Canada’s World Regional Dialogue

Diversity Matters

Canada is home to globally connected people in a world that needs cultural translators.
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Morris J. Wosk
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_The views expressed in this publication are provided here to stimulate discussion and learning. They do not reflect the views of Canada’s World staff, reviewers, funders, collaborators, or the SFU Centre for Dialogue._

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INTRODUCTION

Canadians often have conversations like the one you are about to begin, where we discuss our identity and what it means to be a Canadian. Perhaps we continually ask this question because we are continually evolving as a country. Perhaps it is because of the feeling that the world is closer to home than ever before.

Originally inhabited by Aboriginal peoples, the colonies which were to become Canada, experienced different waves of immigration. This began with French and then British colonialization in the 17th century, and continued through the 18th-19th centuries with the immigration of United Empire Loyalists fleeing the newly created United States. This was followed by successive waves of immigration from Europe in the late 19th century and into mid 20th century, followed by other waves of immigrants from many different countries in the last six decades.

Diversity has been important in shaping our country. For instance, the Québec Act of 1774 recognized the legitimacy of the French language, Roman Catholic faith, and French civil law in Québec, though our Aboriginal peoples did not enjoy the same rights. Immigrants helped to “settle” the West and build the trans-Canada railway, but were also often subject to prejudicial treatment.

In 1971, the Trudeau government made Canada the first country in the world to enact an official Multiculturalism Policy, which was affirmed by former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s Multiculturalism Act of 1988. Various debates on our constitutional evolution have also centred on accommodating diversity in the federation, including the founding of Canada itself, the Charlottetown Accord and Meech Lake proposals, and ongoing debates on Aboriginal self-government.

Indeed, Canadian diversity continues to play a significant role as our world has become more global. Aboriginal peoples now assert their rights and independence at international forums; Québec has its own seat at UNESCO and other international bodies and about 2.7 million Canadians - nearly 10% of our population - live overseas. Canada’s diversity has directly and indirectly shaped some of our international policies. This includes: promoting democracy abroad; sharing expertise in federalism in developing and former Soviet bloc countries; advising on the rule of law and human rights; and Canada’s role in peacebuilding. Other manifestations include consultations with Diaspora groups (e.g. Haitian-
Canadians and Muslims) on post-conflict reconstruction and security.\textsuperscript{5}

Diversity issues will continue to play a significant role in the years ahead. The 2006 census reports that 20\% of all Canadians are foreign-born - the highest proportion in 75 years. Of all developed countries, only Australia has a higher proportion foreign-born. Sometime in the 2020-2046 period, immigration is projected to account for all of Canada’s population growth.\textsuperscript{6} By Canada’s 150\textsuperscript{th} birthday in 2017, roughly one in five (or between 19-23\%) Canadians will be a member of a visible minority, and over half the population of Toronto (and close to half the population of Vancouver) will belong to a visible minority group.\textsuperscript{7} By 2017, roughly 4.1\% of the Canadian population will be Aboriginal (up from 3.3\% in 2006) and from 2001-2017, there will be an increase of 41.9\% of young Aboriginal adults into the Canadian labour market.\textsuperscript{8}

\textit{All of us} – newcomers, ancestors of those who came before and the ancestors of our original peoples – are part of the rich diversity of Canada. But our diversity also extends well beyond race or ethnicity, religion, culture, historical roots or newcomer status. Indeed, our diversity is reflected in our geography (spanning three oceans, the Arctic, prairies, mountains, urban, rural and remote landscapes), two official and many other languages, the internal pluralism within our many communities, cultures, politics, gender, life styles (urban and rural), religious affiliations and beliefs, sexual orientation, economic status, abilities, interests and connections to the rest of world.

What does this all mean for our role in the world, if anything at all? This discussion guide sets the stage for a conversation that focuses on how Canadian diversity shapes and could shape our role and place in the world. It provides background and historical information to help inform your discussions. It also supplies some approaches for future directions to spark your thinking about what actions need to be taken to leverage our increasingly multicultural and diverse reality.
BACKGROUND

Over the last sixty years, the world has witnessed the end of the Second World War and the Cold War (1989), leading to what many hoped would be a new world order of hope, global reconciliation and freedom. But the years since 1989 soon gave way to events such as the 1995 Rwandan genocide and terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 which soon resuscitated new anxieties about how people could continue to live together.

As a prosperous country composed of peoples with diverse backgrounds and histories, Canada inspires hope that unity can be found in diversity. Quite uniquely amongst the developed world, the majority of Canadians see our multiculturalism as a fundamental symbol of Canada, with 82% agreeing that multiculturalism is a source of pride for Canadians and 69% contending that multiculturalism helps national identity and citizenship and the identification of common values. Canada’s rankings in the United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) Human Development Report also show that unity and diversity go hand in hand with human development and material progress. The Economist has concluded that Canada is “cool,” partly as a result of its tolerance of diversity.

What has made us so special? The table hereafter summarizes some key milestones and events related to the history of Canada’s diversity, immigration and multiculturalism. This will help put the current situation, and perhaps future directions, into perspective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>First Peoples</strong></th>
<th>• Aboriginal peoples inhabited North America for thousands of years (between 15,000 and 40,000 years)(^4). They numbered hundreds of groups with 50 distinct languages, cultures, traditions, political systems and ways of life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **First Wave of Immigration** | • French and British colonization led to the first large European communities in North America.  
• With the development of the fur trade in the 18th century, Aboriginal communities’ interactions with the colonies increased. A new community, the Métis, consisting of people with British Isles or French ancestry and those of Aboriginal ancestry, was created.  
• During the 17th and 18th centuries thousands of French and British Isles migrants arrived, hoping to escape poverty and religious intolerance. This was the first major wave of immigration to pre-Confederation. |
| **French and Indian Wars** | • The Aboriginal peoples were drawn into larger conflicts (over control of territory) between French and British colonial powers in the 17th and 18th centuries. As their contact with Europeans grew, so too did disease, death, displacement and changes in their ways of life and culture.  
• Britain’s victory over the French in Québec in 1759 meant that the British faced a French population of some 60,000 colonists – far more numerous than the English-speaking population. British authorities agreed to pragmatic arrangements with the Catholic Church and French leaders to continue civil law and permit French education in what was present day Québec.  
• It is important to acknowledge that some 10,000 Acadians (three-quarters of the population then settled in Acadia - present day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and southeast Québec) were not so lucky – from 1755 to 1763 were expelled, some going to Louisiana and surrounding areas. \(^{15}\) This has become known as le Grand Dérangement. \(^{16}\) Many eventually made their way home after years of exile – the descendents of Acadians now make up more than a third of the population of New Brunswick. |
| **SECOND WAVE OF IMMIGRATION** | • In the period following the conquest of Québec, greater immigration from the British Isles was encouraged to increase the English speaking population.  
• Following the successful American war of Independence (1776), thousands of peoples loyal to the British crown (known as “United Empire Loyalists,” some of whom were of African ancestry) came to Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI. |
| **INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS FOR FRENCH CANADA** | • The 1830s sees political unrest and rebellion in both Upper and Lower Canada leading in part to the amalgamation of the two colonies in 1840.  
• A French-English compromise was orchestrated by the first joint-leaders of the new Province of Canada, Robert Baldwin of Canada West and Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine of Canada East. These leaders and their supporters were successful in achieving responsible government and in restoring French as an official language.  
• Through the British North America Act of 1867, a confederation of four diverse provinces (Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia) was achieved; Québec received full control over education and a continuation of civil law.  
• By 1897 Canada had its first Prime Minister- Sir Wilfred Laurier from Québec.  
• When the other provinces joined Confederation, provisions for French language and education rights were included to varying degrees, though not systematically or consistently applied or enforced. |
| **THIRD AND FOURTH WAVES OF IMMIGRATION** | • In the years from Confederation up to mid 20th century, Canada experienced two waves of European and non-European settlers:  
  ▪ The first wave included those recruited to farms, factories, mines and fisheries all across Canada’s expanding territory including different groups such as Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, and Asians (the First Sikh Gurdwara arrived in BC in 1908).  
  ▪ The second wave included immigrants flocking to Canada to escape war torn Europe (WWI and WWII). |
| **FIFTH WAVE OF IMMIGRATION** | • Following the Immigration Act of 1967, which reduced restrictions, more newcomers arrived from emerging economies and developing countries, especially from China, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean.  
• Multiculturalism Policy in 1971; Multiculturalism Act in 1988. |
French Canada

The historic role of French Canada in Canada’s creation, and the complex relationship between Anglophones and Francophones in Canada, merits further discussion. The passage of Official Languages Act that followed the groundbreaking so called “B&B Commission” (Bilingualism and Biculturalism) led to greater recognition of and status for Francophones in Canada. The B&B Commission was, in part, a reaction to discrimination against Francophones (e.g. in hiring practices in public and private sectors, access to services in French) and the Quiet Revolution in Québec that sought to re-invent Québec as a modern, secular and confident nation. Today, Québec is the only officially French-speaking province and New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province, though some provinces do offer some public services in French (e.g. Ontario, Manitoba).

The rise of the Québec sovereignty movement (including the rise and fall of the Fédération de Libération du Québec-FLQ-and the assassination of Quebec Minister Pierre Laporte in 1970 which triggered the passage of the War Measures Act), the election of pro-separatist governments leading to two national referenda on Quebec separation (1980 and 1995), the repatriation of the Canadian constitution without Quebec’s endorsement and the persistence of nationalist sentiments in Québec have continued to raise questions about Québec’s place in the Canadian federation. Various efforts aimed at formal recognition of Québec as a distinct society, have failed, including the 1990 Meech Lake Agreement, and the 1992 Charlottetown Accord.

Nonetheless, Québec enjoys a number of powers not available to the other provinces, including responsibility for its own immigration and settlement programs. Québec takes in fewer immigrants than the Canadian average. Globally, Québec works to promote French language and Québécois culture, and actively supports the protection of the cultural diversity of all nations (e.g. through the recent treaty on culture developed through UNESCO).

The ongoing concentration of Francophones in Québec (though representing a declining percentage of the total Canadian population), coupled with a decline in Francophones speaking French as their mother tongue elsewhere in Canada (though they do number about 1 million) and an increasingly diverse immigrant population in Québec, raise many questions about cultural identity and preservation for the Quebecois. In 2007 in response to a number of ethnocultural and religious tensions in Québec, the provincial government appointed two eminent scholars, Charles Taylor and Gerard Bouchard, to head a commission on the “accommodation practices related to cultural differences’ and to make recommendations to “ensure that accommodation practices conform to the values of Québec society.
as a pluralistic, democratic, egalitarian society.” This commission (to report by March 31, 2008) has raised important questions about diversity, identity and culture – its report is expected to attract considerable attention in Québec, Canada and parts of the world.

TENSIONS, EXCLUSION AND RACISM

Canada, not surprisingly, has not been free of racism and policies that had the effect of excluding certain racial, ethnic, and religious groups. The following highlights a sampling of these negative policies, practices and events.

- Some of Canada’s policies towards Aboriginal people have been particularly offensive. They have included the forceful removal of children from their homes to attend residential schools (which were often the sites of violence, physical neglect and abuse), the outlawing of cultural practices like the Potlatch and the suppression of native languages; the disenfranchise of Aboriginal people until 1960 when they were granted full voting rights; the forced resettlement of First Nations communities from traditional lands; and slowness in resolving outstanding treaty and land claims that date back to the 19th century.

- Canada actively recruited Chinese labourers (e.g. mining, construction of the railways) and responded to an anti-immigration backlash with the levying of a head tax on Chinese immigrants followed by a ban on Chinese immigrants (and other discriminatory practices like barred entry to professional schools).

- The internment (and loss of property and businesses) of Canadians of Japanese descent during World War II. Less known is the similar internment of Ukrainian, German and Italian Canadians during and after World War I.

- Forced displacement of African-Canadians from “Africville” in Halifax, Nova Scotia in the 1960s and continued systemic discrimination against black Canadians in employment, education, housing, etc.

- Religious and cultural discrimination against non-Christian groups (e.g. membership rules banning Jews and other non-Christian, non-white members). In 1939, Canada accepted the fewest number of Jewish refugees of any of the western countries.
WHO ARE CANADIANS TODAY AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

As noted earlier, the 2006 census reports that 20% of all Canadians are foreign-born, the highest proportion in 75 years. Of the developed countries, only Australia has a higher proportion foreign-born, and while its percentage has stabilized, ours has grown by about 13% since 2001. Canada has the highest per capita immigration rate in the world, welcoming 262,239 immigrants in 2005, or 0.8% of our population.

These rates compare to an earlier period in our history. In 1931, the percentage of foreign-born Canadians was 22.2%. In 1913, immigration levels peaked at more than 400,000. Over the past two decades, the annual level of immigration has fluctuated within a small range. According to Statistics Canada the “number of foreign born in Canada has nearly tripled during the past 75 years and their share is inching towards the levels in 1911 to 1931” 19.

Where newcomers come from, as well as their ethnic backgrounds, has changed greatly since World War II. Canada now attracts and accepts fewer immigrants from “traditional” sources, such as Europe and the United States, and more from emerging and developing countries. The immigrants that Canada attracts are also generally very highly skilled and educated. Two major reasons for this shift are:

• In 1952, the Immigration Act, which excluded applications, based upon race, occupation, and nationality was changed to a points system with three categories of immigrants: family class, economic and refugee. In 1967, it was revised again to remove racial and nationality-based discrimination from the application process.

• Since the 1960’s, Europe has enjoyed an improved standard of living making immigration to Canada less appealing to Europeans.

The results of these changes are clear. There are 35 self-identified ethnic groups with populations of more than 100,000 in Canada, and 10 ethnic groups with populations of over a million.
### Top 10 Countries of Birth of Recent Immigrants, 1981 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>1981 Census</th>
<th>2006 Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>People's Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>People's Republic of China</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Aboriginal Identity Population by Age Groups, Median Age and Sex, 2006 Counts, for Canada, Provinces and Territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Aboriginal Identity Population</th>
<th>North American Indian</th>
<th>Métis</th>
<th>Inuit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>31,241,030</td>
<td>1,172,785</td>
<td>698,025</td>
<td>389,780</td>
<td>50,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>500,610</td>
<td>23,455</td>
<td>7,705</td>
<td>6,470</td>
<td>4,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>134,205</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>903,090</td>
<td>24,175</td>
<td>15,240</td>
<td>7,680</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>719,650</td>
<td>17,650</td>
<td>12,385</td>
<td>4,270</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>7,435,905</td>
<td>108,425</td>
<td>65,085</td>
<td>27,980</td>
<td>10,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>12,028,895</td>
<td>242,495</td>
<td>158,395</td>
<td>73,605</td>
<td>2,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>1,133,515</td>
<td>175,395</td>
<td>100,640</td>
<td>71,805</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>953,850</td>
<td>141,890</td>
<td>91,400</td>
<td>48,120</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>3,256,355</td>
<td>188,365</td>
<td>97,275</td>
<td>85,495</td>
<td>1,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>4,674,385</td>
<td>196,075</td>
<td>129,580</td>
<td>59,445</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon Territory</td>
<td>30,190</td>
<td>7,580</td>
<td>6,280</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td>41,060</td>
<td>20,635</td>
<td>12,640</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td>4,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>29,325</td>
<td>24,915</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>24,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In recognition of the changing ethnic diversity of Canada, and perhaps to ensure that the ongoing accommodations between Anglophones and Francophones did not come at the cost of excluding other immigrants, the federal government implemented a Multiculturalism Policy in 1971. This policy was entrenched in the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms (section 27 states that the Charter must be “interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians”). The Multiculturalism Policy was further formalized in 1988 with the passage of the Multiculturalism Act. In the past 27 years, in spite of fluctuating funding levels, the federal Multicultural Program has supported initiatives and groups focussed on cultural diversity, human rights, anti-racism and immigrant settlement programs.

The federal Multicultural Policy has its parallels in many provincial governments and at the municipal level. These multicultural policies and programs have their staunch supporters and their critics. The former believe that multiculturalism is very successful in promoting a pluralistic, richly diverse and accommodating country, which has served to integrate newcomers into Canadian society while protecting their cultural identities. Others worry that multiculturalism is actually creating more distance among Canadians, turning Canada into an ethnic archipelago.”

Although the terms diversity and multiculturalism are often used interchangeably, they are not identical. Even the term “multiculturalism” is understood to mean different things by different people. Generally, most people understand multiculturalism to be policies designed to promote or accommodate ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious diversity. Diversity, on the other hand, is not a policy but rather a fact of life in Canada. Our diversity, as noted earlier, includes our geography, our official and other languages, cultures, gender, politics, life styles, religious affiliations and beliefs, sexual orientation, economic status, abilities, interests and connections to the rest of the world.
Forces Driving our Connectivity

Three major forces have increased our connections to a globalized world: communications technology; mobility and immigration; and cultural partnerships – all working to make the world a smaller place. Living in a smaller and more connected world presents Canada with new challenges and opportunities not dreamed of half a century ago. These phenomena below have changed how Canadians relate to each other and how we relate to the rest of the world.

1. Communications Technology is Better, Faster and More Affordable

The cost of communications and overseas travel has become much more affordable (and therefore accessible) in the past decade. Canadians now have a range of quick and convenient ways to contact friends and family globally (MSN, Skype, Facebook, email, video calling to text messages etc.) and consume diverse electronic and print media (inside and outside Canada, including ethnic-based media). This allows us to stay connected to the world, increase international trade and commerce, get news from multiple (including non-Canadian) sources and become more involved in global issues.

If communication technology helps us get more connected to the world, is it helping us stay connected to each other? Social networking sites are certainly helping those that subscribe to them stay connected. But how do we stay connected as citizens when our choices for news and information are so diverse? How do we talk together or analyse issues that are important to Canada’s place in the world, when everyone is tuned into their own favourite source for information? If fewer and fewer Canadians (especially younger Canadians and newcomers) are tuning into news away from common Canadian sources, like our public broadcaster, (CBC or Radio Canada) – what might this mean for our knowledge and connections to each other?

2. Rise in Globally Mobile Canadians (Transnationalism)

Two-thirds of Canadians have traveled outside of North America. Canadians of all backgrounds have family, work, education, and cultural attachments and connections to another country (or other countries). The ability to learn, maintain or build on these connections is also sometimes referred to as transnationalism, a phenomenon facilitated by communications technology. Examples include: the
thousands of Canadian youth who work, study or travel abroad; growing immigrant and newcomer populations in contact with family members and business associates in their countries of origin; the 2.7 million Canadians who live elsewhere in the world; Diaspora populations who retain ties to their home country; and the rise of people in business, academia, and so forth who work across the globe and in an increasingly global marketplace of production, consumption and ideas. Transnationalism is a new way of thinking about citizenship and nationality. While population movements are not new, advances in technology and communications have intensified global connections.

As a country of globally connected people, we have openness in our country that may be unique in the world. This openness has created both opportunities and challenges for Canada. How do we manage these challenges and leverage these opportunities? For example, how does Canada manage a population who has multiple alliances, who are transnational in their businesses and their connections and who are pluralistic in their world view? How do we advance a vision for our nation that embraces and makes sense of these realities?

3. CROSS CULTURAL NATURE OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES

In recent years, Canada and other countries have shown heightened concern about ethnic, cultural, political and religious tensions and conflicts. Some worry about what they perceive to be a rise in religious fundamentalism and extremism in some quarters, which has given rise to pockets of increased intolerance against newcomers. Others dispute that extremism is on the rise, blaming instead the difficult and unequal circumstances many newcomers are living in, or sensationalist/uninformed media coverage. Regardless, the focus on cross-cultural tensions has put diversity and cultural understanding in the spotlight. This has arguably also been exacerbated in a post-9/11 climate where specific identities (e.g. “Islamic” identity) have been treated as the only definitive representation of people.21

As a country that is home to many different cultures, how do we ensure that we are not supporting global initiatives that exacerbate cultural tensions and advance ethnic stereotypes? How do we draw from our assets as globally connected citizens to bridge ethnic divides and enhance cross cultural understanding?
Canadian Diversity In a Globalizing World

Many outside Canada often portray our country as a successful experiment in accommodating diversity and promoting multiculturalism. Indeed, Canada derives a significant share of its distinctiveness, credibility, legitimacy and reputation in the world on the basis of its multiculturalism and diversity. Working with the Canadian government, for instance, the Aga Khan (Spiritual leader of the world’s Ismaili Muslims) is investing in a new “Global Centre for Pluralism” in Ottawa. The Aga Khan selected Canada as his destination of choice for the Centre in large measure because of Canada’s positive experience with diversity and pluralism.

Canada’s experience with multiculturalism and diversity is a significant source of pride for Canadians. Contending with this diversity, however, is not without its challenges. Racism persists in Canada: Aboriginal peoples continue to experience health, education, economic, and social development outcomes significantly lower than most Canadians; and too many immigrants are unable to have their foreign credentials recognized, face exclusion, and struggle to make ends meet. Some also think Canada is failing to instill a pan Canadian civic identity.

Others, however, think we are, on balance, doing quite well. Michael Adams, author of Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism, argues that: “when we look at the data on how Canadians old and new are living and working together - particularly in this country’s major cities - we have many reasons for optimism.” In contrast to Adam’s optimism, others worry that too many newcomers’ are becoming disaffected from Canada. They point to the clash of religious fundamentalism and western liberal norms and laws seen in Europe, and to a lesser extent in Canada, as evidence that greater public engagement is needed. Others worry that too many newcomers are not getting ahead.

Finally, some believe that increasing diversity poses challenges for Canada’s role in the world. They contend that some multicultural groups and Diasporas import their conflicts into Canada, have a propensity to be involved in conflicts in their homelands, or disproportionately influence the Canadian government’s international policies and positions.

All of these variables put our experiment under the watchful eye of the international community. Given trends in immigration, mixed-race marriages,
growing global communications and transnationalism, and the lack of shared ties of ethnicity, religion, language, and history, how does Canada find unity in this pluralism? What binds us together?

Some see the answer in a more conscious development and promotion of civic nationalism or civic identity that rests on a firm foundation: knowledge of Canada’s history, respect for the rule of law, a belief in democracy and the protection of human rights. Others don’t think there is a big problem and don’t see the necessity for promotion of pan-Canadian civic nationalism, preferring to emphasize the benefits of Canadian pluralism that combines different collective identities and individuality. While some argue that our diversity is an asset for international policy; others say this diversity has little to do (or should have nothing to do) with our roles abroad.

Ultimately, much of this discussion boils down to what Canada aspires to be at home and abroad. As Canada works to adapt to a world that is at home and abroad, a world that is shaped by international security concerns, new modes of international power, and where people have multiple identities what does our diversity mean for our role in the world, if anything at all?
In this next section, we would like to engage you in a conversation about the role of diversity in Canada’s international affairs. Can we leverage our assets as globally connected people in a manner that advances Canadian values and interests? Are there specific roles Canadians can play as cultural translators in a world that seems to be plagued by cultural misunderstandings? And if so, what are those roles?

Deciding how best to proceed is not about finding the correct technical solution – your decisions will reflect your beliefs, values and assumptions. In the final section of the discussion guide, three value-based approaches are presented as a starting point for your discussions.

These approaches are not exhaustive, definitive or mutually exclusive. They are meant to stimulate your thinking about the most important steps to take, the choices you are prepared to commit to and why. You are not being asked to pick one approach. Rather, we invite you to use these approaches as a starting point for considering other options or combinations of approaches.
APPRAOCH 1

HARNESS THE POWER OF DIVERSITY IN CANADA’S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Canada is composed of peoples from all around the world: this is a great asset that Canada can use to its advantage. This approach would focus on engaging our diverse population (especially globally connected Canadians i.e., Diaspora, immigrant and multi-lingual groups) to strengthen Canada’s economic and political relationships with other countries and to address our own priorities.

Key actions would include: engaging newcomer and diverse communities directly in building trade relations between Canada and their country of origin (for example the Canada-Pakistan Business Council facilitated Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty’s trade mission to Pakistan); harnessing the expertise and knowledge of globally connected communities in Canada to advise Canada’s international policy; recognizing newcomers’ foreign credentials and professional degrees (filling shortages in Canada while offering newcomers better prospects); and branding Canada as the world’s “think-tank”, with expertise in cultural and political mediation in part by tapping our vast cultural, political, geographic and linguistic knowledge to do so.27 We have already begun to see this as Canadian Inuit communities form alliances with other northern nations to address climate change through circumpolar initiatives.
**ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR**

- This approach uses the resources, skills and knowledge of newcomers whose talents are otherwise underutilized. This will increase productivity at home and status abroad.
- Not only will it help our productivity, it also promises to pay off in increased foreign investment to strengthen key sectors of the economy.
- This will position Canada as a key player in cross cultural mediation and peace building and expands our understanding of global issues by directly engaging Canadians from different backgrounds.

**ARGUMENTS AGAINST**

- How can Canadians of diverse background collaborate on clear and unified international policy when they still face barriers to participating in Canadian society (i.e. racism, sexism)?
- Would there be a risk of a “clash of loyalties” in involving globally connected Canadians in promoting Canadian interests and values abroad? What about those Canadians that are dual citizens? Would special interest groups lobby for policies based upon biases brought from their country of origin (e.g., one group of people with connections to one side of the conflict in a foreign civil war may work to bias Canada’s response in favour of their alliances).
- The approach creates a diffuse sense of Canadian identity. Canada needs to create a more cohesive identity as a nation. If our focus is on promoting diversity, we will lose our sense of self in our international affairs. We need a core identity that everyone can advance.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Given that many Canadians come from different backgrounds, how can we agree on Canadian international policy goals?
2. Could an approach, which focuses exclusively on language, cultural skills and ethnicity, actually serve to encourage stereotyping, discrimination, and racism in Canada?
3. Does this approach privilege some Canadians at the expense of others in our international policy?
4. How can Canada leverage the assets and skills of globally connected Canadians without becoming captive to the interests of a diaspora community?
Before we can aspire to a leadership role in resolving international ethnic and cultural tensions, we have to resolve our challenges around diversity at home. While Canada has a reputation for being multicultural we are far from perfect and still have a lot of room to grow. We will be a model to the world by demonstrating our ability to build a strong multicultural, diverse, just and harmonious society in Canada. This approach focuses on how Canada and Canadians can do this and how to create a truly inclusive society where diversity is promoted. By getting our own house in order, we would serve as a model to other countries.

Key actions would include: developing a new strategy with well funded programs to integrate newcomers to Canada (helping them adjust to life here – settlement supports, language training, accreditation programs, job training), and revitalizing citizenship education with clear articulation of rights and responsibilities. This approach would promote actions to create cohesive communities at the local level, which in turn will help to create a stronger Canadian identity. Much of this identity would be centred on the things that Canadians value most: a strong social safety net, good public education, health care and diversity.
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR

✓ We need to be clearer on who we are and what we “stand for” first before we can make a difference in the world
✓ There are serious existing challenges (racism, poverty, inequality, etc.) that require urgent attention first. Working on these at home is the best way to show the world that people with different backgrounds and histories can live peacefully as one; that is, we can serve the world best by “living by example.”
✓ The world is watching Canada as an experiment in multiculturalism. If we fail, that may lead other countries to believe that multiculturalism doesn’t work. In turn, this could lead to shifts in attitudes away from promoting diversity and increase cultural tensions.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

✖ This is much too narrow and inwardly focused. We cannot afford to ignore our international responsibilities and not use our considerable expertise and experience to help other parts of the world deal with the challenges and opportunities of diversity.
✖ We haven’t solved the challenges of Québec’s place in the federation or the circumstances of Aboriginal peoples, but this has not stopped us from “doing good” in the world. It shouldn’t be a zero-sum policy. We can and should work locally and internationally.
✖ This puts too much emphasis on multiculturalism. Multiculturalism may be one area of expertise that Canada has to share with the world but our diversity is broader than multiculturalism. The approach should focus more on leveraging our assets as a diverse nation.

QUESTIONS

1. How do we start to achieve consensus on who we are as a country? What are the things that truly bind us together? How can these shape our role in the world?
2. If globalization is happening within and outside our borders, then do we gain or lose something if we are too focused on what is going on at home? Would such an approach distance us from the world, or in fact bring us closer to knowing who we are?
Canada’s diversity, while important, should not be the main focus of our international policy. Canada’s international relations should be driven by economics and not related to domestic policies like multiculturalism. Giving diversity a central place may worsen or derail the achievement of our international goals.

Canada should continue to be guided by our historic priorities – respect for the rule of law, democratic values, human rights, global security and a strong economy. Diversity or multicultural might influence these but are secondary considerations – the economy and security come first. Multicultural policies at home and abroad need to respect these international policy priorities.

This approach suggests that Canada is doing a good job of managing diversity at home and our international relations abroad. While multiculturalism and foreign policy might overlap sometimes, that cannot happen at the sacrifice of our international relations or trade.

Canada would tighten its immigration policy to accommodate security and economic concerns (e.g. greater screening of immigrant and refugee applicants to ensure that members of known terrorist groups are not coming to Canada and emphasizing the economic class of immigrants). Canada would not try to promote itself as a cultural translator or global mediator and would rely on the market to attract and retain good quality immigrants.
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR

☑️ International policy is based largely on trade, security and economic interests. Matters of multiculturalism and/or diversity are not central in the decision-making processes of international policy.

☑️ If we open the door to the different interests of Canada’s diverse communities, we will never manage to develop coherent or unified international policy positions. It is best to leave international policy making to the professionals and “experts”.

☑️ Now is not the time to experiment with thinking about multiculturalism or diversity in international policy. With the threat of economic downturn and concerns about global security we should minimize the risks we take internationally and stick to the working system we have.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

☒ Whether we like it or not, Canada’s diversity has frequently shaped key positions and actions we take in the world. For example:
  ▪ Not participating militarily in the Iraq War was due in part to Québécois’ opposition to the war.
  ▪ Our involvement in the Commonwealth and la Francophonie, is the result of our English and French cultural and linguistic diversity.
  ▪ Our support for post-conflict reconstruction in Haiti was in part because of our connection to Haiti through Haitian communities in Canada.

☒ Incorporating diversity in international policy will not derail historic Canadian values: in fact it can help to strengthen them. Recognizing diversity is key to promoting human rights. Having language and cultural translators is an asset, improve our international trade relations, and helps us address global challenges like security. Canadians have demonstrated that they can embrace our diversity and live peacefully.

☒ Multiculturalism and diversity are fundamental features of our Canadian identity and an essential part of expressing who we are to the world. If we are a truly democratic and equal society, our international policy should reflect the voices of all Canadians.

QUESTIONS

1. Does this approach privilege some Canadians at the expense of others in our international policy?
2. Can Canadian diversity help to strengthen our interests (e.g. positive relations with the United States) or solve some of the world’s pressing global concerns (e.g. climate change)? Or, would a focus on diversity derail us from the achievement of our international objectives?
CONCLUSION

So now, it’s your turn. What do you think? As we have noted above, the information and the approaches outlined in this discussion guide offer a starting place for your conversation. They are intended to stimulate questions, help you consider options and develop your own views on how to best position Canada in leveraging our assets as a globally connected country.

This issue, like any foreign policy issue, is complex. The conditions within the international arena are always changing and it is often difficult to navigate the best course for Canada. We can decide not to do anything and get swept up in the current or we can set sail in a direction that we have defined. Imagine you are the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the weekend. What ideas, insights, questions and options would help you in making decisions about what actions Canada should take?
YOUR NOTES

USE THIS PAGE TO COME UP WITH YOUR IDEAS

2 Department of Canadian Heritage http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/reports/ann2005-2006/4_e.cfm. [Internet accessed September 2, 2007].


6 Statistics Canada http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/051215/d051215b.htm [Internet accessed September 1, 2007]


23 “Social Development,” *Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.* http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/gs/socie_e.html [Internet accessed September 21, 2007]

