

URBAN AND LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVES



Leonie Sandercock · Giovanni Attili

Where Strangers become Neighbours

Integrating Immigrants in Vancouver, Canada
with Val Cavers and Paola Carr



 Springer

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The main issue in the series is developed around the projectual dimension, with the objective of visualising both the city and the territory from a particular viewpoint, which singles out the territorial dimension as the city's space of communication and negotiation.

The series will face emerging problems that characterise the dynamics of city development, like the new, fresh relations between urban societies and physical space, the right to the city, urban equity, the project for the physical city as a means to reveal *civitas*, signs of new social cohesiveness, the sense of contemporary public space and the sustainability of urban development.

Concerned with advancing theories on the city, the series resolves to welcome articles that feature a pluralism of disciplinary contributions studying formal and informal practices on the project for the city and seeking conceptual and operative categories capable of understanding and facing the problems inherent in the profound transformations of contemporary urban landscapes.

Where Strangers Become Neighbours

Integrating Immigrants in Vancouver, Canada

by

Leonie Sandercock and Giovanni Attili

with

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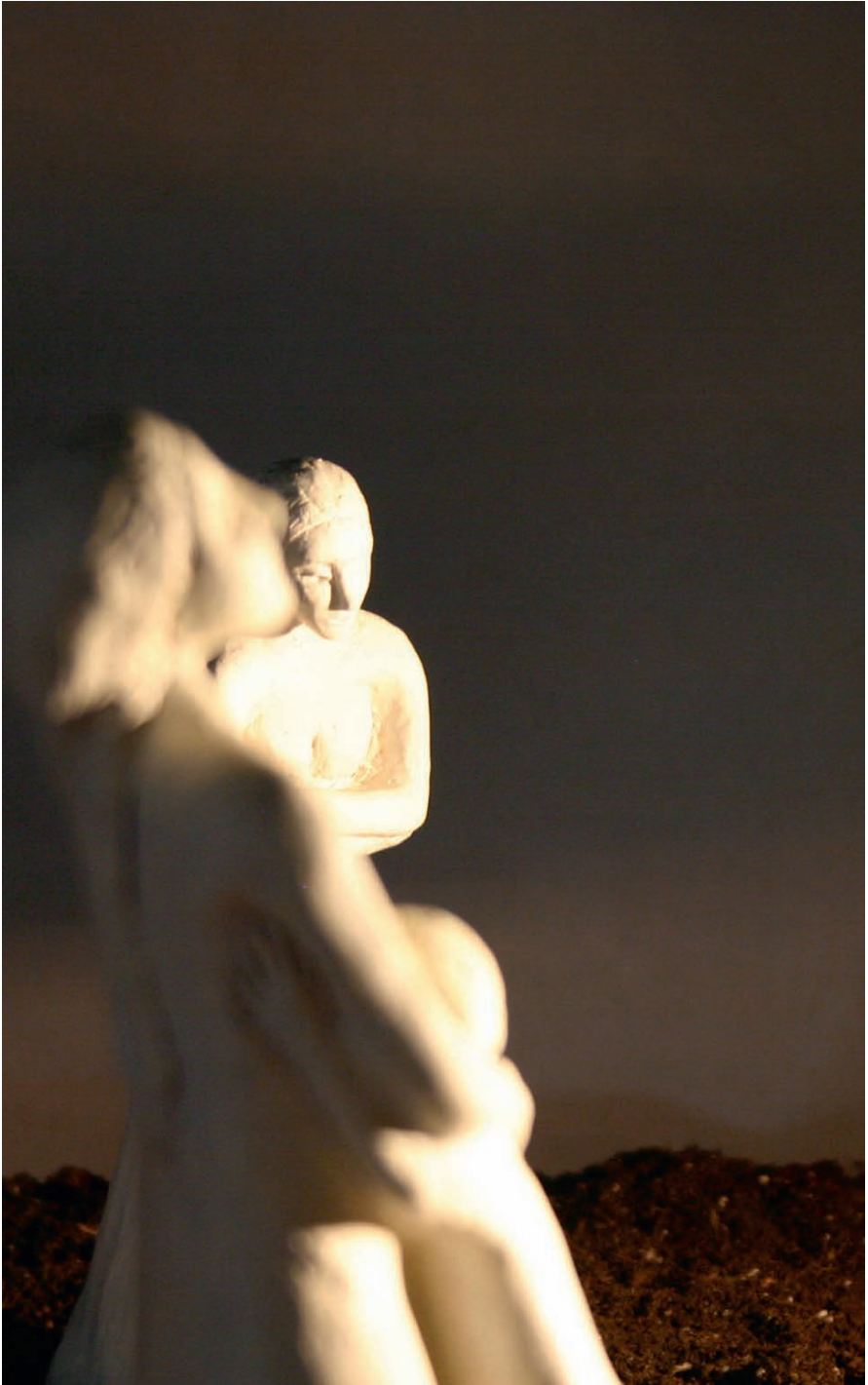
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- Pages 110, 235: graphic works by Giovanni Attili
- Chapter 5 and Chapter 10: graphic works by Giovanni Attili taken from the dvd “Where strangers become neighbours”
- Chapter 8: “The Spirit of Haida Gwaii by Bill Reid”, photos by Giovanni Attili

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Sculptures by Sara Bonetti

Preface

We have written this book to accompany our film, “Where Strangers become Neighbours”. The film tells a very specific story of the integration of immigrants in Collingwood, a neighbourhood of 48,000 people in the eastern part of the City of Vancouver, part of the metropolitan area of Vancouver. The film is even more specific in focusing on the key role of one social institution, the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, in helping strangers to become neighbours. Much of the story is told in and through the voices of immigrants themselves, who have settled in this neighbourhood from many different parts of the world.

Although this is a specific story, it is in many ways a typical one, in telling of the challenges facing immigrants in making the transition from outsiders to fully belonging members of a new society. We live in an “Age of Migration” that began after the second world war and has been accelerating since the mid-1980s (Castles and Miller 1998). A number of factors have contributed to this: growing inequalities in wealth between North and South impel people to move in search of economic opportunities; political, ecological and demographic pressures force some people to seek refuge outside their homeland; and ethnic and religious strife, from Africa to the Middle East to Southeast Asia, lead to mass exodus. In some developing countries, emigration is one aspect of the social crisis that accompanies integration into the world market and modernization.

The result is 21st century cities of extraordinary cultural diversity, cities that are multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multiple. This creates challenges of living together in one society for people from diverse cultures. Migrations change economic, demographic and social structures, and the associated cultural diversity can call into question longstanding notions of citizenship and national identity. Influxes of migrants can lead to the spatial restructuring of cities and regions, in which sometimes the very presence of new ethnic groups leads to the destabilizing of the existing social order. In this new “ethnoscape” (Appadurai 1990), ambivalent new communities are thrust together with nostalgic older ones, and xenophobic fears can quickly turn into territorially based racist politics as the new mix of cultures projects itself onto the urban landscape.

When newcomers with different histories, cultures, and needs appear in existing communities, their presence can be experienced as unsettling to the “oldtimers”, who may perceive their whole way of life as being challenged. There is a complicated experiencing of fear of “the Other” alongside fear of losing one’s job, fear of a whole way of life being eroded, fear of change itself. This fear is a great threat to the future stability of the multicultural or “mongrel” cities (Sandercock 2003) of the 21st century. Our film explores how one city, and one neighbourhood, have been involved in a positive way in addressing the challenge of integrating immigrants from different cultures, engaging in the active construction of new ways of living together.

The reality of neighbourhoods with increasing numbers of “strangers”, or newcomers as we call them in Canada, is becoming a familiar one across Europe. But most of the European cities are at a much earlier stage of accepting the reality of immigration, and of thinking about urban and social policies that can assist integration, reduce tensions, and help to build new, more intercultural communities. It was our intention, in making this film, to provide an example of how one neighbourhood has done this very successfully, albeit not without significant struggles along the way. The film documents the sociological imagination that has made this possible.

But there are of course important differences in political, legal, cultural, and social context, between Canada and European countries. It is the intention of this book, then, to sketch in those differences, to explain what philosophies and policies have made integration successful in Canada, and how these might (or in some cases, might not) translate into the European context. At the very least, we hope our film and book stimulates a more open and less tense and stereotyped conversation in European cities about the presence and contribution of immigrants.

Part I

provides the Canadian context

In **Chapter 1**, we provide some basic information about Canadian immigration and settlement policies, entrance filters and immigrant rights, settlement services, negative elements and difficulties, and the guiding philosophy behind integration, that of multiculturalism. We discuss the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act as part of a political

and legal framework that encourages immigration and establishes and protects immigrants' rights, including their right to their own culture.

In **Chapter 2**, we focus on Vancouver as a multicultural city and recipient of the second largest number of newcomers in Canada each year. We describe the very dramatic demographic changes of the past thirty years and how the city, the province, and grass roots organisations have responded to this new reality. We emphasise the importance of State-civil society collaboration in managing immigrant integration, outline the role of the municipality and of the Planning Department in the City of Vancouver, [within the much larger metropolitan area, population 2.3 million], and discuss some specific interventions and ongoing and evolving policies for coping with the ever-changing influx of newcomers.

Chapter 3 takes an even closer look at how it is possible to “change the mind of a city”, establishing a multicultural readiness in the host society, by detailing a case study of an institute that was established by the City in the 1980s to tackle antiracism and diversity training in the public sector.

Part 2

concentrates on the case study that is the subject of the film, namely the Collingwood Neighbourhood House

Chapter 4 introduces the idea and history of Neighbourhood Houses, their origins in the 19th century Settlement House movement in London, and their adaptation in the New World, in recognition of the numbers of immigrants in some urban neighbourhoods, even one hundred years ago. We describe the mission, the governance, the programs and services, and the achievements of contemporary Neighbourhood Houses, as well as some of the challenges they face.

Chapter 5 zeroes in on the subject of the film, the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) as a local gathering place which is also a unique social institution. We explore how the CNH has become a welcoming place for everyone, bridging cultural differences and building community. We discuss CNH's mission and vision, and core values such as respect, relationship building, collaboration, inclusivity and accessibility, and social

justice. We also note the special role of creativity and the arts in community building, and the special place of celebrations in the neighbourhood.

In **Chapter 6**, Paula Carr (the Executive Director of CNH) and Val Cavers (former Coordinator of Settlement Services) reveal some of the stories that were not told in the film, stories of resistance to change, stories of initial fears of and hostility towards newcomers. These stories illustrate just how much has changed during the past twenty two years in this neighbourhood, and how this change came about through the use of extensive consultative processes to deal with people's fears and opposition to particular projects and policies. There are also stories about the ongoing challenges of inclusiveness, which today is manifest in the attempt to offer services and assistance to homeless people in the neighbourhood.

Chapter 7 draws all of this together, asking what CNH's story can teach other cities about building intercultural communities in the mongrel cities of the 21st century, and what is important about the Canadian and Vancouver contexts in enabling such a success story. To go from being a total stranger, to a service recipient, to a full member of a neighbourhood, able to contribute to the lives of fellow residents, is a major life transition for newcomers. Making that transition possible is the extraordinary achievement of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

Chapter 8 concludes this section by elaborating the elements of a theory of cosmopolitan urbanism: a sociological imagination of living with difference; a deep political and psychological understanding of difference; and an intercultural political project that addresses the shortcomings of 20th century multiculturalism. We then connect this theory with the actual achievements of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, as an instantiation of and inspiration for the theory.

Part III

dwells on the relationships between film, social research, and action

Chapter 9 is a sensemaking narrative of the research process which led us to build the documentary about the Collingwood Neighbourhood House. It is an inside view of the different stages, the challenges and the goals which constantly accompanied and shaped our inquiry. Many elements played a significant role in this process: the initial collective work of the students which was carried out during the class "Digital Ethnographies

and urban planning”, the Cosmopolis Laboratory in the School of Community and Regional Planning, the qualitative research approach, the interviews and the interviewees, the editing phase and the construction of the story, the dissemination process and the educational package.

Chapter 10 offers a more general reflection about the use of film languages in the planning field. It is an inquiry into the new potentialities of digital storytelling and explains the reasons which convinced us to embrace information and communication technologies (ICTs) in telling the story of the CNH. Digital languages can strengthen the expressive possibilities of storytelling, connecting a qualitative study of the city to the potentialities of deeply communicative languages. Digital qualitative inquiries expressively communicate narratives through aesthetic involvements which are crucial in urban interactions. They can give expression to inspiring stories which are potentially able to trigger further planning processes, showing possibilities and sense worlds.

We hope that this book expands on and enhances your understanding of what you see in the film. While the book provides political and legal context, description, and policy analysis, the film provides cascading layers of narrative, much of it through the voices of immigrants themselves, thereby conveying in a more deeply qualitative and experiential way what it feels like to be a stranger in a new land.

Vancouver, Canada

Leonie Sandercock

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Part I

Context



Chapter 1

Inventing a Multicultural Nation: Canada's Evolving Story

Leonie Sandercock with Samara Brock

1.1 Introduction

We have written this book to accompany and complement our documentary film, “Where Strangers become Neighbours”, which tells the remarkable story of the integration of immigrants in one neighbourhood in Vancouver, Canada’s third largest metropolis. But that local success story cannot be fully understood without providing some historical and geographical context that locates Canada as a white settler society based on immigration, and some political context that delineates the ways in which the nation has invented and reinvented itself through always evolving and contested policies that both “manage” immigration *and* manage the inevitably associated debates about national identity. These latter debates led to and helped produce Canada’s well known philosophy and policies of multiculturalism, as a way of managing the ethno-culturally diverse nation that is the result of Canada’s approach to immigration.

The intellectual project of this book is to explore both the political and sociological imaginations that have informed this ambitious attempt at nation building through immigration. Almost a century ago, the Liberal government that was led by Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier decided that immigration was Canada’s destiny and proposed an answer to the question of immigration and identity by telling new arrivals, “Let them look to the past, but let them also look to the future: let them look to the land of their ancestors, but let them also look to the land of their children”. These words are as relevant today as they were far-sighted then, and they happen to succinctly capture the tightrope that Canadian multicultural policy has teetered along as it has sought to adjust to new waves of immigration since the 1970s from predominantly non-Anglo-European source countries. Canada, then, can be seen as a remarkable social and political experiment in constructing a nation that is not, or rather is no longer based on assumed cultural homogeneity as the foundational citizenship criterion. Precisely *how* national immigration policies propelled by an economic and geo-political

rationale translate into ways of actually living together in cities and neighbourhoods is the underlying fascination of and curiosity behind our film and this text.

This chapter provides an account first of Canada as a white settler society pursuing nation building in socially exclusionary ways from the 19th century until the 1960s and, since then, of the co-evolution of immigration policy and multiculturalism policy. We trace the changing criteria for and categories of immigration policy. And we chart the concomitant emergence of legislation and legal changes establishing not only the rights of immigrants but also the institutions and social policies that would shape their integration (as opposed to assimilation) into Canadian society. The final part of the chapter introduces some of the ongoing controversy and debates that surround both the idea and the actually existing practice of multiculturalism.

In the next chapter we situate Vancouver within Canada's political and economic history as a frontier in the westward expansion of Canadian society and therefore as a destination for much of Canada's internal migration; as the entrepot for the opening up of the resource rich province of British Columbia; as Canada's gateway, since the 1970s, to the Asia-Pacific region and therefore the recipient of new sources of immigration as well as capital flows; and as a city that has undergone not only an economic transformation since that time, but also a social, cultural, and political transformation. Vancouver, now widely regarded as a fascinating, cosmopolitan city, is underpinned by a unique institutional infrastructure for immigrant integration, and that will be the focus of Chapter 2.

1.2 Canada as a New World Settler Society

Long before Canada's emergence as a modern nation state and industrialized democracy, the lands it now occupies were inhabited by indigenous peoples. With histories going back in some cases ten thousand years, the lifeways of these First Nations peoples were initially unsettled by contact with the first European arrivals, the fur traders, and ultimately dislocated and dispossessed by successive waves of European settlers who spread across continental North America claiming land for farming, urban development and resource extraction. These settlers not only brought with them diseases such as smallpox and measles that were lethal to indigenous peoples but also brought an equally lethal colonial mentality that asserted the superiority of European civilization. This mentality provided the





ideological justification for the systematic, state-led destruction of indigenous cultures from the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth (Harris 2002; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, vol. 1, 1996).

In this respect, the founding of Canada as a modern nation state followed the same trajectory as other new world societies (Australia, New Zealand, the United States and South Africa), born in the Age of Empire, appropriating land, dispossessing original inhabitants, and pursuing nation building from an immigrant stock peopled entirely from Europe. These white settler societies were all intrinsically immigrant societies and, in Canada's case, born from a particular history of bi-cultural and bilingual compromise, as the two dominant settler groups from the 18th century until the mid-20th were French and English-speaking communities. Thus two fundamental sets of national policy concerns have developed side by side, defining and redefining the nation: the first is immigration policy, the second and more recent is the policy of multiculturalism.

Canada's immigration policy has always been driven opportunistically as well as ideologically: on the one hand by the need to populate and develop a country of vast and challenging geographic scale; on the other, by the desire to reproduce European civilization. Thus, during the expansion of the latter part of the 19th century, with the gold rushes of the north west and the pushing of the railway line across the continent, Chinese male

immigrants were welcomed as labourers but laws were quickly developed to prevent them from bringing families with them or joining them, or owning property except in restricted areas. From the late 19th century onwards, immigration laws were unashamedly racially based. Europeans were welcome, non-Europeans were not. The single most significant change in this approach to immigration policy did not come until the passage of the Immigration Act of 1967 which, in response to the labour shortages of the post-war boom, explicitly ended the racially and culturally based criteria for immigration.

Over the next twenty years or so, the longstanding global pattern of migration to Canada was turned almost completely upside down. The combined proportion of immigrants admitted from Europe (including the UK) and the USA fell from 85% in 1966 to 50% in 1975, 30% in 1985, 22% in 1995, and was just over 21% in 2004 (Hiebert 2006: 7). In this latter year, 47% of immigrants landing in Canada came from the Asia-Pacific region, 22% from Africa and the Middle East, and 9% from Latin America. In other words, almost four fifths of recent immigrants have arrived from “non-traditional” source countries, presenting significant challenges in both economic and social integration to which we will return.

The new Immigration Act of 1967 instituted a “points system” that ranked potential immigrants according to age, education, labour skills, language skills, and financial resources. The underlying economic rationality of Canadian immigration policy is readily apparent from this points system and from the make-up of immigrant categories. There are essentially three categories of immigrant: economic immigrants, family class immigrants, and refugees. Today, the majority of newcomers enter as economic immigrants (58% in 2000), followed by family class immigrants (27%) and refugees (13%).

But the term “economic immigrant” can be misleading, often represented in the media as wealthy businessmen buying their way into the country. In fact, the economic category contains three quite different groups within it.

The first is a very broad category of skilled workers who are identified through the points system and offered entry precisely because of their technical, trade, or professional skills. The second are business immigrants, who come as entrepreneurs, investors, or self-employed business people. The self-employed program is the most restrictive, pertaining mostly to athletes, cultural performers and artists, and farmers. The entrepreneur class was created to facilitate the admission of those individuals

intending to establish businesses in Canada. They must have owned and operated a successful business, have a minimum net worth of at least C\$300,000, and a credible plan for establishing a business in Canada that will employ at least one person beyond the entrepreneur. These immigrants have three years to fulfill their obligation to establish a business, and must furnish proof of doing so to maintain their status as permanent residents. Investor class applicants are required to have a higher net worth of C\$800,000 and to make a minimum investment of \$400,000, which is placed with the Receiver General of Canada. And thirdly, there are specifically designated categories of economic immigrants to fill lower-level service positions, the best known of which offers entry to caregivers or domestic workers under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). These workers often work for wages below the statutory minimum in exchange for the opportunity of gaining permanent resident status (leading to citizenship) after 24 months employment. This program has brought significant numbers of Philippina women to Canadian cities in the past decade.

As a generalization, it is fair to say that the business immigrants are the wealthiest, those in domestic employment are among the poorest, and the fortunes of skilled workers are very uneven (Leaf 2005; Hiebert and Ley 2003; Pratt 2003).





This latter issue, of skilled workers unable to find employment appropriate to their skills, is widely seen as the single most striking *failure* of Canada's approach to immigration in the last forty years. (We return to this issue and its probable causes later in the chapter). The single most striking *success* of immigration policy in this same period is the fact that it has enjoyed not only broad bipartisan political support but also that it has widespread public support such that, even at times of specific controversy, the overall approach and actual levels of immigration have not been seriously questioned. And these levels are significant. While the United States continues to be the single largest recipient of international migrants in absolute numbers, Canada takes in approximately twice as many, proportional to total population. Australia is the only country with a higher proportion of foreign born residents, with 21% compared to Canada's 18% and 12% in the USA (Statistics Canada 2003; Hiebert and Ley 2003). What is remarkable is that politicians and policy makers seem to have succeeded in making the case over these past four decades for the economic necessity of immigration. As a highly developed, indeed rich country, with relatively high wages, Canada has essentially completed its own demographic transition: that is, we now have less than replacement rates of natural population growth. The implication of this demographic reality is that the nation is reliant on a continuing intake of immigrants in order to maintain both productivity levels and viable dependency ratios between the working and the aging sectors of the population. So the need for immigrant labour is clear.

What is not so clear, given the Anglo-European origins and ideology of the country's founding as a settler society, is just how the Canadian state has managed the socio-cultural transition from the traditional European source countries to an acceptance of newcomers from Asia and Africa, the so-called "visible minorities" (see Fig. 1.1) whom restrictive immigration policies had previously labeled "non-preferred" (Wallace and Milroy 1999). To comprehend that transition we must turn to the role of multiculturalism policy and its co-evolution with immigration policy since the 1960s.

1.3 Immigration and National Identity: The Evolving Multicultural Response

When a nation state is constructed out of an immigrant population there is always a question of what constitutes membership in the nation, who is a citizen and who is not, and what all this says about national identity. For European nations the answer has always seemed (deceptively) simple. Citizenship is based on long histories of assumed shared cultural and racial identity. This is not so for settler societies, and for Canada it has been doubly complicated by the fact of not one but two "charter groups", the Francophone and Anglophone communities. It was the rivalry between these two groups, often referred to as the (still unresolved) "Quebec question", and the secessionist pressures that arose from desires for cultural recognition among Francophone residents, that seriously unsettled the nation state in the 1960s. Provoked by these pressures and associated terrorist stirrings, a Royal Commission on National Identity was set up and spent five years having conversations with citizens across the country. The favored solution to this problem of the "two solitudes" (Anglophone and Francophone) was to declare Canada an officially bi-cultural nation, and in 1969 the Official Languages Act made Canada officially bilingual. But the result of the five years of conversations through the 1960s was a growing understanding that significant numbers of residents related to neither of these so-called "charter groups". It was for this reason that, in 1971, Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's multiculturalism policy was invented, to acknowledge the increasingly diverse demographic profile of the postwar period (Hiebert et al. 2003; Ley 2005; Fleras and Elliot 1999).

Beginning, then, in 1971 when Canada became the first country in the world to introduce an official policy embracing the idea of multiculturalism, this new self-understanding became permanently embedded in political discourse and the Canadian imagination (Canadian Heritage 2006b).

As the idea of multiculturalism evolved, it came to encompass the rights of individuals to retain their cultural practices (as opposed to the idea of assimilation to the dominant culture, or the “melting pot” approach of the USA); the provision of social services to new immigrants; and anti-discriminatory policies (Hiebert et al. 2003).

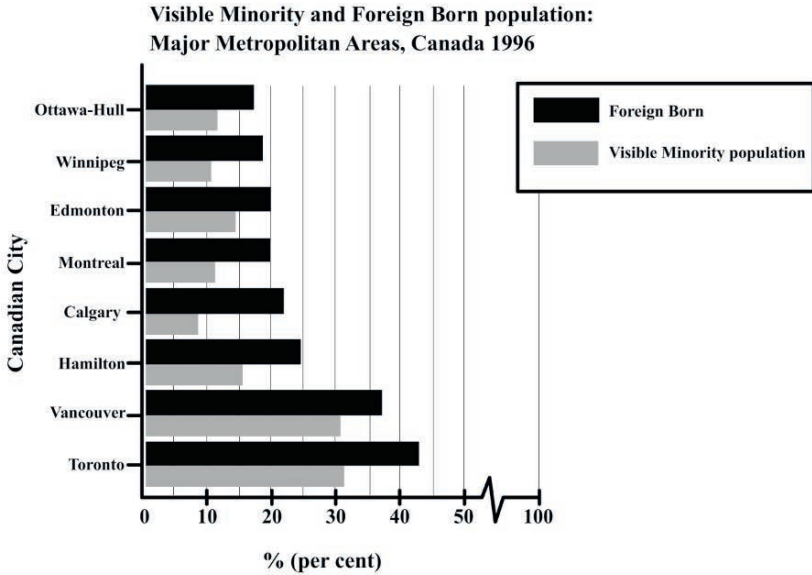


Fig. 1.1 Visible minority and foreign born population (Canadian Heritage 2006a)

Multiculturalism thus became deeply embedded in a broad range of laws, policy statements and international agreements including the Employment Equity Act (1986), the Pay Equity Act (1985), and the Multiculturalism Act (1988). As a central tenet of Canadian society, it was finally enshrined in the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canadian Heritage 2006c). These last two have been particularly important. The legislative and Charter frameworks established since the 1980s now require all federal institutions to formally adopt multicultural policies as part of their working mandates, and the Ministry of Canadian Heritage which implements multiculturalism policy is supported by the position of Minister of State for Multiculturalism. Since the federal government sets policy and establishes funds to implement policies, provincial governments have been forced to follow suit, establishing their own ministries to oversee multicultural affairs. Over the past twenty years, a thick institutional infrastructure supporting the integration of immigrants has evolved, connecting federal,

provincial and municipal governments along with an increasingly important role for non-government organizations, all of which is evidence of Canada's commitment to actively creating a multicultural society. The next chapter will illustrate this institutional thickness by describing in some detail how one city, Vancouver, has adapted to the increasingly diverse immigration flows of the past four decades.



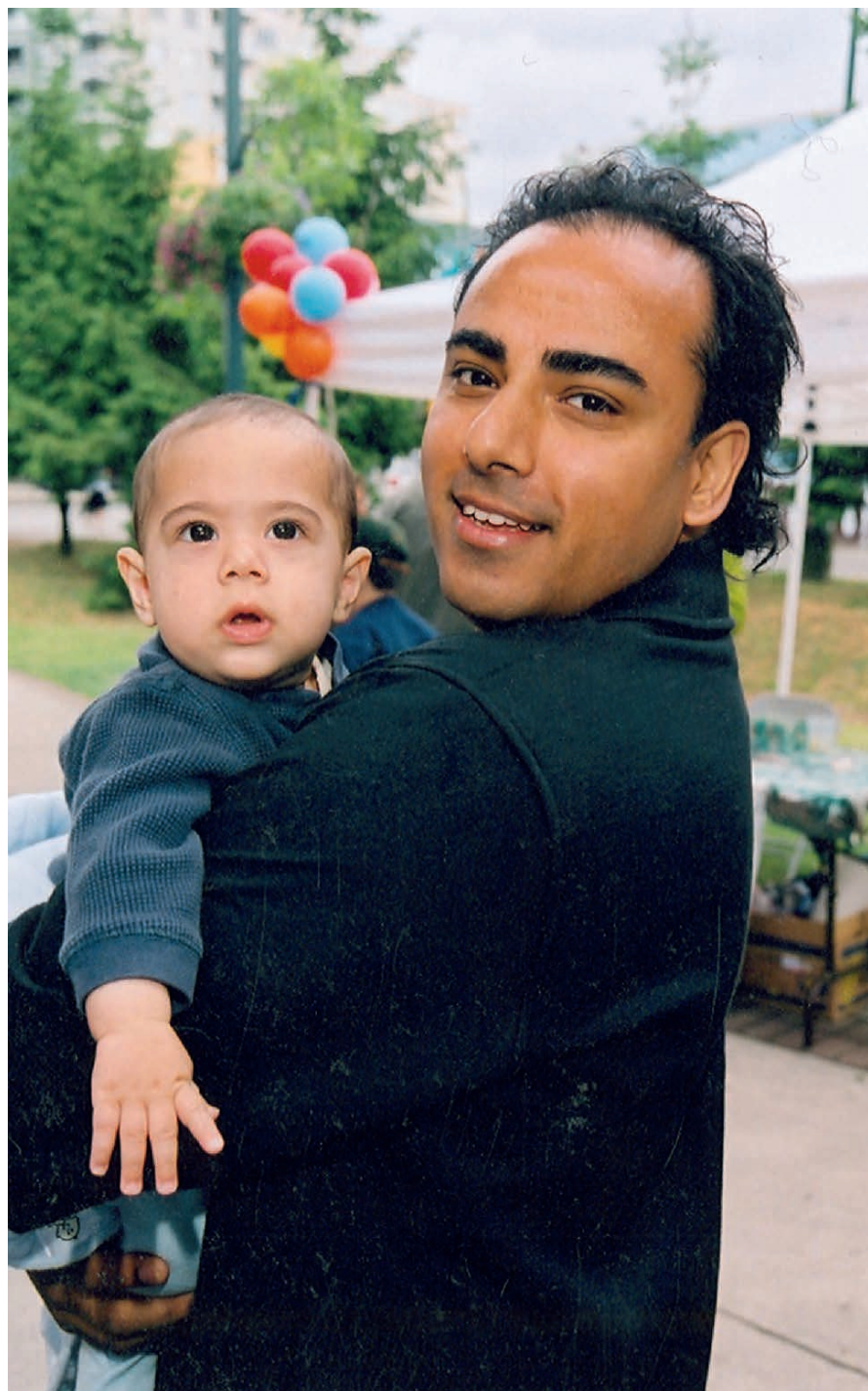
Canadian multiculturalism has encouraged individuals to voluntarily associate with the culture and tradition of their choice, and there has been significant spending, through multicultural grants, to support the maintenance of various cultures and languages and to encourage diverse cultural festivals in public places, as well as the symbolic gesture of public artworks that recognize and celebrate the multiple peoples who make up the nation. As Mahtani (2002: 70) comments, this is “surely a remarkable change from conventional strategies of nation-building”.



Canada's multicultural policy has been driven by the need for continuing immigration to a country of vast area but relatively small population. From its beginnings as a settler society become modern nation, Canada has always required immigrants as labourers, as a stimulus to its economy, and more recently as tax-paying supporters for an ageing population (Fleras and Elliot 1999; Baxter 1998). The problem for legislators and government officials who saw increasing levels of immigration as necessary for national greatness was how to frame Canada's national identity in ways that would be inclusive of the large number of newcomers who were not part of the traditional streams of immigrants from Europe. Early attempts at resolving this issue had centered on shaping immigration laws to ensure that those who came would be readily incorporated into existing, largely Anglo-European, cultural norms. But this has always been an unattainable ideal. Cultural diversity, beginning with the First Nations, and onwards to early Dukhabors (or "spirit wrestlers" from Russia) as well as large numbers of Chinese immigrants in the late 19th century, had always posed a challenge to Eurocentric notions of what it means to be Canadian. Multicultural policy has thus been about more than managing the coexistence of disparate groups of people in the same country. From the beginning, and at its best, it has been about the story of a nation gradually learning to accept multiple identities, multiple histories, and multiple ways of being at home in the land we call Canada. As Leaf explains: "it is helpful to see the Canadian nation state as fundamentally a modern constitutional polity, rather than a society whose national identity is derived from ethno-nationalist loyalties" (Leaf 2005: 284). But this is, necessarily, an evolving story...

1.4 Multiculturalism: The Ongoing Debates

Canadian multicultural policies are often commended for having promoted the importance of multiculturalism as an ideology not only in Canada but around the world (Fleras and Elliot 1999: 318). The federal government has been relatively successful in making multiculturalism an integral component of governance at the federal level. But an ongoing debate continues about whether Canada has actually succeeded in changing the core story of the nation in which its citizens' lives and identities are embedded. The irony of political discourse centering on multiculturalism in Canada (and elsewhere) is that immigrants, while seen as solutions to economic challenges facing the nation, also seem to challenge the very idea of nationhood as perceived by the host society. To understand the underlying reasons for this, we now turn to a brief history of the idea of difference and diversity in Canadian society.



1.4.1 The Power to Narrate: The Construction of the “Problem” of Canadian Diversity and Multiculturalism

There is a necessarily paradoxical aspect of multiculturalism as government policy. In both Canada and Australia, multiculturalism was introduced by the state as a way of managing increasingly diverse streams of immigration, albeit immigration that was understood as essential for continued economic development of the nation. When a nation state adopts multiculturalism as its guiding philosophy, there is an underlying concern that there is a new problem for the state, a problem that needs managing. If the age of global migrations unsettles the established order of things (notions of belonging, of identity, ways of life taken for granted and thought of as “normal”), then the state responds either by attempting to restore the old order through repressive and exclusionary policies, or by writing new rules for shaping and managing the new order of things. The new rules rewrite some old definitions of belonging and citizenship and create new, different boundaries. Multicultural legislation can be seen as an attempt to define, and perhaps to limit, the extent to which the nation will change as a result of immigration. It reflects and addresses a profound unsettling of norms, and fear of change, on the part of the host society, *at the same time* that it appears to celebrate, and perhaps genuinely desires, this change and seeks to move cautiously towards a new national identity (Sandercock 2006).

So, multiculturalism and the associated legislation is at once very pragmatic in its attempt to manage a new situation and very idealistic in seeking to create new ways of defining the nation. Further, it is likely to be, and should always be contested, at one extreme, by those who wish to see no change to the nation as they understand it, and at the other extreme, by newcomers, as they come to experience exclusion in various ways. In other words, multiculturalism is not an entirely altruistic project, and the language of a virtuous tolerance in which it is often couched needs to be constantly challenged by scrutinizing its actual effects in every policy field. What follows is a brief overview of four significant critiques of multiculturalism. The first is a critique from a First Nations perspective; the second, a critique of the ethno-cultural grounding of the philosophy and policies; the third criticism has been that the apparent tolerance expressed in multiculturalism has actually masked an ongoing and institutionalized racism in Canadian society directed at non-whites (Bannerji 1995, 2000; Hill 2001; Henry et al. 2000); and the final critique concerns the discrepancy between discourses of immigration and multiculturalism on the one hand, and labor market practices on the other.

1.4.2 The Indigenous Critique

Multiculturalism as a guiding political philosophy for the nation presents a significant problem for indigenous communities who argue that their claims, which go beyond calls for “cultural recognition” to demands for land and sovereignty, cannot be accommodated within a multicultural political framework. There is of course a long history behind this impasse, beginning with the ways in which European settlers constructed “the Indian problem” in the nineteenth century.

The first and perhaps most significant problem with multicultural policies is the Eurocentric definition and formulation of these policies (Sandercock 2003; Mahtani 2002; Day 2000; Dei and Sefa 1996; Moodley 1983). Tracing the roots of Canadian multiculturalism back to Western colonial mindsets, Day defines the discourse as one of “Self/Other” differentiation and management (Day 2000: 70). He argues that European discourse on diversity has always been steeped in notions of European cultural superiority. The first instance of a Euro-Canadian ordering of difference came when early explorers encountered aboriginal (First Nations) peoples throughout the continent. They were immediately categorized as “savages” lacking in political organization and thus also lacking any claims to their own land, which, to the European mind, was “terra nullius,” or empty land. First Nations were not just a different people, but an altogether different and inferior race, readily identifiable through their divergence from European norms.

This process of differentiation, definition, and denigration of others by Europeans has a long history. Edward Said was one of the first to outline the underpinnings of this colonization mentality with specific reference to “the Orient” of the European imagination in his pivotal postcolonial text, *Orientalism* (Said 1978). “The Orient”, and thus also “the Oriental” were European inventions that existed in Western thought as the antithesis of all that was considered “Occidental” and therefore norm-giving. Out of this Western discourse “there emerged a complex Oriental suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic,