Chapter 10

Immigration and multiculturalism undermine culture and security in Canada

Salim Mansur

An immigrant society is generally reluctant to pose the question and examine how immigration over several generations might be changing its core identity. This reluctance might be even greater in an immigrant society whose future growth and prosperity are viewed as irreversibly tied to the flow of new immigrants, while efforts required to keep secure its core identity are considered to be of secondary importance. In such a situation, the core identity of an immigrant society is flexible and changing without any clear vision of what it will be in the future.

Canada is one of these immigrant societies. Over the past few generations, since the middle of the last century, Canadians in general have gradually come to the view their country's future growth and prosperity as being increasingly tied to keeping an open-door immigration policy and accepting of immigrants from around the world. It is a delicate question if Canada has reached a tipping point of dependency on immigration but the social indicators suggest that Canada is headed in that direction.

Given this fact, one question concerns the implications of such dependency in the light of the current demographic trend of an aging population and declining fertility rate among Canadians. A second question is

how immigration that alters the ethnic profile of Canada might also alter the country's cultural identity as a unit of the West as a civilization distinct from other civilizations. In this paper, I offer a few propositions for consideration in weighing the pros and cons of an open-door immigration policy in the context of the current demographic trends in Canada and the politics of multiculturalism that came into vogue since the nineteen-sixties.

The West, immigration, and multiculturalism

Migration in the contemporary world is largely a unidirectional movement of people from non-Western societies and cultures to the West, which consists of advanced industrial democracies with shared values of politics and culture shaped by Christianity and the revolutions in science and philosophy of the Enlightenment, and resting on the inheritance of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations: the countries of Europe, North America (excluding Mexico), Australia, and New Zealand. These countries have been the cradle of modern politics identified with democracy based on the notion of popular sovereignty; secularism as separation of church and state; liberalism as the idea of individual rights and freedom; equality as the principle of each individual, irrespective of gender or religion, being equal to another under the rule of law; and government deriving its legitimacy from, and accountable to, the people. These ideas emanating from the Western revolution in politics have travelled around the world and penetrated into other cultures in varying degrees but it is the sum total of these ideas and their further refinement over time that has defined the West as a civilization separate and apart from the Chinese, Indian, or the Islamic civilizations.

The important point to note in regard to the West as a distinct cultural unit or civilization is that the most effective contemporary assault upon this idea comes from within, through the politics of multiculturalism, as in Canada. The West is not monolithic in ethnolinguistic terms or, in religion, since the one universal church of Christianity splintered in the Middle Ages; and, moreover, the West divided into nation-states has meant modern politics spread unevenly within its civilizational boundaries. Yet, the distinctiveness of the West as a civilization has stood out since the early nineteenth century. Over this period, a large and growing gap

in scientific and technological achievements and the level of income and wealth has developed between the West and the non-Western civilizations.

Unfortunately, the politics of Canadian multiculturalism is based on the notion that all cultures represented within an immigrant society are more or less equal, and deserve equal respect and treatment in politics and law. The idea of equality among individuals, a distinctly Western notion, has been changed to embrace equality among cultural groups. This change can be viewed as implying that the culture of the West is not distinctly better or more advanced than other cultures. The politics of multiculturalism in Canada discourages (if "prohibit" is too harsh a word) the majority population from demanding assimilation of minorities originating from a variety of non-Western cultures. Multiculturalism promotes and requires accommodation of ethnocultural minorities by the host society, a policy that has led in Canada to the encouragement and growth of *identity* politics. Consequently, multiculturalism together with an open-door immigration policy loosens the host society from its inherited culture.

Such a loosening is seen by some as a positive development. For example, John Ibbitson writes:

> Canada is the world's most successful country because it is profiting from the explosive creative forces that are unleashed when people of different races, cultures, and lifestyles live together and bond. Just as English has emerged as the world's most robust language by virtue of its being a mongrel tongue, so too are Canadians a mongrel people, a mélange. (2005: 3–4)

Similarly, Michael Adams sees Canada evolving as an "unlikely utopia" of ethnic diversity and multicultural harmony where there "is ample empirical evidence to suggest Canada *is* special, both in its social conditions and in the way its people (Canadians new and old) respond to those conditions" (2007: x).

However, some Canadians have found that multiculturalism and immigration have had negative effects by forcing them to change their own culture. Thus, recently the town of Herouxville in Quebec produced a charter in which its citizens declared that cultural accommodation is not a one-way street and that it is for immigrants to learn how to accommodate

to the settled ways and lifestyle of the town. The existence of the Herouxville Charter was responsible in part for the creation of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission by the Quebec government to examine the public discontent concerning the concept of "reasonable accommodation." The Commission's report, *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation* (Bouchard-Taylor, 2008), acknowledged the existence of tensions within Quebec society between the majority Quebecois and the ethnic minorities and recommended that civil society and government make more efforts to ease tensions and to work towards reconciliation among cultures in the province.

A majority of Canadians appear to have accepted the notion that multiculturalism has positive effects on Canada, which in turn has allowed federal governments to commit the country permanently to an open-door immigration policy and no federal political party can afford to change it in the foreseeable future. Canadians sensitive to the negative impact of multiculturalism, like the proponents of the Herouxville Charter (Drouin and Thompson, 2007), tend to be viewed by politicians and the media as being at the margin of Canadian society. However, the critics of multiculturalism may well influence Canadian politics in the future. The debate over "reasonable accommodation" could be characterized as the prologue of the sort of public discussion waiting in the wings of Canadian politics, especially if there were more incidents of global terrorism like 9/11 in the United States, the subway bombings in London and Madrid, and others. Huntington (1996) in his seminal work had suggested that there would be a "clash of civilizations" that would lead to growing incidents of global terrorism and identity politics.

The West's vulnerability

During the seven years since 9/11, Canada has been spared terrorist attacks on her soil like those executed in the United States, Spain, and Britain. This could be due to luck and successful intelligence gathering by Canadian security forces; but it is no reason for complacency. The record shows that many terrorists reside in Canada and have exported terrorism abroad from Canadian soil (Bell, 2005).

In Canada, it has become very difficult to engage in open discussion of the impact on culture resulting from the open-door immigration

and multiculturalism policies. It is similarly difficult to discuss critically whether these policies and the view of the equality of all cultures have made the country vulnerable to destructive forces within. Such difficulties are likely to increase as Canada becomes ever more dependent on immigration to sustain economic growth while the population is ageing and fertility declines even further.

The public discussion in Canada needs to come to terms with the threat to the country's cultural and civilizational character as secular, liberal-democratic, and predominantly Christian in origin is threatened by open immigration and multiculturalism. This discussion must consider the existence of attacks on the United States and other Western countries by Arab-Muslim[1] terrorists in the context of a global "clash of civilizations" while at the same time it must recognize that the contemporary process of globalization demands openness of society to an unprecedented pace of change and that multiculturalism can help Canada accommodate this change.

The West's demographic shift

The historic shift in the demography of the West, ageing population and declining fertility, which began around the second half of the last century, suggests that the populations of Western countries will decline severely and bring far reaching consequences for their civilization. Demographers estimate the "total fertility rate" (TFR)—or the average number of children born to women of childbearing age—needs to be 2.1 for a society to maintain a stable population over time. A TFR of less than 2.1 indicates declining population and a TFR of 1.3 or lower indicates that population will decline by half in 45 years. The recent compilation of TFR rankings by the United Nations places Niger with the world's highest TFR at 7.2 and Hong Kong with the lowest at 1.0. Among the Western countries, the United States scores 2.04; France, 1.88; the United Kingdom, 1.70; Germany, 1.35; and Italy, 1.29. Canada's TFR stands at present in the middle of the Western countries at 1.52 (United Nations, 2007) but Statistics

1 ◆ My use of the term "Arab-Muslim" refers to the ethnically diverse world of Islam. "Arab" in this usage indicates ethnicity by language since there are Christian Arabs, while "Muslim" signifies people of Islamic faith that include Afghans, Bengalis, Berbers, Javanese, Kurds, Punjabis, Malays, Turks, and so on.

Canada reported in 2004 that the age of mothers giving births has been steadily increasing over the past 20 years and that the fertility rate is likely to fall further (Statistics Canada, 2004, April 19). The case for immigration in Canada is based in part on the existence of these demographic facts and on the desire to maintain economic growth and to assure the financial viability of public pensions and health-care programs.

If fertility does in fact continue to decline and Canada's population falls dramatically, it will be an interesting question for historians in the future to understand why people in Canada and other Western countries made the decisions that brought them to these conditions. They will have to consider that, while technologically primitive cultures in the past have perished or been severely weakened when brought into contact with technologically superior cultures, Western countries went into demographic decline while they were at their civilizational apex, materially, culturally and technologically unthreatened by other cultures.

The paradox of liberal democracy

Liberal democracy, based on the notion of unalienable rights of the individual and the rule of law, is a product of the Western civilization. The basic idea and understanding of the workings of liberal democracy have spread throughout the world but its adoption has been very limited and where it has taken root it remains weak, needs protection, and can easily wither or be uprooted by people attached to their illiberal cultural values. For example, the rise and spread of Islamic fundamentalism or radical and militant Islam across the Arab-Muslim world have undermined any promise of liberal democracy. In its place, we find "illiberal" democracy and the rule of the majority based on cultural and religious values of traditional Islam.

Liberal democracy is the most beneficent and desirable political arrangement for the world and holds the promise of ending wars among nation-states that have marred Western history. However, liberal democracy is deeply vulnerable from the outside given its preoccupation with filling the needs of citizens through the improvement of living conditions and by upholding freedoms even in the face of those seeking to subvert them. As a result, reversals or defeats are due less to the superior power of external foes than to internal weaknesses. In *How Democracies Perish*, Jean-Francois Revel (1983) observed:

> Democratic civilization is the first in history to blame itself because another power is working to destroy it … What distinguishes it is its eagerness to believe in its own guilt and its inevitable result. Democracy's predecessors hid such beliefs as shameful even when they thought, or knew, they were doomed. But democracy is zealous in devising arguments to prove the justice of its adversary's case and to lengthen the already overwhelming list of its own inadequacies. (1983: 7–8)

Revel belonged to the European generation that saw liberal democracies weaken themselves with mistaken guilt, and through the false choice of appeasement delude themselves with the expectation that hostile powers raging against democracies could be persuaded to opt for peace. His words have a powerful resonance in the post-9/11 world if we give credence to Huntington's thesis and acknowledge the Islamist-directed terrorism against the West is a civilizational war, and civilizational wars tend to be wars of religions and cultures.

Loss of traditional faith in the West

Religious or cultural wars are won and lost on the grounds of how confidently and tenaciously antagonists hold to their respective religious and cultural values. The Cold War was fought out between two ideological camps, and one reason the West won it is that it held more confidently and tenaciously to its principles of liberal democracy and capitalist market economy while the Soviet Union and its allies were less firmly committed to their socialist principles. It is undeniable that Christianity played a vital role in buttressing the liberal-democratic West in this war against Soviet Communism since the West, by acknowledging the place of religion in an open democratic society, stood in marked contrast to a Communist system based on militant atheism. It is uncertain how confidently the West holds its civilizational values in the post-9/11 world compared to the tenacity with which Islamists hold theirs while they pursue their declared war against the West. My sense is that this balance favors the Islamists.

The West's demographic decline is accompanied by a loss of traditional faith in Christianity. A 2002 survey by the Pew Research Center on the attitude of wealthy nations towards religion found that affluence

is correlated with declining belief. The United States again was an exception. Nearly 60% of Americans reported religion being important in their lives. The comparative figures for Britain, Italy, Germany, and France were 33%, 27%, 21%, and 11%. The figure for Canada was 30% (Pew, 2002). If the downward trend over the past couple of generations continues, Christianity in Europe and Canada will cease to be a significant social institution. This decline of the role of Christianity in the West is likely to be accompanied by a decreased willingness to defend it and a greater openness to accommodate other faiths. This trend will be strengthened by the Western tradition of tolerance and freedom to pursue religious practices. However, since all major religions, including Christianity, have an in-built capacity for renewal, the declining trend is not certain to continue.

It is also important to note that in Europe the decline of Christianity will almost certainly be accompanied by the rise of other religions practiced by the many immigrants settling there. This process has already become quite pronounced and visible through the growth of Muslim communities in Britain, France, Italy, the Netherland, Denmark and other member states of the European Union.

The demographic bulge in the Arab-Muslim world and *jihad*

The "total fertility rate" in the Arab-Muslim world is the highest in the world and is only exceeded by that of sub-Saharan Africa. The TFRs of a few select countries from the Arab-Muslim world are as follows: Afghanistan, 7.48; Mali, 6.70; Somalia, 6.43; Yemen, 6.02; Palestine territories, 5.63; Iraq, 4.86; Sudan, 4.82; Pakistan, 3.99; Saudi Arabia, 3.81; Jordan, 3.53; Syria, 3.48; Egypt, 3.17; and Bangladesh, 3.22 (United Nations, 2007). This high fertility rate in the Arab-Muslim world has produced a demographic bulge of young people under the age of 25. A high proportion of young men in this age group are unemployed, under-employed, and unemployable due to lack of education and training for the modern economy.

This reservoir of young males has been estimated to number 25 million by 2010 (Spengler, 2005) and is the source of warriors for the Islamist cause. Many of these young men will migrate to Western countries and there some will join the already existing warriors of Islamist *jihad* (war) against the citizens and institutions of countries in Europe

and North America. Interestingly, the large number of young men in the Arab-Muslim world has also fuelled conflict among countries in the region. These conflicts may well spill over into Europe and led Spengler (2005) to speculate that "[b]ecause of mass migration to Western Europe, the worst of the war might be fought on European soil."

Jihadist wars in Western countries involve not only terrorism but importantly also attacks on existing cultural institutions. For example, Islamists have demanded the creation of a parallel legal system based on Sharia law and changes in existing laws and traditions that interfere with Islamic practices such as unequal relationships between men and women, gender exclusion through dress codes, Islamic tradition of divorce and child custody, non-Western inheritance rules, Sharia financing, polygamy, and limits on free speech in discussing Islam. These demands are pushed by Islamist organizations in the West such as the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in the United States and its counterpart or subsidiary in Canada (CAIR-Can), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), the Muslim Student Associations (MSA), and a host of others that Daniel Pipes and Steven Emerson have documented (Pipes, 2002; Emerson, 2006).

Politics of identity and intercultural accommodation

In a world of accelerating change and mass movements of people, existing national identities are threatened and are replaced by new ones. In traditional society, identity has been developed over many generations and is mostly inherited. In a transient society, the search for new identities is deliberately crafted and formed on the basis of nostalgia, myths, and political demands. In the search for new national identities, Western countries have favored individuals over collectivities in the spirit of modernity. This quest threatens the continued existence of the values that are the base of Western identities. Replacement of these values by those of many ethnic groups fostered by the policy of multiculturalism leads to a "mongrel culture" (Ibbitson, 2005: 3–4) without strong and coherent values, except those used in Canada to justify multiculturalism itself. The rise of this "mongrel culture" threatens the existence of Canada's unique Anglo-French identity, history. and culture. This threat

has been felt strongly by the residents of Herouxville and has driven them to develop a charter in an effort to combat this threat.

The recommendations by the Bouchard-Taylor Commission produced in response to the Herouxville initiatives and charter are that "reasonable accommodation" should allow immigrants from non-Western cultures to practice traditional customs like Sikhs wearing *kirpan* (dagger) and Muslim women wearing *hijab* (headscarf) in public. The acceptance of these recommendations is justified on the grounds that Canada has a tradition of tolerating minority cultures that is consistent with the broader policies stemming from the principles of multiculturalism.

The accommodation of non-Western cultures in Canada is based on domestic values and politics. The danger is that in the future, demands from foreign countries and religious organizations will also lead to the demand for, and granting of, accommodations to non-Western cultural values or norms. An example of such a development is found in the effort by member states of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to restrict free speech on Islamic issues in Canada and other Western countries. The instinctive response of Canadian society and governments to such responses is conditioned by real, imagined, or exaggerated guilt about the role of the West in the past development of Islamic countries. Concessions are made and foreign powers are appeased rather than opposed, encouraging them to increase their demands in the future knowing how weak liberal democracies are in their unwillingness and inability to protect their national identities. In Canada, assimilation is not demanded of immigrants and there is no required test of their loyalty, which encourages them to remain attached to their native cultures or faiths. These conditions can foster the making of homegrown terrorists, as occurred in Britain with the London suicide-bombers of Pakistani descent, bringing the risk that terrorism along the lines of the 9/11 events could be repeated in Canada and other Western countries.

Conclusion

The main proposition of this paper has been that open-door immigration from non-Western countries under Canada's multicultural policies and liberal-democratic values has resulted in a growing threat to the country's national identity and security. This threat has confronted the country with

the difficult task of reconciling its desire to conserve the national identity and diffuse the threat of terrorism with the policy of multiculturalism and liberal desires for inclusion and individualism.

Unfortunately, these issues are getting very little attention from the public, media, or politicians, who prefer to treat the threats of global terrorism as questionable and treat open-door immigration policy and multiculturalism as "untouchable" pillars of the modern Canada that for demographic reasons is believed to require a steady influx of immigrants. Politicians as opinion makers and leaders are to be blamed for this absence of any serious discussion of these issues in Canada. Yet, given the nature of Canadian democracy, this behavior is understandable considering the voting power of the immigrant population. As is noted by David Harris, formerly Chief of the Strategic Planning of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS): "Canada's immigration and refugee system has become largely a vote-importing mechanism designed to play on identity politics. It gives no consideration to the kinds and scale of terrorist threats, subversion, and disruption that such massive population movements can facilitate, even at the best of times" (2008: 139).

It would be good for Canada if politicians changed their behavior and encouraged a public discussion of the issues and possible changes to policies, rather than rushing into such a discussion after possible future terrorist acts in Canada or other Western countries or after there have been more militant domestic actions by Canadians bent on protecting their national identity in the spirit of the relatively restrained policies enacted by the citizens of Herouxville.

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