

# Multiculturalism and the Power of Words

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# Outline

- Multiculturalism policy intent and evolution
- Words matter
  - Citizens, taxpayers, consumers
  - Immigrants, not migrants
  - Plasticity of multiculturalism and pluralism
  - Hyphenated Canadians
  - Visible minorities vs Racialized communities
  - Radicalization and extremism
- Examples
- Respect and Awareness



# Bi&Bi Report 1969

Integration, in the broad sense, does not imply the loss of an individual's identity and original characteristics or of his original language and culture. Man is a thinking and sensitive being ; severing him from his roots could destroy an aspect of his personality and deprive society of some of the values he can bring to it. *Integration is not synonymous with assimilation.* Assimilation implies almost total absorption into another linguistic and cultural group. An assimilated individual gives up his cultural identity, and may even go as far as to change his name. Both integration and assimilation occur in Canada, and the individual must be free to choose whichever process suits him, but it seems to us that those of other than French or British origin clearly prefer integration.



# Multiculturalism Policy 1971

- To assist cultural groups to *retain and foster their identity*
- To assist cultural groups to *overcome barriers to their full participation* in Canadian society
- To *promote creative exchanges* among all Canadian cultural groups
- To assist immigrants in acquiring at least *one of the official languages*



# *Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)*

- Fundamental freedoms
  - (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
  - (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
  - (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
  - (d) freedom of association.
- Equality:
  - **15.** (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.
- Multiculturalism
  - 27. This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.



# *Multiculturalism Act 1988*

- Recognize and promote diversity
- Fundamental characteristic of Canada
- *Full and equitable participation*
- Recognize contribution to Canada
- *Equal treatment and protection*
- Respectful and inclusive institutions
- Promote interaction
- *Foster recognition and appreciation*
- Preserve and enhance other languages in harmony with official languages
- Responsive federal institutions



# Multiculturalism Policy Evolution

	<b>Ethnicity Multi (1970s)</b>	<b>Equity Multi (1980s)</b>	<b>Civic Multi (1990s)</b>	<b>Integrative Multi (2000s)</b>	<b>Social Cohesion</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Celebrating differences	Managing diversity	Constructive engagement	Inclusive citizenship	Social cohesion
<b>Reference Point</b>	Culture	Structure	Society building	Canadian identity	Canadian values
<b>Mandate</b>	Ethnicity	Race relations	Citizenship	Integration	Cohesion
<b>Magnitude</b>	Individual adjustment	Accommodation	Participation	Rights and responsibilities	Responsibilities and rights
<b>Problem Source</b>	Prejudice	Systemic discrimination	Exclusion	Unequal access, “clash” of cultures	Faith and culture clashes
<b>Solution</b>	Cultural sensitivity	Employment equity	Inclusiveness	Dialogue/ mutual understanding	Shared values
<b>Key Metaphor</b>	“Mosaic”	“Level playing field”	“Belonging”	“Harmony/jazz”	“Conforming”



# Words Matter

- Narrow sense: Communicate facts and information
- Political sense: Engage and convince audience (but which one?)
  - Common (inclusive) vs targeted (exclusive) language
  - Risk of wedge or 'dog whistle' language
- Choice and intent



# Citizens, taxpayers, consumers

- Multiculturalism more about citizens and citizenship, not taxpayers or consumers
- While there are taxpayer and consumer views (targeted products and services), it is how well society fosters recognition and participation in society
- What's in it for us, not what's in it for me



# Immigrants, not migrants,

- Immigrants come to settle permanently, connect, participate and become citizens
  - Refugees subset that need to build a new life
- Multiculturalism facilitates integration process
- Migrants (and Temporary Foreign Workers) have instrumental view, pursuing economic and other opportunities
  - Migrants distinct from refugees (economic motives)



# Plasticity of multiculturalism and pluralism

- Multiculturalism: Recognition of diversity and focus on equal participation
  - Interculturalism: Quebec variant
- Pluralism: Mutual respect and civic inclusion. Peace, prosperity and security accessible to all
- Both take deep forms (e.g., separate education, health, political institutions) and shallow forms (e.g., common public education)
- ‘Shallow’ multiculturalism is Canadian ‘brand’



# Hyphenated Canadians

- Mixed ethnic origins and identities
- Hyphenation part of Canadian reality
- Order matters
  - Ukrainian Canadian vs Canadian Ukrainian? Or Chinese Canadian vs Canadian Chinese?
  - Jewish Canadian vs Canadian Jew? Or Muslim Canadian vs Canadian Muslim?



# Visible minorities vs Racialized communities

- Visible minorities official definition of non-white, non-aboriginal
  - Embedded in employment equity, human rights and other legislation and reporting
  - Minority becoming majority in largest cities
- Racialized communities captures race as social concept
  - But leaves out social concept of being white
- Distraction from substantive issues or provides focus?



# Radicalization and extremism

- Different terms:
  - Neutral: Religiously-inspired extremism
  - Neutral but Specific: Al-Qaeda- and ISIS-inspired extremism
  - Specific: Islamic-inspired extremism
  - Labelling: Islamic terrorism
- Obama: *"They no more represent Islam than any madman who kills in the name of Christianity or Judaism or Buddhism or Hinduism," he said. "No religion is responsible for terrorism. People are responsible for violence and terrorism." (Feb 2015)*
- Harper: *"The fact of the matter is this, ladies and gentleman: The international jihadist movement has declared war. They have declared war on anybody who does not think and act exactly as they wish they would think and act. (Jan 2015)*
- What works best to engage communities? What alienates?



# Niqab - March 2015

- **Harper:** *"We do not allow people to cover their faces during citizenship ceremonies. Why would Canadians, contrary to our own values, embrace a practice at that time that is not transparent, that is not open and frankly is rooted in a culture that is anti-women. That is unacceptable to Canadians, unacceptable to Canadian women."*
- **Mulcair:** *"Mr. Harper specifically singles out mosques [in the debate]. That leads to Islamophobia and that's irresponsible. When he talks about a culture of 1.8 billion human beings as being anti-woman... that's very divisive and it's irresponsible, and it's undignified from a Canadian prime minister."*
- **Trudeau:** *You can dislike the niqab. You can hold it up it is a symbol of oppression. You can try to convince your fellow citizens that it is a choice they ought not to make. This is a free country. Those are your rights. But those who would use the state's power to restrict women's religious freedom and freedom of expression indulge the very same repressive impulse that they profess to condemn.*



# Examples

- 'Bogus' refugees vs ilegal (or irregular) refugees
- 'Barbaric' cultural practices vs practices contrary to law and Canadian values
- 'Old stock Canadians' vs long established groups
- 'Citizens of convenience' vs expatriates
- General reference to Israel vs specific practices of the Israeli government
- General reference to Islam or Muslims vs Islamic-inspired extremists
- Violent Blacks vs violence within Black communities
- White privilege vs examples of white advantage



# Respect and Awareness

- Be mindful and aware of one's own biases
- Avoid generalizations and stereotypes
- Focus on specific behaviours and practices, not singling out a general group
- Use as neutral language as possible
- Be attentive to impact of your language and adjust accordingly



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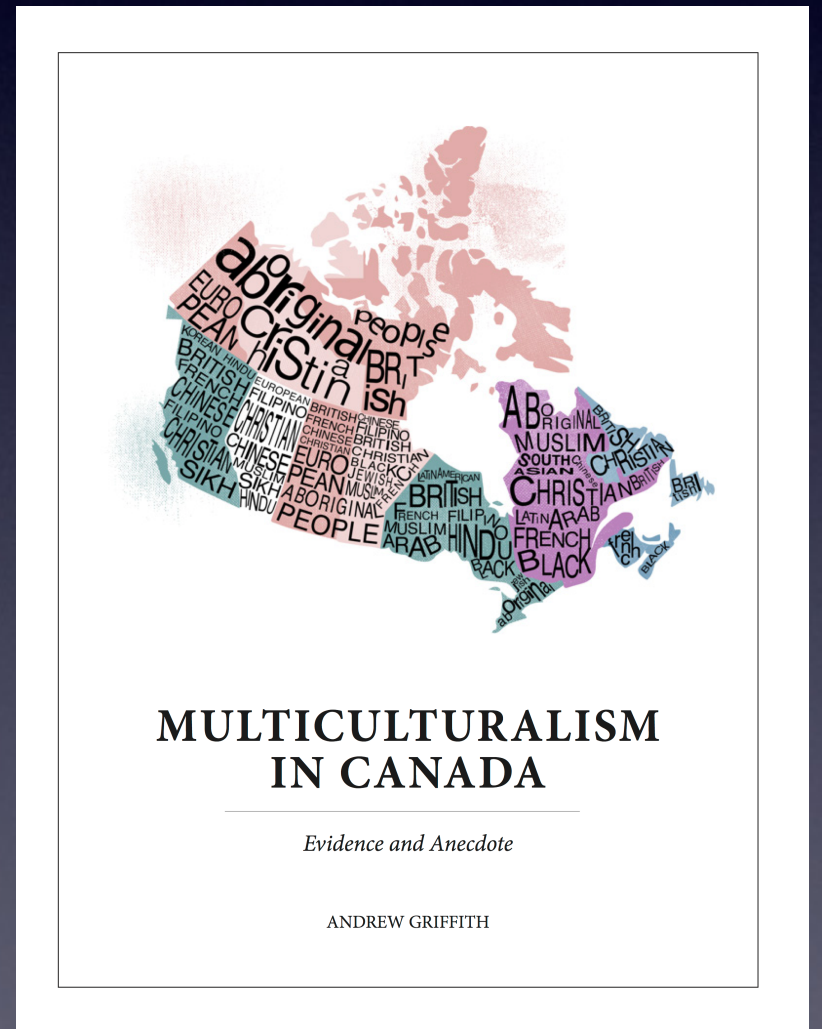
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# Webinar Purpose

- How do language and lexicon in policy, in the media, and in daily interactions influence our experiences, identities, attitudes, and relationships? How can discourse create and perpetuate unbalanced power relations, marginalizing certain groups and individuals? How can we use language to promote positive race relations in a harmonious Canada?