

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND PLURALISM

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Résumé — Le Canada a une société cumulative. Celle-ci est plus cumulative qu'on s'en rend compte en général, et elle deviendra de plus en plus diverse durant les années à venir. La dynamique de la population est en train de changer les "données" de la communauté canadienne. Cette étude s'adresse aux répercussions de la dynamique de la population sur le pluralisme au Canada. Elle donnera un aperçu des dimensions et des directions de la diversité et de l'impact sur la vie publique. Elle comprend une identification des zones qui doivent faire l'objet des recherches afin de préparer le Canada pour le siècle prochain.

Abstract — Canada is a plural society. It is more plural than is generally realized, and will become increasingly diverse in the years to come. Demographic change is altering the basic "givens" of the Canadian community. This paper addresses the implications of demographic change for pluralism in Canada. It will outline the dimensions and directions of diversity and the impact on public life. It includes identification of areas which require research in order to prepare Canada for the next century.

Key Words — demographic change, immigration, ethnicity, pluralism

Retrospect and Prospect

Diversity in Canada has always existed as a fact, even if not perceived as a social reality. The current need to adjust to multiculturalism is leading, slowly, to recognition of Canada's traditional pluralism. Canada's original inhabitants, the Native People and Inuit, have not been in the forefront of national consciousness. Black, Chinese, Irish and Jewish settlers have been present nearly as long as the French and English presence. German settlers outnumbered the British among the original United Empire Loyalists in Upper Canada (Magee, 1984:25).¹

Settlement patterns have provided decidedly plural communities in various parts of the country, which may help explain regional sentiments — and antagonisms — over time. The concept of two 'founding races' or 'Charter groups', has always been empirically and historically partial.

Canada has been a country of minorities for almost half a century. The component of the population of British descent slipped below the 50 per cent mark in about 1940 and soon may drop below 40 per cent. The component of French ancestry fell below 30 per cent in the early 1960s and presently is nearing the 25 per cent mark. By 1981 the 'Other' in Canada — those of non-British and non-French descent — passed the French component and now comprises nearly a third of the population. Depending on trends in fertility and immigration, the 'Other' could be the largest single element of the population in the first half of the next century. Even now the demographic equation in ethnic terms reveals at least a 'quadrilateral' relationship (English, Other, French, and Indigenous).

Official recognition of Canada's pluralistic nature began in 1969, with the appointment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Although it was meant to resolve enduring problems of dualism, the Commission "discovered" pluralism, and Book IV dealt with the 'Other' in Canada, giving permanent recognition of the diverse nature of society (Canada, 1970). This process culminated in 1971 with the formulation that Canada is a multicultural country within a bilingual framework.

Ethnic pluralism in Canada received little recognition for two closely related reasons. The ethnic composition of the country changed slowly, and was buttressed by channeling of newcomers to frontier areas. Intense nativist pressures were applied to keep out Asians of all types (Ward, 1978) and white Europeans from the 'wrong' areas. Even refugees were turned away, including Jews fleeing the Nazi regime (Abella and Troper, 1982).

One lesson from this brief review is that demographic change is both cause and effect of policy choices. As a cause, policy based on the need for a larger

population leads to the choice of more immigration, and thus to greater diversity in the social composition of the community. Demographic change as the result of policy is demonstrated by immigration practices in the 1950s and 1960s. Canada abandoned traditional policies of choosing people by country or region, to one based on a point system, related primarily to labour-market requirements. Subsequently immigration numbers followed the ebb and flow of unemployment levels. Immigration content, however showed considerable variation from previous patterns. Source countries changed, and consequently, the nature of pluralism in Canada.

Canada is likely to become increasingly diverse. Demographic trends inexorably push in the direction of enhancing the pluralist nature of the country. Only startling changes in current trend lines could alter this fact. In important ways, there will be a new Canada in the twenty-first century.

The full implications of these facts are just beginning to be analyzed. Attention so far has been on the economic implications of a no-growth population and on potential shifts in the age and gender structure. Canada is faced with the possibility of a dwindling youth cohort paying the support costs of a burgeoning proportion of senior citizens, who in turn are disproportionately female.

Two sources of renewed growth are possible. Incentives to fertility, if successful, could affect the impending decline. However, foreseeable increased levels of increased fertility would only postpone the date at which decline would set in without substantial immigration as well (George and Perreault, 1985:44-46). Comparative data suggest that successful fertility incentives are difficult to achieve in highly industrialized states (Taylor, 1986; Romaniuc, 1984). To reduce female participation in the work force would require massive transfer payments, in a society which so far places no monetary value on work in the home.

To rely on immigration would not only call for a reversal of recent policy, it would lead with near certainty to an increase in pluralism in Canada. Traditional sources, especially Britain and France are steadily declining bases from which to replenish the Canadian population. Trends are decidedly in other directions. Voluntary and involuntary (refugee) immigrants are increasingly from non-traditional sources. The trend has intensified in recent years. By 1985, nearly 70 per cent of all immigrants originated from outside Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The United Kingdom has continued to decline as a source, from 6.4 per cent in 1983 to 5.3 per cent in 1985. Preliminary figures for the first half of 1986 indicate a further decline, to 4.9 per cent of total immigrants. France is no longer in the top ten source countries, declining from fourteenth in 1983

to sixteenth in 1984, 1985, and the first half of 1986. So far this year, three of the top five source countries are in Asia (Vietnam, Hong Kong, and India). Overall, before 1961, 80 per cent of arriving immigrants came from 10 countries. From 1971 to 1981, the top 10 countries accounted for only 57 per cent of newcomers to Canada (Canada, Employment and Immigration, 1986a:6, 1986c; Statistics Canada, 1984).

The importance of this profound demographic change has been recognized. The MacDonald Commission noted:

It seems likely that in future years, a substantial proportion of newcomers will be attracted from non-European nations, and these new Canadians will continue to expand the diversification of our cultural and ethnic mix. These important changes in Canada's racial and ethnic composition will continue to transform our economic and political life in the coming decades. They are also likely to generate a certain amount of social conflict, and future generations of Canadians will need to invent new policies and techniques for coping with the stresses of a vibrant and dynamic multicultural society. (Canada, Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, 1985:660)

Conceptual Frameworks and Issue Areas

Demographic Analysis and Pluralism

There are several ways to conceptualize the impact of demographic change on pluralism in Canada. One is by including ethnicity as a component of routine demographic analysis. Pluralism is about the totality of the Canadian population. The 'Other' in Canada is just part of the overall picture and is internally as diverse as any other population aggregate.

Age, sex and fertility manifestations of ethnicity. As a working hypothesis, it is likely that broad demographic trends affect most sectors of the existing population equally.² Urbanization, modernization and secularization seem to affect all groups more or less the same: fertility decline, increase in female work force participation, aging of the population and so forth. In the Canadian case, the dramatic demographic change in post-war Quebec reinforces this assumption.

Immigrants are another matter. Empirically, recent immigrants do vary in some ways from the non-immigrant population and from earlier generations of immigrants, although the differences are unlikely to matter except in

the short run (Statistics Canada, 1984). For the moment, immigrant numbers are too small, the differences too short lived (one generation) to make a major statistical change in Canada's overall demographic profile.

Who comes, in terms of social composition, may be more important in the short run than the purely demographic variables of the immigrant intake. Altering the ethnic balance of Canada's cities and regions may be as critical as the age or sex of the newcomers.

Immigration has declined steadily for five years. The shift in sources of immigration, to Asia, Latin America and Africa has more implications than the fact that more women than men have arrived or that the majority of immigrants (1971-81) were of working age. Changing the ethnic composition of inner cities, for example, will have significant localized effects on consumer demand, and on social system requirements. Certain cities, for example, will need to prepare now for future demand on senior-citizen facilities for Chinese-speaking widows. But as noted, without a dramatic increase in total net intake, newcomers to Canada will have a minor and temporary impact on standard demographic variables, other than ethnicity.

The effects of immigration on basic demography including ethnicity, seem largely unintended. Immigration policy in recent times seems directed primarily by non-demographic concerns. The demographic implications of the point system, or the balance between labour-market needs and family reunification as policy goals, have other imperatives. Research is needed to document the demographic results of policies with non-demographic motivations.

Labour-market participation and ethnicity. Canada as a place to work is affected by the social composition of the work force. As the population becomes increasingly diverse, the impact will vary accordingly. Differential participation in the labour force is a recognized fact, attributed to the "centrality of value systems" (Kalbach and McVey, 1979:28). Moreover, occupational clustering by origin group is known in Canada, as elsewhere (Clodman and Richmond, 1981:43). What does not seem to be available is current analysis regarding changes in social composition and correlation with changing economic structures. This is an area where further research is warranted based on the most recent census data.

Of course, a related concern is stratification and impediments of mobility based on ethnic considerations. Segmentation and exclusivity may be normal attributes of complex labour markets. Changing patterns of pluralism will be reflected in changing ethnic participation rates.

Considerable research is required to establish useful generalizations regarding the impact of ethnicity on the economic system. Empirical evidence is limited and paradoxical. Immigration drops when unemployment rises. However

both common sense and limited data suggest immigrants create wealth and thus employment (see Samuel, 1984; Samuel and Conyers, 1986; Samuel and Wolowski, 1985; Shaw, 1985; Canada, Manpower and Immigration, 1974).

Corporate elites remain disproportionately Charter-group in ethnic composition (Clement, 1975) yet non-Charter groups historically have done well in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1984:42-43). In a country where everyone is a member of a minority group, some groups have fared better than others in financial terms. Does that reflect discrimination, value systems, levels of education, place of residence (urban vs rural)? What are the implications of differential rates of achievement? Evidence suggests that ethnicity counts in the accumulation and distribution of wealth.

The Spatial Dimension. Who lives where in Canada — in terms of ethnicity — is not currently known, nor is it likely to be known without some guided research. It is likely that non-Charter populations are nearing, or are already an absolute majority in a surprisingly wide area of the country.

As a result of past policy choices, the demographic composition in the Prairie provinces has been very diverse for most of this century. Since in 1971 non-Charter groups composed 49.1 per cent of the population (Kralt, 1977:14), it is possible that non-Charter groups passed the 50 per cent mark before the mid 1970s. With fluctuations in inter-provincial migration, related to changing regional economic circumstances, the population mix is difficult to determine. However it is unlikely to have led to less diversity than in 1971.

What mobility and industrialization have done to traditional non-metropolitan settlement patterns is also not known. It is likely that change has led to greater, not lesser diversity, especially in Ontario and British Columbia. The entire North, of course, is likely to show distinct but highly plural patterns of non-Charter settlements.

The major cities in Canada are increasingly plural in composition now and are likely to become more cosmopolitan in population mix. Canada's largest city, Toronto, is at least 50 per cent non-Charter already, as is Vancouver. The second largest group in Vancouver is Asian. In Montreal, the 'Other' population outnumbers people of British descent by a margin of two to one (Kralt, 1986:9).

Cities are likely to become more plural, and more multiracial, at least in the foreseeable future. Decline in domestic fertility along with shifting patterns of immigration and emigration indicate a substantial change to the face of major cities. Immigrants choose urban over rural destinations. European immigration as a whole was only 22 per cent in 1985, showing a continuing trend to third-world sources. Emigration is a factor as well. For example, immigra-

tion from Italy, a significant source of immigration to large cities in recent times, reportedly is now exceeded by emigration to Italy (Marchi, 1986).

The Impact of Demographic Change

Another way to conceptualize the implications of pluralism is to indicate areas where demographic change will affect the community. The focus is on the interrelationship between demographic change and change in the public agenda. Central to the analysis is the concept that a system of patterned behaviour exists, and that change in one component — ethnicity in this case — affects a number of other components.

Changing patterns of ethnicity place differing demands on localities. Social services, consumer preferences, housing needs, are all affected by changing sources of demand. Schooling, language retention, and second language courses are areas where ethnicity makes a difference. If immigration increases sharply, immigrant service organizations will need to adjust to the type and number of newcomers.

Healthy local economies and labour markets will need to adjust to increasingly diverse sources of supply and demand. The key to adjustment is acceptance of diversity as normal and recognition that demographic trends will lead to greater diversity.

At its highest level, the political system is about values. The process of politics involves setting the core values of society. For the twenty-first century, a new definition of the nation is required. Canada today is more than a community of communities. It is a plurality among pluralisms. The Canada of tomorrow will be more than a country with no single majority. It will be a country where no group is a dominant plurality.

Pluralism at home affects Canada abroad. Ethnicity has always played a role in determining what Canada is interested in globally and which foreign matters became an element in domestic politics. With changes in the population comes change in the perception of national interest. Considerable research is required to specify how social diversity affects Canada's global concerns. As a starting point, it is essential to accept the existence and legitimacy of pluralism as a factor shaping Canada's role as a world actor.

A population with many motherlands abroad provides new problems and new opportunities for the motherland at home. It should be anticipated, as normal, that this generation will be as interested in their ancestral homelands as were previous generations. A more cosmopolitan Canada means a more cosmopolitan set of foreign interests. Terrorism, civil war and poverty are mat-

ters which concerned previous generations, and are shared by this generation as well. What has changed is the point of origin abroad.

Similarly a more cosmopolitan Canada has enhanced opportunities in the fields of trade and investment. In developing new arenas for Canadian economic activity, familiarity with language and culture is essential. Recent trends in immigration coincide with shifts in Canadian trade activities overseas. Asia and the Pacific are the most promising areas for future economic expansion. Therefore diversity in trade and investment may rest increasingly on the diversity of Canada's human resources.

Near-Term Issues and Factors Affecting Pluralism

Pluralism Today

Emerging public issues reflect efforts to achieve a new social equilibrium. They revolve around core issues of equality of opportunity. They reflect recognition of the need to strengthen the protection of individuals and groups; and to remove barriers to opportunity based on ascriptive criteria. Demographic change has provided an interrelated set of issues which affect ethnic diversity. If diversity increases over time, these issues will take on increasing importance.

Multiculturalism and Multiracialism. In the near future, it will be necessary to reformulate the basic definition of the country. Language questions are not an issue here, as in other countries; dualism in language is a settled policy matter. But in a country composed of minorities, some are more visible than others. Reformulating the official definitions of the state, to include multiracialism, is just one of a series of issues in this field. A lengthy agenda exists. *Equality Now*, the Report of the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Visible Minorities presented eighty recommendations.³ The recently created Standing Committee on Multiculturalism will produce other policy recommendations. Philosophically, issues include profound questions of integration, assimilation, and Canada's future as a mosaic of cultures and races.

The Constitutional and Legal Framework. Constitutional documents as political agreements are enforceable in courts, and debatable in legislatures. The Constitution Act, 1982, including the Charter of Rights, represented the political consensus at the time of agreement. Years of additional legal activity lie ahead. Some will reflect evolving perspectives based on demographic concerns.

Native people and visible minorities have specific concerns about present constitutional safeguards. As visible minorities increase, so too will such con-

cerns. The Japanese redress issue, and others which may be forthcoming, are based in large measure on the absence of adequate constitutional protection. At a philosophical level, the whole question of individual and group rights remains to be resolved.

Removal of Barriers to Life Opportunities. Canada is both ethnically diverse and stratified. Since it is likely to become more diverse, in the nearterm the issue will be to reduce existing ethnic stratification, and prevent new forms from emerging.

The task immediately ahead on the public agenda, is to entrench hedges against discrimination. This requires a vision of the political system as a whole entity, driven in part by the imperatives of demographic change. In this field, the need is to move retrospectively and pro-actively. Barriers to advancement have been built into many aspects of society. To remove them may require additional changes in human rights and race relations codes, nationally and provincially. Employment equity relates to affirmative action and contract compliance affecting the public and private sector. As the Abella Commission noted:

What is clear is that many groups of people living in Canada despair about ever being able to avail themselves of the economic, political, or social opportunities that exist in this country... Nothing short of strong legislative measures is necessary to reverse, or at least inhibit, the degree to which members of visible minorities are unjustifiably excluded from the opportunity to compete as equals. (Canada, Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, 1984:51)

Pluralism Tomorrow: Immigration and Pluralism

The System-Wide Impact of Immigration Policy. Without any further immigration, Canada would remain a very plural society, with substantial issues to be resolved regarding the role of 'the Other'. However, immigration will play at least some part in further altering Canada's demographic make-up. Support for family reunification and refugees will not totally disappear in the near future. Labour-market immigration is to be expanded next year. Given recent patterns, all three categories will contribute more people to the population from non-traditional sources. That is, the dimensions of pluralism will increase in Canada. If immigration policy moves toward greater intake, and recent source trends prevail, pluralism could deepen considerably.

Near-term issue areas regarding immigration policy have been identified. They concern streamlining of procedures, fairness and control. In nine reports to the House in two years, the Committee on Labour, Employment and Im-

migration has provided numerous specific recommendations. They deal with such topics as procedural delay, family and entrepreneurial immigrants, and conditions at detention centres. Similarly the Plaut (1985) report deals with streamlining and fairness in the refugee determination process.⁴

The general tendencies of these policies push in the direction of a larger, swifter intake of applicants for admission, based on non-ascriptive criteria. Argument over which category to emphasize, while important, is unlikely to change the general content of the categories. Efficiency and fairness of intake will lead to additional new Canadians from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

From a broader perspective, the numerous recommendations and proposals on the near-term agenda lead to a larger concern. Most of the issues deal with various manifestations of problem areas showing up as a result of a sudden change in immigration policy. In 1982, labour-market immigration was sharply reduced. Subsequently, the source of immigrants shifted, and family class and refugee categories became clogged with applicants. The system-wide implications of immigration policy led to piece-meal attempts to deal with unintended consequences.

Rethinking the Role of Immigration. The McDonald Commission concluded that "Canada should set its immigration levels on the basis of long term objectives, rather than...short term considerations" (Canada, Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, 1985:670). Others have joined in this call. The Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration recommends that "levels of immigration should be set in the broader context of desirable population goals established by the Parliament of Canada."⁵ The Minister of State for Immigration also has indicated the need to pause and reflect on the role and function of immigration. (Canada, Employment and Immigration, 1985a, 1985b, 1986b, 1986d; Weiner, 1986).

The spectre of population stasis and decline is adequate motivation for a reassessment. But there are many questions yet to be raised and answered. Immigration may prove to be a better tool for resolving demographic dilemmas than answering spot needs in the labour market. However, it is not enough to suggest "more and younger" immigrants (Seward, 1986:16-19; Foote, 1986). Higher levels of immigration will lead to higher levels of social diversity. The interrelated ripple effects of immigration policy have to be more clearly understood. That is the task of research. Can Canada cope with a more diverse ethnic future? Political leadership and political preparation, based on research, will be essential.

Economic projections can assist in identifying the number of people and qualifications desired by Canada. However, the global demographic situation

will dictate the source of future immigrants. Research and analysis can clarify the relationship between the desired change and the means chosen to attain it. It can also help dispel fear of the unknown, of 'the Other', which can impede rational demographic planning.

Conclusion

This preliminary study has suggested many areas where demographic change affects ethnicity, and where ethnicity affects Canadian life. There are a number of reasons to welcome a more diverse Canada, for example, sustained economic growth and enhanced cultural richness. To enter the twenty-first century with a new political equation may also be a healthy development — essential in responding to the pluralisms of language and region as well as ethnicity.

Nathan Keyfitz offers a final thought on the necessity of diversity. "Man's imperfection requires pluralism" he notes. In regard to Canada he says:

Recognition of imperfection induces modesty with respect to one's culture and to oneself. If men are imperfect and their cultures are imperfect then the last thing one wants is that they should all be the same. The most one can hope for is that in the competition of culture traits there will be a natural selection of good features. (Keyfitz, 1976:78)

Footnotes

1. See also the Forward by the national president of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada: "...of the 7000 or so that made up the 'critical mass' that came to the future Ontario there is no question that the English or British element was a minority."
2. See Beaujot *et al.* (1982). The authors conclude "...we must emphasize that fertility variation by ethnic groups now involves rather small differences," but add "We have here some evidence that the persisting family size differences are a component of given ethnic identities."
3. Tabled in the House of Commons, March 28, 1984. Recommendations cover the areas of social integration, employment, public policy, media and education.
4. For a summary of the Report and the initial Parliamentary response see the Fifth Report to the House of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, November 7, 1985.
5. Second Report to the House, April 1, 1985. It adds "Every effort should be made, beginning today and continuing for at least thirty years, to consider using immigration policy to smooth out the current age imbalance in the Canadian population", and calls for coordinated public policy to "produce a population of approximately thirty million by the year 2000."

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