

The Cultural Costs and Crisis of Diversity

Looking at different definitions of diversity in Canada today

BY MARK WEGIERSKI

It is only by conflating different definitions of diversity in society, that the concept of diversity can be made to appear so highly attractive and beyond question in Canada today. This was also the semantic maneuver that occurred in the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that enunciated the idea that the U.S. government has a “compelling interest” in diversity.

It’s quite clear that virtually any given social community — and especially a college or university — is almost inherently diverse in at least some senses. What the advocates of so-called “diversity” today fail to understand is that plenty of intellectual and cultural diversity can exist at, for example, a university where nearly all of the professors and students are of one ethnicity as well as religion or denomination. There were many such universities for several centuries in most European countries, yet occurred there, astonishingly deep and profound intellectual debates as well as huge scientific breakthroughs. It should also be remembered that such typically multi-ethnic cities in Europe as Vienna had only the most minute percentages of persons that did not belong to groups that had already lived in Europe for centuries.

Obviously, the advocates of so-called diversity or multiculturalism today wish to evoke a climate of intellectual and cultural excitement around the term. This extends, for example, from the spicy food of exotic cuisines mixing in a huge cosmopolitan city, to the said-to-be brilliant intellectual achievements of a diverse education system or university.

What is rarely noticed, is that what this definition of diversity implies about the so-called

mainstream, majority culture, is that it is bland, boring, and more or less worthless without the addition of the exotic spice. It could be argued that this kind of view of the so-called majority culture is possible only where the teaching of a highly inspiring, exciting, and, indeed, glorious historical narrative of one’s nation has been excised from the education system at almost every level. Indeed, one sees that the dominant mode of historical instruction in English-speaking Canada today is to portray traditional Canada, Britain, and indeed all of Western civilization, as little more than a repository of loathsome racism, sexism, and homophobia that has barely been overcome, even by today.

Actually, if one could try to carry the spice analogy a little further, a small amount of spice is quite nice, but a lot of spice is quite likely to kill you.

Interestingly, Quebec has been able to avoid, to some extent at least, the “blame everything on ourselves” narrative. Indeed, because they were seen as victims of British imperialism, the Quebecois nationalists were one of the few European or European-descended nationalisms that were quite congenial to the otherwise usually internationalist Left. However, there has arisen in the last few decades a pejorizing narrative in Canada that sees Quebecois nationalism as some kind of monstrous “Catholic tribal racism.” Nevertheless, when some of the recent leadership of the Parti Quebecois seemed to express a kind of “anti-national nationalism” (at least in regard to Third World immigration), the French-speaking majority of Quebec brought to prominence a party more willing to talk about issues of cultural sovereignty and the problems of the recent, mass, dissimilar immigration to Quebec, the Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ).

So the real meaning of diversity in Canadian society today is the drive to bring in huge numbers of persons from the Third World, in order to “save us” from our own blandness and boredom. Without a

Mark Wegierski is a Toronto-based writer and historian. He is a frequent contributor to The Social Contract.

doubt, the varied perspectives of those Third World people are so much richer, more creative, and more imaginative than our own pale, feeble concepts. Such is the direction of sentiments among many in the self-hating WASP elites in English-speaking Canada today.

A considerable number of consequences can arise from viewing traditional Canada as more or less worthless.

One of these is to intensify the impetus towards the Canadian version of affirmative action, officially called “employment equity” — because it has become impermissible for the so-called majority to attempt to justify better outcomes for itself than for the very latest immigrants. In Canada, “employment equity” officially extends to at least four categories — women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities. Since the percentage of visible minorities (a term officially used by the government) continues to grow in Canada (because of an immigration of about a quarter-million persons per year — of which about 75 percent are visible minorities, according to official statistics), the perception that there aren’t enough such minorities in well-remunerated positions in Canada can easily be exaggerated. One must also wonder whether the “percentage of workforce participation” is meant to reflect the percentage in a given locality (almost half of the population of Toronto in 2006, according to the official Census), or the percentage country-wide (which is much less, of course — a country-wide total of about 17 percent, according to the 2006 census).

Because of the overwhelmingly urban focus of Canada today, what happens is that Canada virtually becomes culturally defined by a few trendy and/or grungy neighborhoods in Toronto. So the Toronto “node” dominates a vast hinterland periphery.

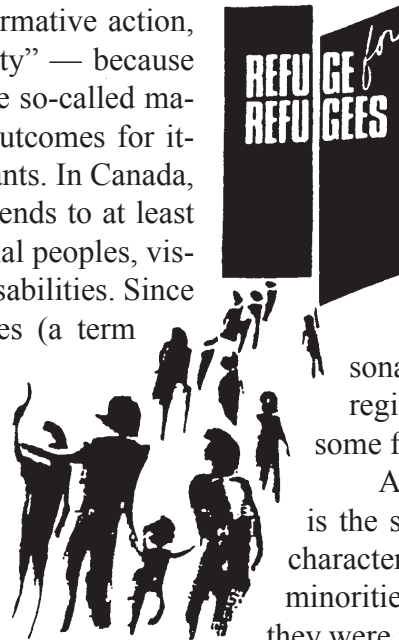
Another issue is that when inequalities in levels of education and income are shown to exist between the so-called majority and certain visible minority groups, the only currently acceptable explanation of the cause for this is blaming the bigotry, racism, or

systemic racism allegedly carried out by the majority. The majority culture is then required to attack itself even more thoroughly, to become even more self-abnegating vis-à-vis these minority groups.

Among the consequences of what could be called “the diversity regime” in Canada — which aims to prevent any meaningful criticism of the current state of affairs — is the attempt to eradicate any genuine intellectual diversity or diversity of thought. In the last several months, at least some attention has been given in the Canadian media as to the extent to which the federal and provincial Human Rights Commissions and similar tribunals serve to stifle freedom of speech in Canada. The direction towards which Canada is moving appears to be one where any rather pointed but still reasonably voiced opposition to “the diversity regime” tends to become characterized as some form of “hate speech”.

Another consequence of the system is the sharp division between what could be characterized as “preferred” or “accredited” minorities, and those groups that — although they were indeed culturally distinct from WASPs — are now presumed to be part of “the oppressive majority.” These are most prominently the so-called “white ethnics” such as Eastern and Southern European groups — especially Ukrainian- and Italian-Canadians. It was indeed curious that in a society awash in funding for multiculturalism, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO) was permitted to wither on the vine and has now shut down most of its activities. It may be conjectured that the main reason for this was that the MHSO was one of only a few institutions centered around multiculturalism that was largely controlled by “white ethnics.”

The frequently fascinating national literatures of Eastern and Southern European groups, and their colorful folk cultures, could have been considerably enriching to the so-called Canadian mosaic or kaleidoscope, but — with some notable exceptions as in the case of the Ukrainian-Canadians —



they have mostly disappeared from the current-day Canadian cultural scene. Indeed, it is striking how much apparently strong identities such as the Polish have dissolved away almost completely in Canada. Today, there are no federal M.P.s, no opinion columnists in major newspapers, virtually no prominent authors of books by recognized publishers, and virtually no prominent professors in the social sciences and humanities who could be identified as belonging to the Polish-Canadian community. So with regard to the increasing attenuation of some “white ethnic” groups, it could indeed be argued there is not *enough* support for diversity in Canada.

Observing the predicament of the “white ethnics” in Canada leads to one of the most vexing questions of late modernity — the disappearance of most of real high culture and authentic popular culture through the process of what has been termed mass-mediatization and consumerism. Indeed, there emanates from America (or rather from its “bicoastal” media structures) a debased high culture and a vulgar pop culture, focused mostly on advertising- and brand-driven consumerism, that relentlessly wars against traditional society in America itself and around the globe.

Traditional Canadian culture has been annihilated from at least three directions: the all-pervasiveness of the American-derived pop culture; the fragmenting effects of multiculturalism; and the failure by the official custodians of Canadian culture (such as those typified by the so-called CanLit) to resist the excesses of multiculturalism and most aspects of the American pop culture.

What has emerged today in Canada is that the most exotic customs of Third World peoples are often rigorously defended by the system, whereas a healthy self-regard for one’s one civilization is seen as virtually forbidden.

Doubtless, the “white ethnic” fragment-cultures in Canada that point to more traditional European societies which continue to have a greater respect for themselves (as is the case especially in

Eastern Europe) and more traditional social *mores*, are seen with considerable disdain by the WASP elites. They remind these elites not only of a horrid (European-derived) traditionalism that Canada is said to have safely left behind decades ago, but also that more traditional types of existence may still be possible for European and European-descended peoples, even today. Certainly, there appears to be no impetus of governmental, media, or corporate concern on behalf of “white ethnic” groups.

As for the reasons that the WASP elites still remain so prominent, it is possible that they are the most politically correct group in the country. Thus these elite WASPs will typically support each other strictly on the basis of ideological congruity, and certainly not because of a mutually held ethnic affiliation.

Somewhat ironically, these self-hating, guilt-ridden WASP elites are one of the main elements steering Canadian society towards a multiculturalism ever more intensively focused on visible minorities.

At the same time, these elites are mostly well served by what has been termed late capitalism — which inclines them even more towards transnational and globalizing stances.

It appears that any tendencies counter to these multifarious processes can arise only from the inherently more patriotic lower-middle and working classes and their often-harried intellectual champions.

Since there appears to be, from the current-day vantage point, very little chance of reducing mass, dissimilar immigration to Canada, all the problems and issues around diversity, multiculturalism, globalization, and the demise of traditional Canada, are likely to intensify over the coming decades.

It could be argued that the more genuine cultural diversity seen in a somewhat traditional, mostly European-descended Canada has been replaced by a multiculturalist — or rather multiracial — diversity that really embraces mainly *one* dominant culture of left-liberalism, political correctness, and consumerism — with the most racially heterogeneous population on Earth. ■

