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CITIZENS OF THE WORLD WITH CANADIAN PASSPORTS?

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Citizens of the World with Canadian Passports?

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Are Canadians simply watered-down Americans ("America Lite") or are we "Citizens of the World'? Where does the concept of nationalism fit into debates about identity and citizenship and is it still a valid concept in this era of "transculturalism"? This paper will argue that nationalism is a mythical identity based on "imagined communities" and that the concept of shared citizenship is a far more inclusive and binding way of constructing shared roles and responsibilities in Canadian society. Identity is personal and individualistic whereas citizenship is collective and shared. Debates about language, immigration and cultural and regional identities therefore take on a very different hue when citizenship, rather than various spurious constructions of "the nation" and "founding nation(s)," becomes the central operating concept guiding our perceptions of ourselves and each other. I make extensive use of polling results commissioned by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) in 2002 and 2003 as well as fresh analyses of newly released census data.

Keywords: Citizenship; Identity; Transculturalism/Transnationalism; Nationalism; Unity; Diversity.

Introduction

In this paper I seek to shed light on the nexus between citizenship, identity, and nationalism by first engaging the debates as to whether—using the concept of nationalism as a vehicle—Canadian society is firmly planted within fortress North America resulting in Canadians becoming watered-down Americans or "America Lite" as some have called it, versus the conceptualisation of Canada and its peoples as model "Citizens of the World." A proposed research agenda on unity and diversity with respect to Canadian citizenship and identity will then be outlined.

I intend to use all these "loaded" terms such as citizenship, identity and, in particular, nationalism with a good dose of critical perspective. I certainly do not take any of these terms for granted and part of this exercise will entail making clear the definitions I am using for each one of these terms.

Citizenship, Identity, and Nationalism in the Canadian context

This paper will argue that the notion of citizenship—as one of belonging and participating in a polity—is a far more effective notion than that of "nation" based on shared ethno-linguistic identity to guide our discussions of the emerging Canada. Despite the adoption and evolution of multiculturalism policy in Canada over the past 30 years, many continue to refer to Canada's "founding nations" as underpinnings of citizenship.

In the century following the British conquest of parts of what is now Canada, in keeping with "the Maple Leaf Forever" mentality, descendants of the English were given the first priority when it came to nation-building. The lyrics of the well-known song shed light on the world view it represents.

The Maple Leaf Forever

In Days of yore,
From Britain's shore
Wolfe the dauntless hero came
And planted firm Britannia's flag
On Canada's fair domain.
Here may it wave,
Our boast, our pride
And joined in love together,

The thistle, shamrock, rose entwined,
The Maple Leaf Forever.

CHORUS:
The Maple Leaf, our Emblem Dear,
The Maple Leaf Forever.
God save our Queen and heaven bless,
The Maple Leaf Forever.

At Queenston Heights and Lundy's Lane
Our brave fathers side by side
For freedom's home and loved ones dear,
Firmly stood and nobly died.
And so their rights which they maintained,
We swear to yield them never.
Our watchword ever more shall be
The Maple Leaf Forever
[CHORUS]

Our fair Dominion now extends
From Cape Race to Nootka Sound
May peace forever be our lot
And plenty a store abound
And may those ties of love be ours
Which discord cannot sever
And flourish green for freedom's home
The Maple Leaf Forever.
[CHORUS]

The "Maple Leaf Forever" point of view is clearly one which supports the cultural superiority of Britain and favours its colonial dominion over First Nations peoples and earlier non-Aboriginal settlers, namely, French-Canadians. In this day and age, it is hard to imagine the fact that until forty years ago, Canada was still legally "British North America" with English as its sole official language despite 10,000 years of Aboriginal history, five hundred years of French presence and the fact that nearly one third of the population is francophone.

After a long struggle and pressure on the Canadian state, French-Canadians were finally recognized in this country through the passing of the *Official Languages Act* resulting in the development of the "two solitudes" thesis. The annual LaFontaine-Baldwin lectures founded in part by John Ralston Saul now refers to three "founding nations"—English, French, and Aboriginal—a reflection of the long, hard struggle for recognition of the indigenous peoples of what we call Canada. The difficulty in this

rhetoric is the subsuming of hundreds of Aboriginal ethno-linguistic groups under the umbrella of one "tag"—"Aboriginal"—denying each First Nation its own distinctive past and identity. The other problem with the "founding nation" trope is the lack of recognition of others who have participated in the building of the country—for example, the role of Chinese-Canadians in the construction of the railroad. Without denying constitutionally-entrenched rights of Aboriginal peoples and the official place of English and French as working languages of Canada, a way out of this quandary is to focus on the notion of citizenship rather than nation—which is a fiction of "imagined communities" in any case as goes Benedict Anderson's so well known argument (Anderson 1983/1991).

Moving from "Founding Nations" to Shared Citizenship

This presentation argues that the concept of nation is a fiction—language being a far more useful category. To refer to "the English" as a founding group in colonial Canada is somewhat inaccurate as Scots, Irish, Welsh as well as those who may have thought of themselves as "English" spoke the English language in the early days of Canada's colonial period. Similarly, with respect to "The French"—the French language was spoken by a motley crew of Normans, Celts (Bretons), and so on. It would be far more appropriate and inclusive to refer to linguistic groups of English and French rather than the spurious and reified concept of nation when referring to "founding groups" within what is now Canada. Making this shift would help us move from the outdated and often repeated mantra of founding nations to one of shared citizenship regardless of linguistic and ethnic origin as well as creed, and so on.

Outside critics have remarked on how Canada's "policies are founded on the respect of individual human rights and a civic and contractual definition of citizenship, rather than on ethnic and cultural communitarianism" (Inglis, 1996). Certainly, compared to other countries, Canada is an example of how to move forward on notions of citizenship in an effort to integrate a wide diversity of peoples. Nevertheless, as Kobayashi has so clearly explained, we need to move toward defining citizenship as a participatory notion rather than simple legal status:

> There is a strong consensus that the practice of citizenship in a multicultural country such as Canada needs to continue to move towards citizenship as a way of participating in one's country, rather than as a bundle of rights, or even responsibilities, conferred by the state. There is considerable contingency built into the process of what is variously called 'lived', 'deep' or 'social' citizenship, as the population changes as a result of immigration and other factors of demographic and cultural change. All parties—the state, community organizations, researchers and policy makers—have a role in influencing the ways in which citizenship is imagined and lived (Kobayashi, 2001).

Where does the concept of nationalism fit into debates about identity and citizenship and is it still a valid concept in this era of globalization and "transculturalism"?

Global Citizenship and "Transculturalism"

Following the work of scholars such as Arjun Appadurai and Alejandro Portes, it is clear that the factors that affect the global flows of people and their related identities have changed due to globalisation (Appadurai, 1997). Accelerated information and communication technologies as well as changing immigration patterns have resulted in what some have termed "transnational communities" (Portes, 1997, 2000). In other words, more and more of us have begun to identify ourselves as "global citizens" and though identifying as "citizens of the world" is certainly not new[1], the era of globalization has ushered in the mainstreaming of transcultural/national *métissage* (Gunew, 2003; Mahtani, 2002).

New census and survey data

This section will present polling data collected by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) as well as other sources. The data illustrate two trends: first, changes in public opinion within Canada since World War Two, and second some of the fundamental differences between Canadians and Americans with respect to identifying as global citizens.

Canadian Involvement in International Affairs

The transition from the mainstream "British North America (with a francophone minority)" perspective in this country to one that can be termed, "citizens of the world with Canadian passports" has taken place over the last thirty years. Attitudes towards ethnic diversity in this country have also changed tremendously over the past several decades.

Far too much has been made about the impact on Canadian public opinion of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre with respect to Canada's involvement in international affairs as well as immigration policy. CRIC's polling data show that public opinion in this country quickly rebounded to resemble opinions reported in the earlier part of 2001 with respect to our international commitments.

Figure 1 illustrates the similarity in public opinion in March 2001 and February 2002 as far as Canada's involvement in international affairs is concerned. As far as peacekeeping, economic aid, and military alliances are concerned, post-911 public opinion strongly resembles views collected in March 2001 and differences point to the public arguing for **more** rather than less involvement on the international scene in all three areas.

Figure 2 delves further into pre-911 public opinion on Canada's role as an international player. All Canadians, and particularly young people aged 18-29 agreed that Canada had a moral obligation, or a qualified obligation, to help people in other countries. In other words, Canadians see themselves as part of an international web of global citizens rather than as inward-looking members of "fortress North America." Percentages sometimes do not add up to one hundred percent due to respondents stating they do not know or they may choose not to answer the question.

From Colonial Mindset to Transnational Community

Changing attitudes within Canada are related to the changing ethnic makeup of Canadian society, particularly increased immigration from non-traditional source areas such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Looking at public opinion data from the 1940s and 1960s, it is clear that we have changed considerably in the way we view cultural diversity. The tables below chronicle the collective xenophobia of the post-war years.

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Figure and Tables.doc

Figure 1

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Figure 2

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Table 1

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Table 2

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In Table 1 we see how public opinion was firmly on the side of keeping certain ethnic and religious groups out of Canada in 1961. When asked what "nationalities" respondents would like to exclude, 60% mentioned Japanese with almost half referring to Jews. One third of respondents cited Germans, Russians, and "Negros" as undesirables while a quarter of those asked wanted to keep out Italians and Chinese.

By 1961, as Table 2 illustrates, the situation had not really improved. When asked if restrictions on non-white immigration ought to continue, more than half of the respondents answered in the affirmative with only a third arguing for fewer restrictions.

Public opinion on minority ethnic groups changed in the early 1970s when Canadians from "non-charter" groups pressured the Royal Commission on bilingualism and bi-culturalism (Parkin & Turcotte, 2004). Evidence of this sea-change was the introduction of the Federal Government's multiculturalism policy in 1971.[2]

By the early 1990s, the situation in Canada vis-à-vis opinions on cultural diversity had clearly shifted considerably. In keeping with data collected in 2003 by Ipsos-Reid for CRIC in collaboration with *The Globe and Mail* and Queen's University Canadian Opinion Research Archive, nearly half of Canadians think a variety of cultures is good for society.[3] Clearly, this attitude has been accentuated over the past decade rather than negatively affected by disasters such as the attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001.

Despite having become a more open society, Canadians still believe there are hurdles that need to be overcome with respect to full equality for all, regardless of ethnic origin or place of birth. Most Canadians believe that racism persists in this country but the CRIC research shows, however, that Canadians think the situation is improving.[4]

Canada-US Differences vis-à-vis Global Citizenship

A CRIC survey on international affairs conducted in April 2003 illustrates significant differences between Canadians and Americans with respect to the international roles played by our two countries.

Results showed, for example, that 67% of Canadians surveyed versus 46% of Americans thought that Iraq could be disarmed through peaceful means. Figures 4 and 5 are even more telling.

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Figure 3

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Figure 4

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Figure 5

When asked whether the United Nations contributes a great deal to world peace, 80% of Canadians questioned in March 2003 agreed whereas only 58% of Americans polled at the same time agreed.

Similarly, Figure 5 shows that nearly twice as many Canadians (58%) than Americans (30%) agree that their respective countries ought to be accepting more immigrants from parts of the world experiencing major conflicts. This shows a commitment to internationalism in Canada which is not as mainstream in the USA.

Our research centre has evidence that a large percentage of Canadians feel attached to both their country and the global community. In March of 2001 CRIC conducted a poll to support a publication on trade in which globalization and respondents were asked what various degrees of attachment they felt to their region, province, country, and so on.[5]

Sixty-two percent of respondents reported feeling very attached to Canada with 25% providing "somewhat attached" as a response. When asked about their degree of attachment to the global community, 19% responded "very attached" with 45% answering "somewhat attached." By grouping both categories together, we see that 87% of respondents see themselves as attached to Canada with 64% reporting attachment to the global community. Clearly, identifying both with Canada and the world is on the rise and attachment to the two categories is certainly not mutually exclusive.

The information presented here illustrates that Canadians are clearly starting to see themselves as "Citizens of the world" with a distinct set of international responsibilities. This phenomenon is related to the growing diversity within Canadian society—bringing us further from the fiction of "founding nations" and accompanying colonial mindset. Because of our history of *métissage* and changes since the late 1960s, Canadians do not have a "meta-narrative" of nationalism and, instead, practice a more gentle, "postmodern" patriotism as Cole Harris has argued (Harris, 2001).

Conclusion: Canadians, Citizens of the World

This paper has made a number of points that need to be reiterated. First, Canadian public opinion has not significantly been altered by 9-11, the trends we witness have characterized the Canadian public for the past 10 years. Far from becoming

"America Lite," Canadians have increasingly come to identify as "Citizens of the World" following dramatic changes in the late 1960s and early 70s that have taken place both domestically and internationally. Examples include the assertion of non-Anglo Canadian identities—particularly those of Francophones, Aboriginals, and immigrants from non-traditional source countries (i.e. Asia, Africa, and Latin America/ the Carribean). The travel and the development of information and communication technologies have also fostered this global consciousness as has the internationalisation of production and the rise of global cities.

A "transcultural" society characterized by "variegated borders, identities and narratives of belonging" has existed for some time in Canada and globally. What we have in this country is the rise of a "New Canada" which might be characterized as a society comprised of "citizens of the world with Canadian passports" who are no less committed to making Canada—a highly liveable country—an even better place to live.

Notes

1 For example, in the fur-trading 19th century, it was fairly typical for fur traders to have lived, been educated and worked on several continents. Intermarriage at this time was quite common as well. The example of Sir James Douglas—born of a free coloured mother and a Scottish father—who married the daughter of an Irish fur trading father and Cree mother, is a fine example. Douglas was born in British Guiana, and educated in Scotland before traversing what was to become Canada to work in the fur trade (Adams 2001).

2 See *Multiculturalism in Canada* published on-line by Mount Alison University at www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/english/about/multi.

3 The Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC), in partnership with *The Globe and Mail*, conducted an in-depth national public opinion survey focusing on the way Canada is changing. The survey was designed by CRIC, The Globe and Mail, and the Canadian Opinion Research Archive at Queen's University. The survey was carried out between April 21 and May 4, 2003 by Ipsos-Reid. The "New Canada" series of articles, informed in part by the survey, were published in *The Globe and Mail* in June, 2003. The articles can be accessed online at www.cric.ca. The full survey data is available online on the website of the Canadian Opinion Research Archive: www.queensu.ca/cora.

4 See the publications and background research for CRIC's collaboration with the *The Globe and Mail* on the "New Canada" available at www.cric.ca/en_re/analys/index.html as well as www.cric.ca/en_re/analys/surveys_archive.html#racism.

5 See *Trade, Globalization and Canadian Values,* CRIC Paper No. 1, April, 2001. Available at www.cric.ca/pdf/cahiers/cricpapers_april2001.pdf.

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