to rights and not just tastes, has led to acceptance of the hijab, of Sikh police wearing turbans not hats, and even (contested) consideration in Ontario of admitting limited aspects of shariah family law.[2] It has also led to political activism and the pursuit of citizenship rights in such areas as anti-racism, policing, education, housing and welfare services.

It is commonly the conjunction of multiculturalism with the maintenance of non-western religions in immigrant enclaves that has generated the most marked anxieties, particularly in the post-September 2001 environment. The fear that multiculturalism will aid and abet socio-spatial segregation that encourages not just the preservation of cultural difference but the cultivation of hostile difference has created considerable backlash. But such fears are perhaps guilty of an over-simplification of minority identities. The longer-settled Jewish community in Canada has shown great aptitude in sustaining spatial concentration and a heritage culture, that includes support for homeland religion and politics, while fully integrating into the economic and political mainstream of Canadian life. Not coincidentally, Jewish organizations like the Canadian Jewish Congress have also been

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[2] A report commissioned by the provincial government of Ontario, made public in December 2004,recommended limited use of Islamic shariah family law to avoid costly litigation, particularly in divorce settlements. The recommendation, empowered by a 1991 Act, was supported by the Islamic Institute for Civil Justice, but angrily rejected by Canadian Muslim women's groups. See Mallan (2004). After protracted debate, and even hostile demonstrations outside Canadian embassies overseas, the Premier of Ontario withdrew the proposal in September 2005, even though this would mean also terminating Jewish and Christian arbitration procedures which had been in motion since the 1991 legislation. There has been no mention yet of intervention in another alternative justice system, the use of Aboriginal healing circles where victim and culprit are brought together in a cathartic community meeting. It remains to be seen whether the proposal of shariah law represented the high water mark of Canadian multiculturalism, from which political pressure will force withdrawal on many fronts. Recent opinion polls do suggest a cooling of public support for multiculturalism (Munro 2005), though such support has been cyclic in the past as well.

strong advocates of multiculturalism. The Jewish case could well provide an important precedent for the trajectory of current non-European immigration of self-defined religious minorities, and parry the observation that while multiculturalism worked for an earlier immigrant population that was primarily European and secular, it is over-extended for contemporary immigrants with strong religious identities.

The umbrella of multicultural recognition has created a space for cultural difference both for immigrants but equally, perhaps more, important for the Canadian public imagination and, hence, its political culture (McGown 1999: 165). It is interesting to observe that Canada, the nation that has most fully institutionalized multiculturalism, is also the nation with the most positive public responses to immigration (Hiebert 2006). Multiculturalism has become a defining Canadian value, socialised as a norm through school curricula and public expectations. From this multicultural platform has emerged an institutionally welcoming face to immigrants that includes significant (if inadequate) settlement services. Bringing mainstream civil society closer to immigrant everyday life, these programs are delivered not by bureaucrats but by NGOs with co-ethnic staff, and provide not only services, but also jobs and volunteer positions to recent arrivals. Volunteering provides some Canadian experience on a resume that is so often critical to success in the labour market. SUCCESS, the largest immigrant-serving NGO in Vancouver, claims not only 200 staff but also 7000 volunteers (SUCCESS 1999).

Irene Bloemraad (2003) has developed an intriguing, if not yet fully tested, thesis on one consequence of the presence of such a multicultural umbrella for immigrants. She interviewed a quasi-matched sample of Portuguese immigrants in Toronto and Boston to try to understand a growing divergence in naturalization rates between Canada and the United States, which has evolved from a position of parity in 1970 to a large gap by the late 1990s, with American naturalization rates falling to 35 percent and Canadian rates rising to 72 percent. Her interviews led to the conclusion that multiculturalism and settlement policy in Toronto provided bridging and linking social capital, openings to economic and political inclusion that encourage political incorporation and a sense of national belonging. Her Boston interviews in contrast suggested that Portuguese co-ethnics felt less enfranchised and more marginalised from the political mainstream.

Increasingly in large North American cities ethnographic exploration of cultural diversity and senses of inclusion and belonging can emerge from conversation in taxi-cabs, a self-employment niche now filled almost entirely by immigrants. So I end this essay with a recent taxi story that provides some sense of Canadian multicultural belonging. On the long rush-hour journey to Toronto's airport from a downtown meeting, I struck up a conversation with the taxi driver, who had been born

in Ethiopia, and landed in Canada as a boy some 15 years ago. He had completed a two-year community college program in web design in British Columbia and taken an initial job with a parking corporation that provided funds for his cab purchase. He escaped the Toronto winter, he informed me, by renting out his cab and working for five months each year in Kenya, where he had a small web design company in Mombasa and an internet café managed by his brother. Conversation turned to the Athens Olympics and I asked him about his (and my) dual allegiances, which revealed an elaborate transnational family project for the future. Though his two sons were still very young he had dreams for them to become middle or long distance runners in the tradition of Ethiopian and Kenyan athletes. It was his plan to send them to private school in Kenya in their teens and ensure they would be rigorously trained as distance runners, a program he regarded as more advanced in East Africa than in Canada. So I asked, who would his boys run for, Kenya or Ethiopia? Oh, neither, he replied. They would return to Canada and run for Canada. With East African training his sons might make a distinctive contribution as Canadian citizens in their own specialty. He dropped me off with the wish that I might live long enough to see them win Olympic medals! Among the several themes that could be extracted from this conversation, including immigrant enterprise, transnational linkages, and family aspirations, I note an intent to use ethnic resources to leave a mark, not just in local family or heritage associations, but rather as a full member of a national society.

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