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Elke Winter

The Curious Side-Effects of "Reform by Stealth": How Québécois Interculturalism Influences Canadian Multiculturalism

Abstract: This paper examines the relationship of Canada's two dominant nation-building projects over the past forty years. It also shows how Canadian regionalisms impact multiculturalism at the federal level. I first demonstrate Canadian multiculturalism's strong reliance on Québécois nationalism as a catalyst and contrast-conception until the early 2000s. I then argue that, in recent years, the Conservative federal government has been silently reducing the importance of Canadian multiculturalism in ways that resemble the agenda of its Western predecessor, the Reform Party. Surprisingly, multiculturalism under the Conservatives is characterized by features that are more and more akin to those of Québécois interculturalism.

I. Introduction[1]

Acclaimed political scientist Yasmeen Abu-Laban has recently argued that the current Canadian government under Stephen Harper is implementing an agenda which she identifies as "reform by stealth." Specifically, she contends that "there is a reformulation of multiculturalism policy in ways that are sensitive to the platform once advanced by the Reform Party" (150). The Reform Party is the predecessor of Harper's Conservative Party of Canada. It was known for its vocal rejection of "lax" immigration control, multiculturalism, and "special treatment" for Quebec.

The Reform Party, which originated in 1987 as a Western Canada-based socially conservative protest party, expanded eastward during the 1990s. Its outspoken anti-immigration stance, which resonated with some sections of the electorate, was credited with seducing the federal Liberals into weakening their commitment to both multiculturalism and liberal immigration policies (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 69). The

1 The author gladly acknowledges funding received for this research from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

party's platform in 1996-1997, for example, took a clear stance against multiculturalism: "The Reform Party of Canada stands for the acceptance and integration of immigrants to Canada into the mainstream of Canadian life. [...] It opposes the current concept of multiculturalism and hyphenated Canadianism pursued by the Government of Canada. We would end funding of the multiculturalism program and support the abolition of the Department of Multiculturalism" (Griffith 8). This agenda only changed after the Reform Party broadened its base first by becoming the Canadian Alliance in 2000, and then by merging, under the leadership of Stephen Harper, with the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada in 2003.

Abu-Laban concedes that the Harper Conservatives have so far "steered a distinctive course from the Reform Party insofar as they never [...] overtly attacked multiculturalism or sought its elimination as policy or discourse" (156). Nevertheless, by reconfiguring other policies associated with multiculturalism, such as immigration and citizenship, as well as redirecting certain priorities and funding with implications for multiculturalism, the current agenda "chips away at multicultural symbolism, and (re)entrenches social inequality" (Abu-Laban 151). In this sense, "reform by stealth" reduces the initial aim of multiculturalism, namely the equal participation of Canada's ethnocultural minorities. The reform by stealth agenda only includes them "on the terms of those in power" (Abu-Laban 151).

Abu-Laban's evaluation of the current situation is supported by Andrew Griffith, who surprised Canadians by going public with his experience as former Director General of Citizenship and Immigration of Canada's Citizenship and Multiculturalism Branch. Although Griffith avoids taking a strong political stance, he predicts that the cumulative impact of internal administrative reforms over the past couple of years will change multiculturalism in a way that is "closer to the original Reform Party objective of 1996-97 [which aimed at] abolishing multiculturalism and strengthening a strong, common narrative of citizenship" (Griffith 100).

By examining the relationship of Canada's two dominant nation-building projects over the past forty years, in this paper, I will add an important nuance to Abu-Laban's and Griffith's interpretation of multiculturalism under the Conservatives, namely its resemblance to Québécois interculturalism. As such, my paper will also show how Canadian Western and Eastern regionalisms impact multiculturalism at the federal level. Specifically, I will emphasize the strong reliance of multiculturalism on Québécois regional nationalism as a catalyst and

contrast-conception until the early 2000s, as well as its recent metamorphosis into an ideology characterized by features that are more and more akin to those of Québécois interculturalism. This metamorphosis takes place under the leadership of a party whose predecessor, the Reform Party, was the product of a regional dissatisfaction with federal politics. Quebec's interculturalism, in turn, has also been impacted by federal multiculturalism, as well as by immigration within a context of minority nationhood. The theoretical perspective adopted here presumes that ethnic and national groups are the outcome of historical and ongoing processes of construction, and that these constructions, which are highly relational, also impact the groups' nation-building projects, including the preferred type(s) of diversity management (Winter, *Us, Them and Others* ch. 5).

Building on a series of empirical studies (cf. Winter, *Us, Them and Others*; Winter, "Becoming Canadian"; Winter, "Rethinking Multiculturalism"), this paper constructs a narrative of the semantic and political relations between multiculturalism and interculturalism within nation-building projects in Canada and Quebec. A *caveat*: The concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism are international and polyvalent (cf. Meer and Modood). Here, I will only treat them within the limits of the Canadian context.

The paper is divided into three parts. In the first section, I trace the impact of Québécois nationalism upon expressions of Canadian multiculturalism over the past forty years. I then show how interculturalism developed as an alternative sub-state model of pluralism and immigrant integration against the backdrop of multiculturalism at the federal level. In the third section, I examine the curious redefinition of Canadian multiculturalism under Stephen Harper's Conservative government since 2006.

II. Québécois Nationalism as a Catalyst for Canadian Multiculturalism

Even before its foundation as a country in 1867, Canada was populated by at least three collectivities: Aboriginal peoples, French settlers, and British colonizers. Large-scale immigration in the early 20th century reinforced another form of ethnic diversity arising from immigration. In the 1930s, with the proliferation of ethnic diversity becoming more and more noticeable, the metaphor of the Canadian mosaic emerged (Day 150). The social-normative context, however, remained racist and

exclusionary as Canada's self-understanding as a British society did not change until after the Second World War.

Canada's changing attitude towards ethnocultural diversity in the 1960s was prompted by two interrelated developments: The first was the rise of French Canadian, or more specifically Québécois regional nationalism in the 1960s, which asked for more political accommodation.[2] The emergence of a new collective identity in Quebec transformed the former dualism of linguistically defined French and English Canadians into a territorial opposition between Quebec and the rest of Canada (ROC). Within this context, Canada's so-called ethnic groups emerged, namely first and second generation immigrants of predominantly European origin. The second development that prompted the emergence of multiculturalism within the Canadian context was these groups' demands that their cultural rights were not to be forgotten in the social and political struggle among Canada's British and French "founding nations."[3]

In response to these groups' cultural and political claims, in 1971, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau famously declared "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" (House of Commons 8545) not only an official state policy but also the essence of Canadian identity. He thereby swiftly turned multiculturalism from a strategy of resistance into a state policy. While this policy certainly had empowering effects, it also tamed and circumscribed legitimate forms of minority claims-making. Over the years, a strong collaboration between ethnic associations and the government became one of the cornerstones of Canadian multiculturalism (McAndrew, Helly, and Tessier 50).

Both Francophones in Quebec and Aboriginal peoples opposed the policy, which they saw as a cooptation strategy undermining their own claims for rights and recognition. They also rejected multiculturalism as a political strategy aiming at the cooptation of immigrants into a white English-speaking majority. In fact, there was a widespread impression among French-speaking elites in Quebec that multi-

2 The term 'French Canadians' refers to Canadians who, regardless of their geographical location, trace their background to French settlers. In the 1960s, French Canadians, who still form the demographic majority in the province of Quebec, started developing a specifically Québécois "national" identity which excludes French Canadians outside of Quebec and, in principle, includes all residents of the province regardless of ethnic or linguistic background.

3 This perspective neglects the struggles of Canada's Aboriginal peoples: Inuit, Métis, and "Indians." After a successful fight against assimilation in 1969, the latter group emerged on the political stage as the Assembly of First Nations in 1982 (Dickason 310).

culturalism was a deliberate effort to thwart Quebec's thrust towards greater independence (cf. G. Rocher). Quebec subsequently developed its own policy of interculturalism, which will be discussed further below.

Over time, the legal arrangements accommodating Canada's minority nations – Aboriginal peoples and the Francophones of Quebec – as well as ethnic groups of immigrant origin became "three vertical silos," whose policies pertaining to these distinct groups were disconnected from each other normatively, legally, and administratively (Kymlicka, "Ethnocultural Diversity" 39).

In the decade after its announcement, multiculturalism focused on symbolic rather than on material matters: It provided Canadians of immigrant origin with a normative and institutional framework that allowed them to identify with the Canadian nation. Due to changes in immigration policy, Canada's demographic composition started to include more "visible minorities"[4] from non-European countries of origin, and in the 1980s, multiculturalism shifted its focus from heritage issues to anti-discrimination and equity issues. In 1982, multiculturalism was enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and, in 1988, made law through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

In the early 1990s, multiculturalism became increasingly associated with integration and citizenship (cf. Kymlicka and Norman). Reacting to a wave of criticism, in 1993, the incoming federal Liberals under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien placed the Multiculturalism Program within a newly-created department of Canadian Heritage (overseen by a Secretary of State, a junior minister not represented in the Cabinet), reduced multiculturalism funding from 27 million CAD in the early 1990s to 18.7 million CAD in 1996-1997 (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 15), and initiated a fundamental review of the program. When the new guidelines were finally announced in 1997-1998, they had abandoned the language of ethnocultural communities, subsumed the expression of ethnocultural diversity under the notion of shared Canadian identity (Canadian Heritage 2), and altered the funding scheme from funding for ethnic associations to project-based funding (McAndrew, Helly,

4 The term "visible minorities" was first introduced in the 1995 Employment Equity Act, which required employers to increase the representation of four designated groups: women, individuals with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and "visible minorities." The category is an ambiguous construct, since "visibility" refers sometimes to skin color (e.g. blacks), sometimes to cultural belonging and/or religion (e.g. Arabs and South Asians), and sometimes to the nationality of origin (e.g. Chinese). What unites these different categories is that their bearers are considered non-white.

and Tessier 68). Hence, commentators concluded that the new guidelines "dilute[d] multiculturalism in Canada and diminish[ed] the role and ability of Canada's ethnocultural communities to contribute to the national enterprise" (Kordan 138). The new program was said to show "a decided lack of interest [on behalf of the Government of Canada] in engaging Canada's ethnocultural groups in a full and equal partnership" (Kordan 140).

Astonishingly, however, public support for multiculturalism merely dipped in the first half of the 1990s and then rose again (Winter, *Us, Them and Others* 18). This paradox is poignantly summarized by Karim Karim: "As the bureaucratic target for anti-multiculturalism attacks has shrunk, Canada is increasingly described as a multicultural country in current dominant discourses" (Karim 454).

Overlooked by Karim is the "coincidence" that the 1990s were also the period of one of the most crucial conflicts between Canada's two linguistically defined "founding nations," a conflict that was highlighted by the Quebec referendum on sovereignty in 1995. The 1995 referendum evolved as the political climax of a number of unresolved issues between Canada's French-speaking (predominantly living in the province of Quebec) and English-speaking populations since the 1960s. It was the second referendum on sovereignty (the first one took place in 1980) and was defeated by the extremely narrow margin of 50.6 percent No-votes to 49.4 percent Yes-votes.

Surprisingly, the Quebec referendum did not lead to a downturn of multiculturalism, but rather the opposite was the case: Public support for multiculturalism, at its lowest in 1995, rebounded quickly in the following years. The potential scenario of Quebec seceding and the growing number of immigrants "from all over the world" within Canada produced a situation in which English Canadians were in desperate need of rethinking their national identity beyond expressions of monoculturalism (cf. Resnick). Even in government discourses, multiculturalism regained its prominence in the second half of the 1990s, although it was dubiously lauded as enhancing Canada's economic competitiveness (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 117).

In 1995, the publication of Will Kymlicka's influential book *Multicultural Citizenship* gave academic authority to the widely shared impression that the multicultural rights demanded by immigrant groups and ethnic associations are, in fact, fundamentally different from the "self-government rights" claimed by the French Canadians in Quebec and, in a less threatening way, by First Nations. This distinction was increasingly used to distance ethnic groups of immigrant origin

from the potentially secessionist intentions of minority nations – and thus to liberate them from the stigma of causing social fragmentation (Winter, *Us, Them and Others* ch. 8).

Kymlicka's scholarly distinction was forcefully underlined by the country's experience with the so-called "ethnic vote" in the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty. While Quebec's premier had to resign over his xenophobic comments on referendum night, 95 percent of Quebec's non-French-speaking population did indeed vote against separation (as opposed to only 40 percent of Francophones). The voting pattern in the 1995 referendum was a powerful example of both the "destructive" potential of a minority nation demanding self-government on the one hand, and the "unifying" pan-Canadianism expressed by Canadians of immigrant origin on the other.[5]

In my analysis of representations of multiculturalism in mainstream media discourses during the 1990s (cf. Winter, *Us, Them and Others*), I have argued that the conflict between Canada's and Quebec's projects of nation-building has helped to consolidate multiculturalism as part of a pan-Canadian national identity. This was achieved by rendering the accommodation of immigrants relatively harmless and inclusive in opposition to Quebec's allegedly "ethnically oppressive" nationalism. I demonstrate that a semantic shift took place in the second half of the 1990s, which is best described by the following change in representations: The logic of "multiculturalism should/should not be implemented because ethnic groups are *like* the French Canadians in Quebec" was replaced by "multiculturalism can be implemented because the members of ethnic groups are *unlike* the French Canadians in Quebec" (Winter, *Us, Them and Others* ch. 8).

Initiated by the federal government under Liberal leader Jean Chrétien, the image of multiculturalism that started to dominate in the 1990s is a far cry from Canada as a "community of communities," as it was famously described by Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark in 1980 (Madison, Fairfield, and Harris 96). Rather, the new multiculturalism is profoundly civic, individualist, and neoliberal. It is no longer constructed as a natural extension of the collective accommodation of French Canadians' ethnocultural and linguistic diversity as it was until the mid-1990s, when ethnic groups were constructed as being *like* the French Canadians. Rather, multi-

5 It should be noted that First Nations within Quebec were also united in their opposition to a separate Quebec. On 24 October 1995, the Cree held a separate referendum on the issue. They voted 93.6 percent to stay within Canada (Wherrett 5-6).

culturalism is now constructed in opposition to and through rejection of Quebec's allegedly old-fashioned, backward, individual-rights-oppressing "ethnic nationalism." Put differently, towards the end of the 1990s, multiculturalism as a dominant representation of a pan-Canadian national identity becomes consolidated, but this consolidation comes at the price of "containing" Québécois nationalism and dissociating multiculturalism from most types of group rights.

III. Canadian Multiculturalism as a Backdrop to Québécois Interculturalism

Quebec's attempts to establish itself as a "host society" for immigrants can be traced back to its "Quiet Revolution" in the 1960s and the creation of the Quebec Ministry of Immigration in 1968. At the time, it was felt that a solution was needed to stem what some considered an Anglicization of francophone and allophone[6] immigrants and their children. Quebec's reaction to the 1969 Official Languages Act (which implemented English and French as official languages at the federal level) and to the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy was to enforce its binational vision of Canada. In the 1970s, a series of language laws were adopted: In 1974, Bill 22 made French the only official language in Quebec. In 1977, Bill 101 (or the Charter of the French Language) enforced the Francization of businesses, restricted the use of public signage in languages other than French, and denied access to publicly funded English schools to children whose parents were not educated in English in Canada.

Quebec's position on immigration and integration policies developed further after the 1978 Cullen-Couture Agreement, which provided Quebec with some autonomy in the selection of its immigrants. It became more formally articulated in the years leading up to the first (failed) referendum on independence in 1980, when the Quebec government started to promote a more inclusive definition of membership in the Québécois nation based on French Canadian culture and language within a territorial state.

6 In Canada and especially in Quebec, it is commonplace to differentiate between Anglophones, Francophones, and Allophones, whereby "Allophones" refers to individuals whose native language is neither English nor French.

The concept of interculturalism emerged in the early 1980s.[7] It is argued to be an approach to immigration and integration that differs from multiculturalism. The latter is (falsely) seen as postulating the equality of all cultures and civilizations within the same nation and therefore as inadvertently promoting segregation and ethnic ghettoization within the Canadian "mosaic" (cf. Nugent). Rather than maximizing the representation of ethnocultural minorities within state institutions, as requested by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), interculturalism encourages the convergence of immigrant cultures with that of the French Canadian majority. Hence, the preferred metaphor for interculturalism is not a mosaic but a tree into which various rootstocks are grafted: A solid Québécois core culture is to be enriched by the contributions from minority cultures (cf. Pietrantonio, Juteau, and McAndrew).

Being rooted in the consciousness of a subordinate group, "interculturalism concerns itself with the interests of the majority culture (whose desire to perpetuate and maintain itself is perfectly legitimate) as much as it does with the interests of minorities and immigrants" (Bouchard 438). It is particularly sensitive to the minority status of the French language and culture in Canada and on the North American continent, strives to avoid "all forms of socio-cultural fragmentation, marginalization and ghettoization" (Bouchard 463), and places "emphasis on interactions, connections between cultures, the development of feelings of belonging, and the emergence of a common culture" (Bouchard 464). As such, interculturalism concentrates on both promoting Quebec's dominant culture and French language to the immigrants, as well as on raising the acceptance of immigrant cultures within the dominant society. This two-way street of interaction – hence *inter*culturalism rather than *multi*culturalism – is argued to render the integration process between the cultures harmonious.

Put more schematically, the principle underlying Quebec's ideology of interculturalism – convergence – describes a model where immigrants are said to be full members of Quebec's society. It is based on a reciprocal "moral contract" between the state and newcomers: The state offers to support the immigrant in his/her integration efforts. In exchange, the immigrant must take on the responsibility to integrate successfully. In other words, Québécois interculturalism can be

7 The first articulation of Québécois interculturalism is usually associated with the Government of Quebec's action plan *Autant de façons d'être Québécois* in 1981 (cf. Symons). For a genealogy of this concept in Quebec, see Labelle et al.

summed up as: (i) a society in which French is the common language of public life; (ii) a secular, democratic society where participation and the contribution of everyone are expected and encouraged; (iii) a pluralist society open to multiple contributions within the limits imposed by the respect for fundamental democratic values and the necessity of intercommunity exchange (Gagnon and Iacovino 30).

The ideological differences between multiculturalism and interculturalism set aside, in practice, the programs and policies of immigration and integration in Quebec have by and large followed the developments of immigration and multiculturalism at the federal level: the selection process abroad, the integration programs for the newly-arrived (information sessions, settlement aid), language training, work programs, etc. Also, as explained above, multiculturalism policy is far from promoting ethnic segregation and situates diversity clearly within the framework of "unity." As such, it could be argued that, in comparison to multiculturalism, interculturalism merely places a stronger emphasis on the language and culture of the host society – which comes as the unavoidable side-effect of being a linguistic minority within Canada and on the North American continent. However, compared to the underlying "unity in diversity" concerns of multiculturalism, the emphasis of interculturalism on convergence also reveals a much stronger desire for societal integration (*faire société*). Situated within the context of liberalism, globalization, and non-sovereignty/minority nationhood, this societal integration is difficult to achieve (cf. Labelle). Not only have Quebec's strict language policies remained contentious, the notion of a "moral contract" between the host society and newcomers is currently being tested in heated debates on secularism, or *laïcité*.[8]

For example, in March 2006, a debate on the "reasonable accommodation" of religious minorities was kick-started through "the Kirpan affair": the question whether a Sikh student could wear his ceremonial dagger at school or whether it was to be banned as a weapon. The debate included a number of incidents involving clashes, controversies, and accommodations between members of religious minority groups (mostly Sikhs, Muslims, and Jews), and the members of Quebec's Francophone society, which had overthrown much of its conservative Catholic culture during the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. In one notorious incident, the municipal council of Hérouxville developed a code of conduct instructing prospective immigrants that they would not tolerate certain practices such as the stoning of women (cf. Potvin; Bilge; Stasiulis).

8 I use both words interchangeably here as I do not have the space to explain their different connotations.

Realizing the volatility of the issue, the Liberal Quebec government created the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences. The commission was chaired by two acclaimed academics, Charles Taylor and Gérard Bouchard. It had the vast mandate to conduct an extensive public consultation on this topic. When, in May 2008, the commission released its final report, it recommended, among other things, that the government strengthen Quebec's secularism (*laïcité ouverte*), promote interculturalism (the integration of newcomers into a French-speaking majority society), and encourage the dejudicialization of the handling of accommodation requests (cf. Bosset).

The responses of the government to these recommendations were lukewarm (cf. Leroux). They included the insertion of a clause ensuring the primacy of equality between men and women over freedom of religion in the preface to the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (adoption of Bill 63) in 2008, the introduction of a *Declaration of the Common Values of Quebec Society*, which must be signed by prospective immigrants as part of their application procedure since January 2009, and the introduction (and adoption "in principle" by Quebec's National Assembly in 2011) of Bill 94, *An Act to Establish Guidelines Governing Accommodation Requests within the Administration and Certain Institutions*, which requires Muslim women (or other people wearing facial veils or masks) to uncover if working in the public sector or requiring services from government officials. Quebec's National Assembly voted unanimously to reject the recommendation of the Bouchard-Taylor commission to remove the crucifix in the National Assembly.

Most recently, a Parti Québécois minority government (September 2012 – April 2014) stirred up debates with the proposition of a Quebec Charter of Values (Bill 60), which, among other things, would have prohibited public-sector employees from wearing "ostentatious" religious objects such as kippahs, turbans, hijabs, and larger-than-average crucifixes. The ban would have applied to all civil servants, including teachers, doctors, nurses, and police officers, potentially threatening their employment in the case of non-compliance. There was no doubt that the Parti Québécois aimed at scoring points with Quebec's "old stock" Francophones and their ambiguous position on religion: secular and anti-clerical on the one hand, while clinging to symbols of Catholicism as part of their culture on the other. This

political strategy, however, failed miserably. Campaigning on the issue of the so-called Quebec Charter of Values, the Parti Québécois was overwhelmingly defeated in the Quebec provincial elections of April 2014.

The point that I want to underline here is not that Quebec's conceptualization of a pluralist society is less liberal or more "ethnically rooted" than that of other Canadian provinces or multiculturalism policy at the federal level. Readers are reminded of the abolishment of faith-based family arbitration through (Christian, Jewish, and other) religious mediators in Ontario, which was a reaction to a public outcry over so-called "sharia tribunals" (cf. Razack). In other words, in an era where Islam is said to have "killed" support for multiculturalism in a number of Western countries (cf. Liddle), the accommodation of religious expressions in the public space remains contentious in Canada, Quebec, and elsewhere. Rather, it is important to underline that Québécois interculturalism operates in the context of cultural insecurity among Franco-Québécois citizens (cf. Bouchard and Taylor) and in the context of a strong public discourse that aims to reclaim the place of the French Canadian majority in Quebec's institutions. The emphasis on the French language and on (an admittedly biased expression of) secularism must be understood within this context. Whether or not this context is sufficient to lend legitimacy to both remains an ongoing debate.

IV. Is Canadian Multiculturalism Turning into Interculturalism?

At the federal level, several measures were adopted in response to the narrow victory of the anti-separation campaign in the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty. One of them was a call for the Supreme Court of Canada to rule on the legality of a unilateral declaration of independence. In August 1998, the Court ruled that Quebec could not unilaterally secede from Canada. The ruling was followed by the adoption of the Clarity Act in June 2000, which defined strict ("clear") rules for a future referendum on Quebec sovereignty. Predictably, interpretation of the Clarity Act has largely been determined by political positions along nationalist lines: For some, "debate is ended and democracy, even as the court defined it, is stifled" (Rocher and Verrelli 233). For others, the Act ensures Canada's viability as a united nation-state (cf. Ryan).

Another measure was the implementation of a "sponsorship program" (1996-2004), a large-scale campaign which was to promote national unity and to raise the profile of the federal government, particularly in the province of Quebec. This effort consisted in unprecedented financial support for Canada Day celebrations, the distribution of Canadian flags, and self-promotion of federal services (cf. Turp). While the sponsorship program (1996-2004) was touted as a means of fostering national unity and boosting the federal image among Francophone Canadians, critics of the campaign accused the federal government of attempting to undermine Québécois nationalism by promoting itself as the sole legitimate national body (cf. Labelle and Rocher). It was later revealed that federal efforts to promote national unity had exceeded the boundaries of the law. In what became known as the sponsorship scandal, widespread corruption was uncovered in the operations of the program.

In January 2006, after twelve years of Liberal federal government, the newly created Conservative Party (founded in 2003) was elected to power, winning two minority governments (2006 and 2008) and a majority in 2011. Interestingly, these political developments and the weakening of public support for multiculturalism in Canada ("Part 6: Editorial") went hand in hand with receding nationalism in Quebec. Between 2003 and 2012, the (non-separatist) Liberal Party was in power in Quebec. Between 2012 and 2014, the Parti Québécois governed the province as a minority government, but failed to be re-elected on 7 April 2014, when the Quebec Liberal Party won a landslide majority of 70 seats. In the federal election of 2011, the Bloc Québécois was reduced to four seats.

After their election in 2006, the federal Conservatives started out by wooing French Canadians in Quebec, who, in response to anger over the Liberals' sponsorship scandal, had voted for them in large numbers (Lawlor and Bélanger 293). For example, in November 2006, the Canadian House of Commons passed a motion – introduced in a surprising political move by Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper – which recognized that "the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada" (Harrison and Friesen 82). While this motion did not satisfy those aiming for independence or even just more autonomy, it was a surprising move by a Prime Minister who, in the late 1980s, had helped to build the Reform Party, which had made itself known (and popular with some) through its outspoken stance against multiculturalism, bilingualism, and special rights for Quebec.

Ultimately, however, the strategy of the Conservatives to broaden their electoral base with voters from Quebec was unsuccessful. In the 2011 federal election, the New Democratic Party won an astounding 58 seats of the province's 75 seats, while the Conservatives took six. In the following years, attempts by the Conservatives to win electoral support among French Canadians receded. Between 2011 and 2013, Conservative Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird, got entangled in a language controversy because he ordered unilingual English business cards (Beeby, "John Baird Must Dump Business Cards") and only disposed of them after being ordered to do so by the federal commissioner of official languages (Beeby, "Business Cards Are Finally Going Bilingual").

With respect to multiculturalism, the Conservatives have pursued an ambiguous strategy. As underlined in the introduction of this paper, they have refrained from attacking multiculturalism policy directly (Abu-Laban 156). In fact, due to his successful outreach to "ethnic voters," Jason Kenney, who served as Minister of Immigration, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism from 2008 to 2013, has become known as "Minister for Curry in a Hurry." Kenney retained the multiculturalism portfolio even after a cabinet shuffle in July 2013, when he became Minister for Employment and Social Development, and Chris Alexander took over the position as Minister for Citizenship and Immigration.

Contrary to the Liberals before them, the Harper Conservatives also issued a number of apologies for historical injustices, such as the Chinese head tax (1835-1923) and the 1914 Komagata Maru incident (which included the refusal of granting citizenship to formally British subjects arriving from India). In 2009, they created the Paul Yuzyk Multiculturalism Award, thereby "appropriating multiculturalism as a Conservative, rather than Liberal, initiative" (Griffith 41). Even Prime Minister Harper is famously on record for endorsing multiculturalism at the televised party leader's debate before the federal election:

> *We (the Conservative Party/Government) favour multiculturalism. [People who come here] want to belong to this country. [...] They also at the same time will change our country, and we show through multiculturalism our willingness to accommodate their differences [...] so they're more comfortable. That's why we're so successful integrating people as a country. I think we're probably the most successful country in the world in that regard. (Stephen Harper on 12 April 2011, qtd. in Siddiqui)*

Tom Flanagan calls this the "fourth sister approach": After successfully courting the traditional Tories of Ontario and Atlantic Canada (merging the two conservative parties in 2003) and unsuccessfully trying to win over French Canadians in Quebec, the Harper Conservatives directed their attention to first- and second-generation immigrants, who traditionally constituted a stronghold for Liberal votes. As election results have shown, using this strategy and others, Conservatives have been able to win a number of seats in ethnically diverse electoral districts (Payton, "Ethnic Riding").

Despite these initiatives, a closer look at multiculturalism as a nation-building project under the Conservatives is warranted. At the administrative level, in October 2008, the Conservatives transferred the multiculturalism program from the Department of Canadian Heritage to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).[9] CIC usually deals with the short-term aspects of immigration, settlement, and citizenship acquisition. Multiculturalism, by contrast, used to address "long-term issues and thus included all Canadians, whether first generation or long-established, whether minority (e.g. Ukrainian Canadians, black Canadians) or majority (traditional European groups)" (Griffith 10). By removing multiculturalism from Canadian Heritage – which deals, as the name indicates, with Canadian traditions and history –, multiculturalism is no longer positioned at the national core, concerned with all Canadians, including the dominant group, its culture, values, and *relations* with ethnocultural minorities. Rather, situated within CIC, multiculturalism is given a more peripheral meaning. It is cast uniquely as a "minority affair," specifically one that aims at addressing short-term issues related to the transition from immigrant to citizen.

Citizenship, however, is increasingly pushed back and cast as the "first prize" at the end of integration (Winter, "Becoming Canadian" 20). It is also increasingly defined in terms that are traditionally associated with English Canadian culture and values. The number of initiatives taken to emphasize the importance of the British monarchy in the Canadian national identity, for example, has been accelerating since the coming to power of the Conservatives: It is highlighted in the new 2009 citizenship study guide and was underlined in July 2011 by the replacement of modern artworks by Quebec painter Alfred Pellan

9 The transfer did not only affect the multiculturalism program. Between 2008 and 2013, the Government of Canada introduced an enormous number of changes to policies affecting immigration, temporary entry to Canada, and citizenship, which some scholars hold to be unprecedented in terms of pace and scope (Alboim and Cohl iv). For reasons of space, these changes cannot be dealt with here.

with a portrait of Elizabeth II in the lobby of the Department of Foreign Affairs. In the same year, the government restored the word "royal" in front of the names of Canada's navy and air force, reviving designations that had been discarded in the 1960s. The government also ordered all Canadian embassies and missions abroad to display a portrait of the Queen.

Furthermore, the acquisition of English or French language skills has received much attention, not only at the level of immigrant selection but also at the level of citizenship, where applicants now have to pass a standardized language test as a prerequisite for their application. While language skills are foremost seen as a potential of successful economic integration, it is difficult to deny – especially in Canada – that language also has a cultural connotation. How else could we interpret the fact that, since June 2010, standardized language tests have become mandatory for skilled immigrant applicants regardless of whether they are native English and French speakers? In the words of Canada's Minister for Multiculturalism: "We wanted them to learn our languages and adapt to our way of life" (Kenney).

Indeed, the shifting orientation of multiculturalism suggested by the aforementioned administrative changes is confirmed in both government discourse (Winter, "Rethinking Multiculturalism") and at the level of programming. For example, there was a *de facto* cut in multiculturalism spending. Since 2007, roughly 5 million CAD of the yearly multiculturalism budget have been left unspent. In the years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, more than 50 percent of program funding lapsed (Griffith 107). This was caused by a change in the priorities of the multiculturalism program and a slowly reacting bureaucracy, which failed to alert and properly advise ethnic associations. Priorities shifted from "accommodation to integration and social cohesion, the abandonment of [anti-]racism and [anti-]discrimination, [and] greater consideration of faith-based communities" (Griffith 27).

Taken together, these changes seem to produce an astonishing side-effect: While the importance of Québécois nationalism in Canadian political debates has diminished, the vision of multiculturalism entertained by the Conservative Party of Canada is conceptually much closer to Quebec's pluralist model of interculturalism than the interpretations of multiculturalism by previous governments. To recall, the original idea of interculturalism was to insist that newcomers should integrate into the national, cultural, and linguistic identity of the host society, as opposed to Canadian multiculturalism, which was seen as undermining the special status of French Canadians in Canada.

Canadian multiculturalism under the Conservatives seems to be moving in that direction. Its current incarnation resembles a policy of immigrant integration which strongly "concerns itself with the interests of the majority culture (whose desire to perpetuate and maintain itself is perfectly legitimate)" (Bouchard 438). The reader will recall this phrase, used by Gérard Bouchard to describe Québécois interculturalism. Multiculturalism under the Conservatives is also very sensitive to linguistic integration and strives to avoid all forms of socio-cultural fragmentation or ghettoization. Immigrants must take on the responsibility to integrate successfully, their socio-economic participation is expected, the development of a unified national identity is encouraged, and cultural contributions, while welcome, must remain within the limits of liberal democratic values such as the supremacy of the law, the division of powers, a secular state, as well as respect for gender equality. In sum, the parallels with the notion of cultural convergence are obvious. Indeed, several astute commentators confirm that "Canadian multiculturalism has slowly grown closer to Quebec interculturalism" (Bouchard 463; Griffith 78).

V. Conclusion

In this paper, I concur with Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Andrew Griffith in that the governing Conservative federal government is silently changing the definition of Canadian multiculturalism. While this is not the first time that there has been a change in the orientation of Canada's multiculturalism policy, it was never before so close, conceptually and practically, to Québécois interculturalism. It is ironic that this redefinition is taking place under the auspices of a Prime Minister who has helped to build a party that strongly rejected bilingualism and special rights for Quebec. In fact, the Reform Party scorned federal policies of compromise and diversity accommodation. Instead, it insisted on the need for creating a strong sense of one unified national identity. This sense of unity is also at stake in interculturalism, albeit at a regional level.

Regionalisms impact federal policy and vice versa. In Canada, nation-building and diversity management are highly interdependent. It is widely accepted that the need to address Québécois nationalism was one important factor that brought about Canada's multiculturalism

within a bilingual framework. Furthermore, in the late 1990s, it was yet again Québécois nationalism that helped to consolidate multiculturalism as a pan-Canadian identity. Compared to the threat of separatism, the demands of immigrants and ethnic associations for multicultural accommodation started to be viewed as the lesser of two evils, even by English Canadian nationalists and staunch critics of multiculturalism.

This attitude, however, changed in the first decade of the 21st century. With Québécois regional nationalism somewhat "contained" (e.g. through the Clarity Act) and somewhat receding (e.g. the Liberal Quebec government from 2003-2012), at the federal level, priorities have changed. The newly created Conservative Party no longer has to address issues of national unity. While its leaders continue to frame multiculturalism in neoliberal terms as the Liberals did (cf. Kymlicka, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism"), they also concentrate on shaping Canadian policies in accordance with conservative values, such as patriotism, the monarchy, and the military (cf. McKay and Swift; Ivison). In the second half of the 20th century, these values were more important in regional than in federal politics. This changed, however, when the Harper Conservatives came to power in 2006. Within their conception of multiculturalism, the preference for an English Canadian dominant culture is no longer downplayed or denied. On the contrary, following to some extent the agenda of the Reform Party and its traditional base in Western Canada, the federal Conservatives have not abolished multiculturalism – which, due to high immigration and naturalization numbers, would likely be political suicide – but enacted a strong common narrative of shared citizenship in which multiculturalism only plays a minor role. Specifically, they entertain a discourse in which shared Canadian citizenship is portrayed as being in need of protection (cf. Winter, "Becoming Canadian"). This representation mimics the cultural anxiety of Quebec's French Canadian population: While Québécois nationalists fear the weakening of French language and culture through the influx of anglophone and allophone immigrants, the federal Conservatives portray so-called Canadian values as being threatened by immigration from anti-democratic and war-torn countries. In both cases, the response is a reduction of pluralist rights and an emphasis on the dominant (provincial/national) language(s) and culture.

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Regionalism(s)

A Variety of Perspectives from Europe and the Americas

edited by
Gudrun M. Grabher / Ursula Mathis-Moser

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Foreword

Over the course of the past two decades, the University of Innsbruck has established several Centers for Area Studies as part of its International Services: the Canadian Studies Centre, the Center for Inter-American Studies, the Interdisciplinary France Focus, the Italian Center, and the Russian Center. Their objective is to support and intensify scientific cooperation in all disciplines. Since each of them, by its very nature, focuses on a specific area or region, they jointly organized a conference on the highly topical issue of "Regionalism(s)" in November 2013, with renowned speakers representing and/or discussing specific aspects of one particular region. The volume at hand presents the proceedings of that conference.

The concept 'region' plays a major role in a number of different disciplines, from geography to sociology, from law to political science, from economics to history. The papers collected in this volume shed light on the complexity of this issue from multiple perspectives. Not only do the approaches vary in regard to scholarly discipline — legal, political, historical, sociological, geographical, political —; the authors come from different countries and continents and thus represent different scholarly traditions, different academic conventions, and different cultural backgrounds.

In her profound introductory essay, *Anna Gamper* provides a legal perspective on the topic, dealing with the vast range of meanings of region, from small territory to macroregion. An expert in Constitutional Law, *Gamper* stresses the necessity to differentiate between regions in federal states on the one hand, and regions within unitary states with a decentralized administration on the other, and discusses the challenges that are to be faced. The book is then divided into three sections. The first one, titled "Case Studies of Regionalism(s) in Europe on a National Level," offers perspectives from Italy, France, and Russia. In his essay about "Italy's Odyssey between Federalism and Regionalism," *Jens Woelk*, professor of Comparative Constitutional Law, draws a detailed and subtle picture of the long and complicated process of implementing the federalization reform in Italy, diagnosing a rather gloomy prospect for regionalism in Italy in view of the current economic and political problems the country is facing. In his analysis of the history and situation in France, professor of Public Law *Jacques Fialaire* convincingly demonstrates that France, unlike a number of European states, has been more than hesitant to adapt to regionalism