‘I AM CANADIAN’ – OR NOT

Canadian Issues 2024 SS

Introduction

Complicating Citizenship:
From a 'warm bath of belonging' to a cold splash of awareness of complexities, challenges, tensions

By Randy Boswell

Randy Boswell is a journalism professor at Carleton University and a former senior national writer with Postmedia News who covered politics, science and culture while developing a unique specialization in stories about Canadian history. He has served as guest editor of numerous volumes of Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens *for the Association for Canadian Studies, including this present edition of the ACS's flagship publication.*

There's a couple canoeing on the Rideau Canal with the Parliament Buildings in the background. Been there, done that.

There's a full-rack moose, posed majestically, in a wildflower meadow. Seen it. Loved it.

There's a medal-bedecked veteran, perhaps on Remembrance Day, standing in a cemetery. I've been moved many times, too, by that kind of scene: the courage, the sacrifice, the defence of freedom and democracy.

When it comes to appreciating images meant to stir a sense of patriotism, of allegiance, of identity — of gratitude for the privilege of being Canadian — I'm an easy mark.

Those pictures, all found on the cover of this country's official, 68-page, 12-year-old citizenship guide, *Discover Canada*, resonate well with this Anglo-Saxon child of Centennial-era Southern Ontario, born just months before the Toronto Maple Leafs last won the Stanley Cup and the nation celebrated its 100th birthday with a World's Fair in Montreal.

"Citizenship" for this citizen wasn't something to be consciously, probingly pondered. It wasn't a process to navigate, a status to be achieved, an issue to be debated, a trap to be avoided.

It just *was* — something you were born into, like waking up immersed in a warm bath of belonging.

A responsibility? Sure, but nothing too strenuous: Go to school, sing the anthem, obey the rules, cheer on Team Canada, pay your taxes, cast your vote. In return, you get to live in the world's greatest country, swim in pristine lakes, encounter bears with alarming regularity and enjoy the many other blessings of life in a relatively stable, peaceable, prosperous, maple syrup-soaked land.

But this volume of essays about the history of Canadian citizenship — and the challenges faced by the institution of nation-state membership in this country — represents an invigorating splash of cold water for we blissful bathers of Canada.
We learn that citizenship can be viewed as a badge of honour but also as a system of indoctrinating the population in ever-evolving sets of values and narratives serving state imperatives. It's an elusive dream for many but an expensive, burdensome source of aggravation for others — one increasingly being rejected by many applicants-turned-"onward migrants" who no longer embrace the value proposition of becoming Canadian.
And while citizenship is seen as something to be better promoted, nurtured and rejuvenated in the 21st century, it also remains a deep-rooted source of suspicion and hostility for many of the country's Indigenous people, whose resurgent nations within geographic Canada are their own sources of pride, loyalty, vision and community.
Canadian citizenship was created in 1947 after the passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act. Before 1947, both people born in Canada and naturalized immigrants were considered British subjects. On Jan. 1, 1947, the Canadian Citizenship Act came into force and constituted the first nationality law to define persons as Canadian.
The law now stipulates that both Canadian-born individuals and naturalized citizens are entitled to the rights and subject to the duties of citizenship in Canada. But in many ways, Canadian citizenship — its history, evolution, symbolism, processes, economic and political dimensions, flashpoints and more — is not well understood by Canadians.
At the time of application for citizenship, all persons between 18 and 54 must take a test to determine whether they have adequate knowledge of Canada. Those who secure their Canadian nationality must take the Oath of Citizenship. Recently there have been controversial changes to the Oath and to the citizenship guide reflecting fresh perspectives on Canada's history and relevant national responsibilities arising from the past.
Recent studies have also confirmed a significant reduction in newcomer uptake of Canadian citizenship with few explanations as to why that is transpiring or what it implies.
For this edition of *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens,* contributors were asked to reflect on whatever aspects of Canadian citizenship — historical, contemporary or both — they deemed interesting, contentious or important to illuminate. Through essays or interviews, the contributors were invited to consider some of the aforementioned issues while sharing their vision of what it means to be a Canadian citizen in the 2020s and exploring other aspects of citizenship in this country.

University of British Columbia professor **Catherine Broom**, a leading scholar on the history of Canadian citizenship, takes a deep dive into the texts and policies underlying citizenship education in Canada through the many generations since Confederation. She unpacks decades of evolving approaches to instilling values and beliefs about citizenship, highlighting how "the focus on teaching Canada's nation-building

narratives changed by the end of the 21st century as curricular content increasingly problematized these stories."

University of Ottawa sociologist **Elke Winter** and historian **Friederike Alm** of Germany's Goethe University collaborate on an essay documenting what they describe as a long period of "profound and much needed liberalization" of Canadian citizenship that shed many of its "discriminatory monoethnic tendencies," before a more recent period of "neoliberalization" that recast citizenship "as a 'first prize' for successful, self-driven individuals" and began eroding a collective sense of belonging based on "mutual trust and care."

Jack Jewab, president of the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute, presents and interprets findings from a September 2023 survey of more than 1,500 Canadians in which voter participation is examined as an indicator of engaged and effective citizenship. While the results do suggest a correlation between relatively low participation at the ballot box and self-identification as an immigrant or visible minority Canadian, Jedwab cautions that "associating lower immigrant voter participation with a weakened sense of citizenship requires more investigation to determine why this is the case."

Ninette Kelley, a former senior officer with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and co-author of *The Making of the Mosaic: The History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (2010), reflected on Canada's challenges around citizenship in an interview transcribed and excerpted for this volume. She raises concerns about various obstacles — financial and procedural — creating a "a dampening effect on people acquiring citizenship" and thus preventing many would-be immigrants to Canada from cementing their attachment to this country. "By not helping people become full citizens — by not encouraging that project, by creating barriers to it — I think we are working against the objectives of our own act and institutions," Kelley argues.

Dr. Daphne Winland, an anthropology professor at York University, examines three case studies that shed light on challenges and controversies that have emerged around "the stories that we tell ourselves as reflected in citizenship policies, practices and principles." The Canada 150 "celebrations" marking the 2017 sesquicentennial of Confederation, for example, are shown to have conflicted with the state's "disturbing record of historical injustice that disrupts these aspirational narratives" of Canada as a land of "fairness and equality." And the country's responses to refugee crises — including the mass influx of Indochinese "Boat People" in 1979 — raise questions for Winland about whether the "motivations and expectations" of sponsors "cohere with the project of resettling refugees as future citizens."

Andrew Griffith, former Director General of the Citizenship and Multiculturalism Branch at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, closely scrutinizes a range of

challenges facing Canada's immigration and citizenship regimes. While calling for greater transparency of data tracking the Canadian government's handling of citizenship applications and other stages of the process, Griffith urges — among numerous other practical recommendations — the prompt release of the long-awaited new version of the official citizenship guide to replace the current edition, which he describes as "dated in terms of approach, emphasis and examples" and at odds with "the government's inclusion emphasis."

Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson recounts in a wide-ranging interview her leadership of the Senate's 2021 passage of Bill C-8, which revised Canada's Oath of Citizenship to include an explicit reference to the Aboriginal and treaty rights embedded in Canada's Constitution. Sen. Anderson, a "proud Inuvialuk" who represents the Northwest Territories in the Upper House, describes how the Canadian government's push to assimilate Inuit residents of the North in the 20th century — including members of her own family — cast a cloud of suspicion around citizenship and other forms of state disruption of their culture that persists to the present time. But she said the rewriting of the Oath was a significant achievement because seizing "any opportunity to provide education and inform individuals who are non-Indigenous about the Indigenous history of Canada is integral."

Finally, the **Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson** — who served as Canada's Governor General from 1999 to 2005, and later co-founded the Institute for Canadian Citizenship with her husband, the writer John Ralston Saul — describes in an essay the organization's almost 20-year mission to help newcomers to this country integrate into Canadian life. The goal, she writes, is "to help people belong right from the moment they have made the important decision to become Canadian citizens. Belonging is what matters to everybody as a human being and the longing is what we must always try to promote and encourage as a country."

Education in and for National Interests: Reviewing the History of Citizenship Education in Canadian School Curricula and Texts

By Catherine Broom

Dr. Catherine Broom teaches and publishes in the areas of local and global citizenship, history of education, and social studies education at the University of British Columbia. She has published a book — Youth Civic Engagement in a Globalized World — *several book chapters and numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers. She has researched many aspects of citizenship in various countries, and serves on the executive board of the* Citizenship Education Research Network *and as editor of the* Citizenship Education Research Journal. *She is currently carrying out a survey study of Canadians' perspectives on citizenship, identity and citizenship education and gratefully acknowledges the study's funding by the* Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the evolution of education about and for citizenship in Canada through a case-study discussion of the history of curriculum reforms in British Columbia from data collected in primary and secondary historical documents, such as textbooks (texts include Cranny, Jarvis, Moles & Seney, 1999; Cranny & Moles, 2001; Jeffers, 1884; Jenkins, 1918; McCaig, 1930; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro, Morris & Soward, 1935) and school curriculum documents (Department of Education, 1890-1968; Ministry of Education, 1985-2020).

Citizenship education has had a long and close association with public schools. Some educational historians argue that citizenship education was one of the reasons for the development of public schools, citing 19th-century Prussia as the first nation-state to establish schools as a means of building nationalism (Cordasco, 1976; Boyd & King, 1975). Within the context of developing national identities, public school curricula in nation-states, including Canada, has aimed to nurture a sense of allegiance to, and the dispositions needed to maintain (and further develop), the nation-state (Broom, 2024, 2011a, 2011b, 2008; Boyd & King, 1975; Cordasco, 1976; Dilworth, 2003: Heater & Gillespie, 1981).

Curricula has combined teaching factual knowledge of the government and Canada's nation-building myths into history lessons. Myths are understood to be narrative stories that have moral purposes (Kenny, 1999). In this case, nation-building myths involve the selection of particular historical events and their interpretation in ways that link to nationalism through narrative structures and symbols that can elicit emotions (Wertsch, 2002; Kenny, 1999).

Early Canadian Confederation governments aimed to teach nation-building stories (or narratives) in order to develop nationalism through history education (Tomkins, 1986). For example, in 1923, historians at the University of Toronto's History department wrote a report for the National Council of Education (Tomkins, 1986). The university professors argued against the use of history for moral/national purposes and stated that history should not be carefully shaped into nation-building narratives that aimed to teach patriotism.

Examples of Canadian myths in Canadian school texts include: the Royal Canadian police as staunch defenders of a lawless land, the romanticization of the "North," and the myths of the importance of the CPR, of Unity, of Heroism, and of the Wilderness (Francis, 1997). Textbooks used in schools also included the following nation-building narratives: the current form of democracy as a long and arduous process that we should be grateful for (Cranny & Moles, 2001; Jeffers, 1884; Jenkins, 1918; McCaig, 1930; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro et al., 1935); the development of the British parliament as a long, challenging but worthwhile process that was closely associated with the development of democracy

(Jeffers, 1884; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro et al., 1935); and the development of Canada as a story of how first the French (but particularly) the English developed the nation through the establishment of government, laws, the economy, and social structures (Broom, 2011a, 2011b, 2008; Cranny et al., 1999; Jeffers, 1884). This narrative threads together the early settlements of the French and English in Canada, with the development of gradual self-government through responsible government and Confederation. These events are closely associated and woven together into a coherent and convincing narrative (Collective Myth) of the development of the Canadian state as a progressive democratic state worthy of its citizens' love and dedication (Cranny et. al, 1999; Cranny & Moles, 2001; Jeffers, 1884; Jenkins, 1918; McCaig, 1930; McArthur, 1927; Schapiro et al., 1935). This narrative has changed over the twentieth century.

STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA'S NATION-BUILDING NARRATIVES

Since the establishment of public schools in Canada, nation-building narratives found in school textbooks and materials have changed over time.

Prior and up to the 20th Century: British colonial settlers

As a British colonial nation-state founded in 1867, officials considered what and how to nurture a Canadian identity in schools. Curricula and textbooks embedded a nation-building narrative within a British Empire outlook (Angus, 1926, Jeffers, 1884; McArthur, 1927). For example, one of the recommended Civics textbooks, *Citizenship in British Columbia* (Angus, 1926), describes Canada's role internationally and in the British Empire. It explains the duties of citizens, which include being tolerant, following majority rule, cooperating with others, and being patriotic to the point of "sacrificing" themselves to the nation during times of war (Angus, 1926, p. 217). Canadians should "subordinate our interests to the interests of Canada" (Angus, 1926, p. 218). Similarly, McCaig's (1930) text describes the virtues all citizens should have, including courage, unselfishness, loyalty ["Our great and young country has need of our loyal, devoted service" (McCaig, 1930, p. 4)], patience, and justice. The text also uses history to celebrate democracy, through narrating the many sacrifices "our ancestors" made in order to bring citizens the privileges of freedom and democracy they are portrayed as enjoying at the time. The text aims to build national pride and sentiment, and the British Empire is described as "the greatest and the freest that the world has even known" (McCaig, 1930, p. 152). Thus, textbooks aimed to create a feeling of identity and loyalty to the nation-state of Canada, as part of the British Empire.

Mid 20th Century: Settler Canadian Identity, with a Global Outlook

World War II and the development of Human Rights after the war, Canada's final act of "independence" from Britain, the new Canadian Citizenship Act (Troper, 2002) and rapid population growth all had an impact on ideas of what it meant to be Canadian in curricula and texts. Emphasis was placed on education for democracy, which meant valuing each citizen. In the course Social Studies 20, for example, students were to learn that democracy, "is not only a form of government, it is a way of life which seeks to express a great ideal, the ideal of the worth of each person" (Department of Education, 1960, p. 67). Courses aim to build national feeling towards Canada as an independent nation, to develop "a broad, healthy, enthusiastic Canadian patriotism" (Department of Education, 1960, p. 37), while maintaining connections to Europe. For example, students were to study "our British and French background" in the curriculum. Students' "Canadian nationality" was to be developed through historical narratives that taught the story of the development of the nation-state of Canada and European political and economic history. Students learned European history first, and then concluded their education with a Canadian history course. History continued to be conceptualized as playing a role in developing Canadian identity in students: "Man [*sic*] needs roots, something to provide him with a sense of belonging. History can provide this sense of group identity. The necessity of teaching the national story is implied" (Department of Education, 1968, p. 11).

End of the 20th Century: Inclusive Canadian Citizens

Curriculum documents and texts increased attention to equality, equity, Indigenous peoples, anti-racism education, and multiculturalism by the end of the century. These changes can be connected to the increase in attention to equality and human rights that emerged after World War II (Troper, 2002; Russell, 2002), reports such as McDiarmid and Pratt's study (1971), and political policies and legislation, such as the federal policy of Multiculturalism and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

Early 21st Century: Problematizing Grand Narratives

By the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century, education for inclusion and equity were emphasized, and Canadian nation-building narratives were increasingly problematized through the inclusion of the "history of wrongs" carried out by the Canadian government, such as restrictive immigration policies, the World War II internment of Canadians of Japanese descent, and Residential Schools (Ministry of Education, 1985-2020). Curricula also included more attention to Indigenous history and referred to the First People's Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2006) and multiculturalism. Curricula portrayed Canada as a diverse and inclusive society which still has work to do to address social challenges.

CONCLUSION

In the early days of Canada, the content of the history curriculum was used as a means of building Canadian identity (nationalism) in youth, through nation-building narratives. However, this has not been without controversy as some historians have, alternatively, argued for an inquiry/critical thinking approach to teaching history (Tomkins, 1986). The focus on teaching Canada's nation-building narratives changed by the end of the 21st century as curricular content increasingly problematized these stories. Further, over the century, curricula expanded who was included as a Canadian citizen, and separated itself from links to Great Britain (Department of Education, 1890-1968; Ministry of Education, 1985-2020). History has been a vehicle for promoting Canadian identity based on a conception rooted in European colonialism.

How will these narratives continue to change over the 21st century? Events in Canada, as illustrated in news such as the finding of unmarked graves of Indigenous children, the tearing down of statues, and the renaming of streets demonstrate a social conscience for change. Thinking about Truth and Reconciliation, we can consider curriculum to be addressing Truth. How can Canada move forward to Reconciliation? Can we consider our "shared fate" as a nation? Citizenship as shared fate (Williams, 2003; Vitikainen, 2021) argues that citizenship is not based upon a "shared identity" as people can hold multiple forms of such, but rather, citizenship is about recognizing how diverse people with varying identities share contemporary and interconnected conditions and contexts, which are historically-formed and future-oriented, as people can consider what to do about — and how to collaborate about — issues that inextricably connect us together. Data collected in a Canadian-wide study that has invited Canadians to share their ideas of Canadian identity and citizenship shows that Canadians value social and ecological citizenship. Will future citizenship education curricula focus on the social bonds that connect us together, as we work towards a positive "shared fate" on lands now called "Canada"?

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Canadian Citizenship from Trudeau to Trudeau: A Tale of (Neo-)Liberalization

By Elke Winter and Friederike Alm

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Friederike Alm is a PhD researcher at the Institute of Political Science at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. In her concluded dissertation project, she undertook a comparative-historical analysis of the immigration, citizenship, and integration politics in Canada, France, and Germany since 1945.

Introduction

Canadian citizenship, as both an institution and set of normative values, underwent multiple changes since its formal implementation in 1947 (Winter and Madularea 2018). In this paper, we argue that the past sixty years of changes are best understood as a tale of increasing (neo-)liberalization with the liberalization of citizenship starting in the mid-1960s under Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau (*père*), and the neoliberalization of Canadian citizenship beginning in the 1990s and continuing under Canada's current Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (*fils*) until the present day.

Liberalizing Citizenship

During the two decades following Canada's Citizenship Act of 1947, the framing of "good citizenship" emphasized Anglo-conformity and Whiteness. The underlying ethnocentrism remained dominant until the late 1950s. From the 1960s onward, however, Canadian immigration and citizenship policies became gradually liberalized. A major turning point was the replacement of immigration based on "national preference" by the purportedly "colour-blind" point system. The *Official Languages Act* of 1969 recognized the equality of French and English as Canada's official languages and the *Canadian multicultural policy* adopted in 1971 by Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Liberal government officially declared cultural diversity as the very essence of Canadian identity. This pluralist approach is also noticeable in some stipulations of the 1977 *Citizenship Act*, which defines citizenship as a right rather than a privilege and redesigns it "to allow for multiple allegiances and forms of belonging" (Nyers 2010, p. 52).

In the 1980s, an individualist and liberal interpretation of immigrants' ethnic background and "civic" membership in the polity started to replace the previous, more communitarian conception of ethno-cultural membership that emphasized Anglo-Saxon conformity. As such, Canadian citizenship sustained both social (redistributive) rights and individual (human) rights. This trend was reinforced in other legislative measures: 1) the repatriation of the *Canadian Constitution* in 1982 alongside the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, in which multiculturalism and the principles

of equality and social justice are especially evident; 2) the *Employment Equity Act* of 1986, which encouraged affirmative action in the employment of underrepresented groups (women, "visible minorities", members of First Nations, and persons with disabilities); and 3) the adoption of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988.

Neoliberalizing Citizenship

While fears for national unity due to the revival of Québécois nationalism prevented changes to citizenship legislation for more than 20 years (until the early 2000s, Winter 2013), in 1995, an important administrative change took place: a standard 20-question multiple-choice citizenship test replaced the individual citizenship interview with the aims of reducing costs and increasing consistency. The test was based on a new study guidebook *A Look at Canada*. With a pass rate of over 90 per cent, the Canadian citizenship test was essentially symbolic. It has also been identified as a major step towards the "cheapening" of Canadian citizenship by reducing any meaningful conversation between citizenship candidates and (costly) citizenship judges (Joshee and Derwing 2005). In short, the pen and paper multiple choice citizenship test symbolizes the onset of a neoliberal iteration of Canadian citizenship that continues under Canada's current Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Canadian citizenship legislation witnessed numerous alterations under the government of Stephen Harper's Conservative Party (2006–2015). They culminated in the adoption of the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act* in 2014, which aimed at making Canadian citizenship more difficult to obtain and easier to lose. Elsewhere we interpret Harper's citizenship interventions as a "re-nationalization" (Winter and Sauvageau 2015) and "re-communitarization" of citizenship (Carlaw and Winter 2023). The Conservatives emphasized Canada's monocultural British cultural and political heritage and nourished a climate of anxiety over foreign infiltration. At the same time, their policies reinforced the neoliberal undercurrent of what it means to be a Canadian. They also continued to undermine multiculturalism's foundation in social justice considerations. Citizenship was no longer considered a "tool" facilitating societal integration but rather a "reward" for good behaviour and successful economic performance (Adams, Macklin, and Omidvar 2014).

Campaigning on the slogan "a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian", Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party won the 2015 federal election by opposing several controversial Conservative policies: the Liberals allowed women to swear the oath of citizenship with their lips/face covered and banned citizenship revocations for dual nationals (other than in the case of fraud or misrepresentation). They facilitated access to citizenship, and, in 2021, changed the nation's citizenship oath to include that "the laws of Canada, including the Constitution […] recognizes and affirms the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples" (Johnson 2021). Nevertheless, the Trudeau Liberals also kept many of the tightened provisions in place. More than eight years after coming to power, the notorious citizenship study guide *Discover Canada*, implemented by the Conservatives, has still not been revised and continues to advise immigrants not to bring their alleged "barbaric practices" to Canada. The Liberals have also failed to reduce citizenship fees, which still stand at CAD$630 per adult applicant. Economic means, creativeness and self-sufficiency have become critical for successful naturalization, where citizenship is granted to those who demonstrate mastery of the skills and mindset of highly educated individuals (Winter 2021). On the one hand, there is a stark decline of the citizenship pass rate among vulnerable populations (Nakache, Stone, and Winter 2020). On the other, more and more immigrants decide not to take up Canadian citizenship (Institute for Canadian Citizenship 2023b) and to leave Canada altogether (Institute for Canadian Citizenship 2023a). Return or onward migration suggests fraying social ties and – closely related – a lack of government investment in critical social services such as housing, healthcare, and education. Immigrants and native-born Canadians want to lead productive, healthy and rewarding lives. Instead, and arguably to ease access to naturalization, the Liberals propose that citizenship candidates take their citizenship oath online by a mouse click rather than in the company of co-applicants, friends, family, and a citizenship judge (Osman 2023). Astute observers warn that this would further "cheapen" the meaning of Canadian citizenship and undermine its collective foundations (Keung 2023, cf. Andrew Griffith's contribution in this volume).

Conclusion

Over the past sixty years, Canadian citizenship has undergone a profound and much needed liberalization, shedding many – albeit not all – of its discriminatory monoethnic tendencies in both legislation and meaning. Since the 1990s, however, liberalization has become increasingly paired with neoliberalization, i.e. the belief in a self-regulating free market as a superior force that requires policies of deregulation, privatization, and citizenship as a "first prize" for successful, self-driven individuals. In neoliberalism, rational, economic considerations become empirically indistinguishable from the cultural, emotional and moral dimensions of national identity. While neoliberalism encourages a meritocratic ethic of "diversity" beyond ethnic and cultural group differences, it also undermines everyone's willingness to invest in shared citizenship defined in terms of mutual trust and care.

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Citizenship, Newcomer Integration and Voter Participation: Conceptual Challenges

By Jack Jedwab

Jack Jedwab is the President of the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute. Holding a PhD in Canadian History from Concordia University, he taught at Université du Québec à Montréal and McGill University. He has taught courses on the history of immigration in Quebec, on ethnic minorities in Quebec, on official language minorities in Canada and on sport in Canada. He has also authored essays for books, journals and newspapers across the country, in addition to being the author of various publications and government reports on issues of immigration, multiculturalism, human rights and official languages.

Introduction

Amongst academics and policymakers, the concept of citizenship has taken on an increasingly broader meaning and includes sometimes elaborate discussion about social and political engagement. There is also greater attention being directed at the intersection between citizenship acquisition and identity. In his seminal work on *Citizenship and Immigration*, the German sociologist Christian Joppke (2010) looks at the various dimensions of that relationship from both a theoretical and practical standpoint in North America, Europe and Australia. He points to three key dimensions in that relationship as status, (regarding formal membership in a State), rights (regarding the privileges to which one might be entitled in one's own state or another) and identity (regarding the belief and values citizens of a particular state or society might be expected to espouse).

Canadian policy discourse on immigration makes links between citizenship and newcomer integration. In referring to the rights and responsibilities of newcomers, Canada's official citizenship study guide — *Discover Canada* — mentions obeying the law, taking responsibility for oneself and one's family, and voting in elections. The guide (2021) adds that: ". . . the right to vote comes with a responsibility to vote in federal, provincial or territorial and local elections." It therefore follows that immigrant voter participation is deemed to be an important indicator of newcomer integration.

Using voter participation as a vital marker of active citizenship and, in turn, a predictor of migrant integration risks constituting too narrow a perspective across multiple and intersecting indicators that make for successful newcomer insertion. In effect, assessing voter participation is perhaps better within the larger perspective of democratic participation amongst newcomers. An exclusive focus on voting may end up dismissing other key factors that either support or detract from democratic participation on the part of newcomers. Also, the focus on gaps between immigrant and non-immigrant, even with socio-demographic filters and other controls in place, may not sufficiently capture the importance of certain identity markers (age, gender, ethnicity and racial identification) that help explain the gaps. Such analysis is needed to help us better understand the extent to which the gaps represent challenges to newcomer integration or are associated with obstacles to it. That which follows will use survey data to examine whether the emphasis on voter participation can be used as a barometer for measuring successful integration and "active" citizenship.

Integration Concepts and Voter Participation

As noted above, democratic participation has become a key dimension or indicator of citizenship. To that end, European political institutions have stressed the importance of promoting political participation in support of good practices for what they refer to as active citizenship (European Commission, 2012).

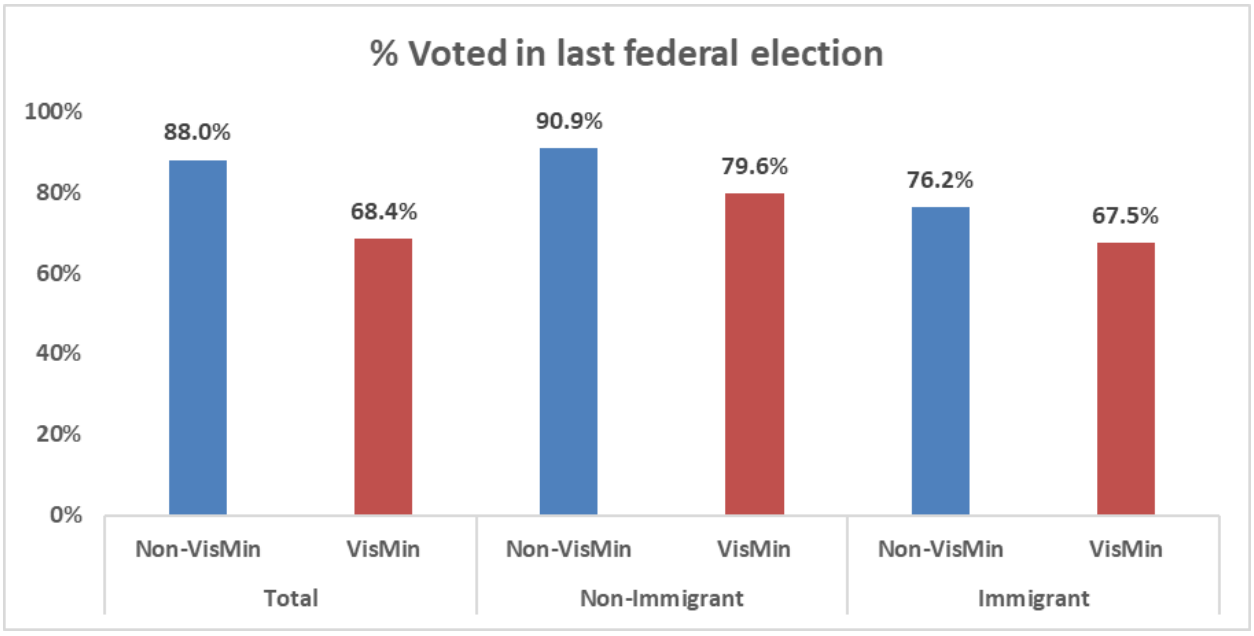
They've also established a connection between immigrant integration and voter participation as illustrated in the European Commission's handbook on integration, which notes that: "The political participation of immigrants is one dimension of the integration process: the greater the political participation, the greater the integration in the democratic domain" (European Commission, 2004).

For its part, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has observed that becoming actively involved in the host-country society is essential towards immigrant integration and has implications for immigrant well-being. As it notes, " . . . by making their voices heard, taking an interest in how their host society works, and participating in the decisions that shape its future, immigrants become an integral part of their new country, this being the very objective of integration" (OECD, 2018). As such, voter participation is described as a fundamental element of immigrants' civic engagement and a sign of integration.

Data findings

As observed below, immigrants are less likely than non-immigrants in Canada to say that they've voted in the previous federal election. (Note: It is important to keep in mind that these are self-assessments). The gap is especially affected by age cohorts with the youngest group surveyed (age 25-34) far less likely to say that they voted than persons over the age of 55, where the gap between non-immigrant and immigrant is reduced to just over 10 points.

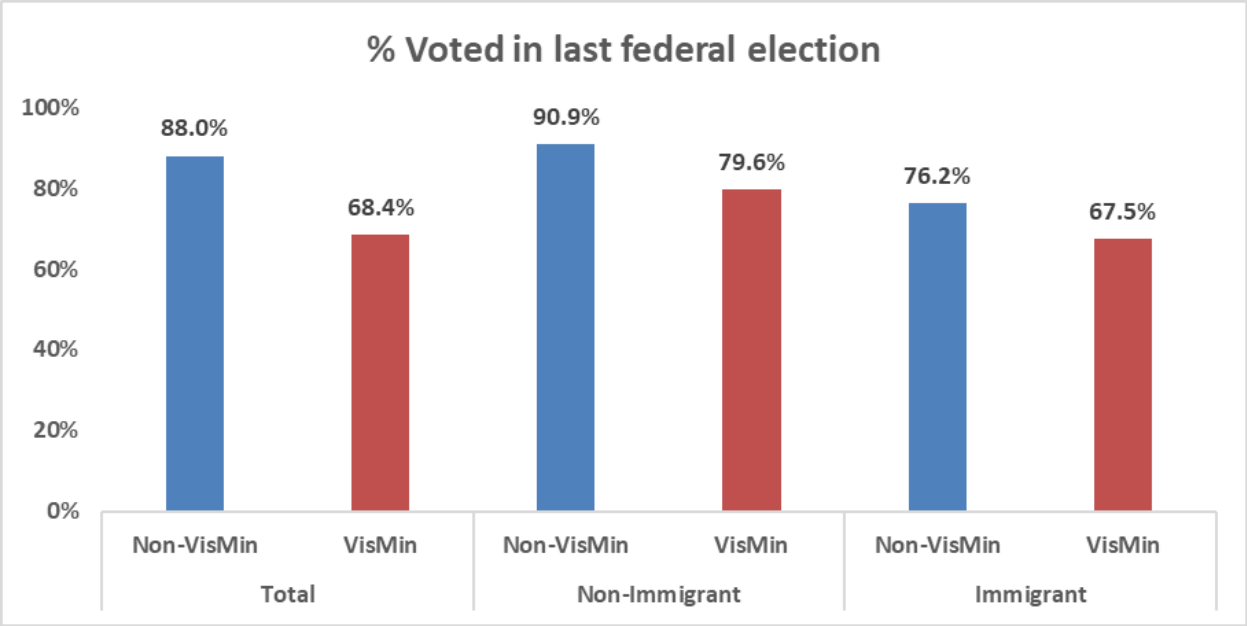
Chart 1



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2020

With regards to visible minorities, the chart below points to considerable gaps in voter participation between non-visible minority and visible minority Canadians. There are similar gaps when contrasting non-immigrant visible minority with persons not identifying as visible minority, and immigrant visible minority with immigrants not identifying as a visible minority. Hence visible minority status is a predictor of voter participation independent of whether it pertains or not to immigrant status.

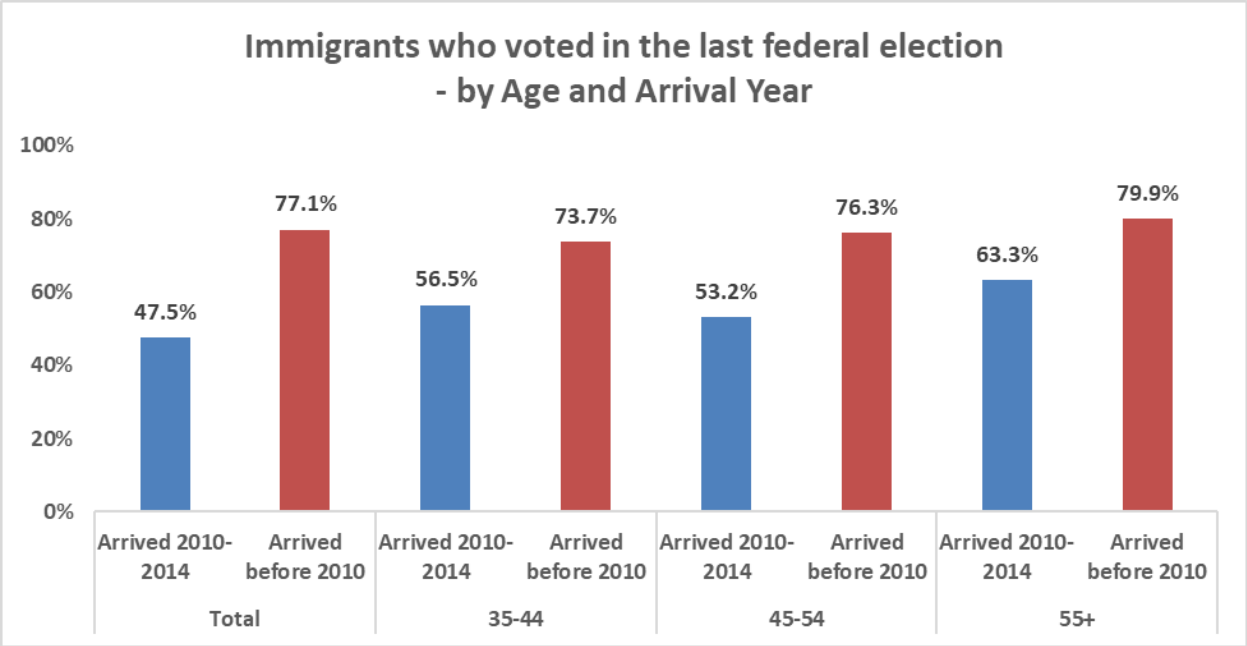
Chart 2



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2020

Chart 3 considers the intersection of age with immigrant time of arrival and confirms that there is a consistent gap across the age spectrum independent of time of arrival and that the latter is a key predictor of voter participation with the more established immigrants considerably more inclined to say that they've voted in federal elections than those more recently arrived.

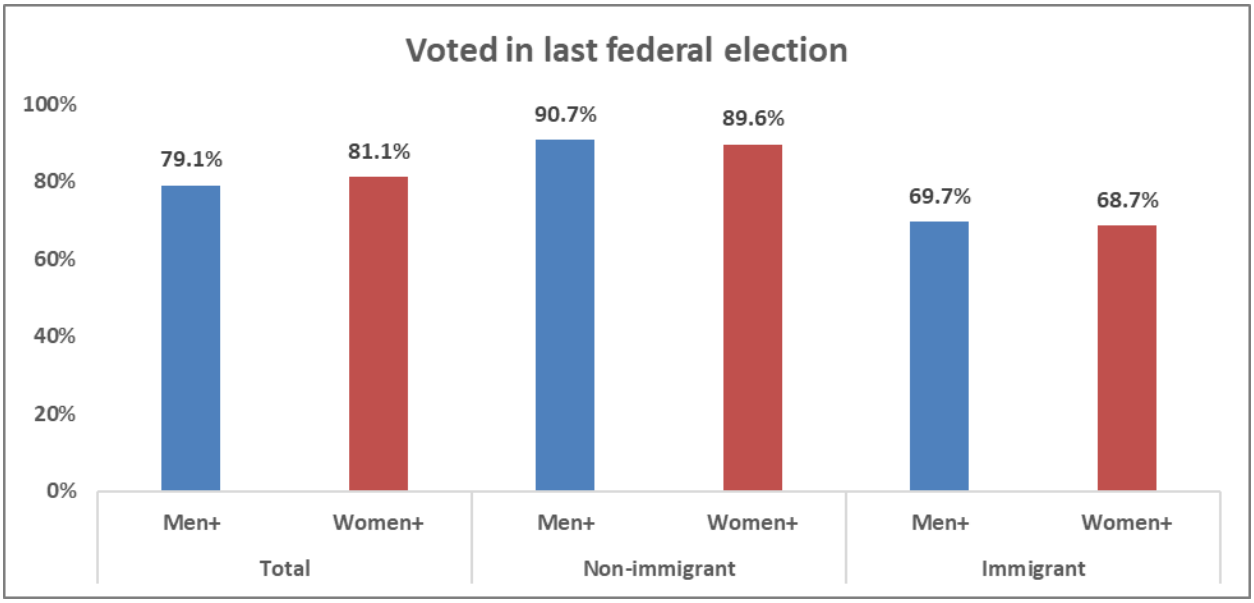
Chart 3



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2020

Yet another socio-demographic factor consideration underlying voter participation is gender, where independent of immigrant status we observe an important gap in the table below between men and women for both immigrant and non-immigrant alike.

Chart 4



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2020

Beyond participation

We presented in the charts above a comparison of immigrant and non-immigrant voter participation as it intersects with visible minority status, age and gender. To varying degrees, these socio-demographic and identity markers are clearly significant predictors of participation. What the data doesn't tell us about are the kinds of considerations that account for the gaps and/or what is potentially impeding active

citizenship. Associating lower immigrant voter participation with a weakened sense of citizenship requires more investigation to determine why this is the case.

Some of the common explanations for lower rates of voter participation are a lack of interest in and knowledge of political processes, low levels of trust in politicians and growing cynicism toward democratic institutions. We considered selected aspects of democratic engagement through a public opinion survey done by Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies. It looks into the extent to which Canadians closely follow politics, whether they feel that they are better informed about politics than most people, if they believe their vote matters, and finally whether they think the decisions made by politicians have a significant impact on their daily lives. The results point to noteworthy differences in the responses given on the basis of age and gender.

With regards to the degree to which they say they closely follow Canadian politics, the gaps on the basis of gender and across the age spectrum are far more significant than the gap between persons born inside the country and those born outside the country (Table 1).

Table 1

I closely follow Canadian politics	**Total**	Born in Canada	Born outside of Canada	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Yes	47%	49%	42%	58%	37%	35%	42%	60%
No	48%	48%	49%	39%	56%	60%	53%	36%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	5%	4%	9%	3%	7%	5%	6%	4%

Source: Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies, September 25-29, 2023

As seen in Table 2, when it comes to the perception around whether one's vote matters, the youngest cohort surveyed (18-34) is less likely than the oldest cohort (55 plus) to feel that their vote matters. When asked about whether they are better informed about politics, men (45%) are considerably more likely to think so than are women (23%). Let's bear in mind, of course, that it doesn't mean the men are right in their perception.

Table 2

	Total	Born in Canada	Born outside of Canada	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
My vote matters	76.6%	77.9%	71.6%	75%	78%	69%	72%	85%
I am better informed about politics than most people	33.8%	35.2%	28.3%	45%	23%	30%	33%	37%

Source: Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies, September 25-29, 2023

Conclusion

Countries with long histories of immigration and/or those with current migrant flows are increasingly acknowledging the need for effective integration policies and measures to evaluate performance. Gaps between immigrants and non-immigrants in various modes of democratic participation offer legitimate indicators for assessing integration outcomes. Yet any such comparisons must take into account identity markers and socio-demographic characteristics to properly establish some degree of causality when drawing conclusions in this regard. This is even more important when making the link between integration and citizenship, as the former is conceptually aligned with forms of mutual accommodation between immigrant and non-immigrant, whereas that might not be the case when such phenomena are seen through the prism of citizenship.

Looking at voter participation as an expression of newcomer integration and/or active citizenship requires a closer examination of social and/or economic factors that may account for those gaps, without which the assessment will be incomplete.

Appendix

Survey Methodology: Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies, the survey was conducted during the week of September 25th, 2023 for the Association for Canadian Studies via web panel with 1,502 Canadians. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1,502 respondents would have a margin of error of ±2.5%, 19 times out of 20

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Citizenship in Canada: ‘We‘re creating more obstacles than we should’

Ninette Kelley is a former senior officer with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. She is the author of People Forced to Flee: History, Change and Challenge (2022) *and previously served in several senior management positions with the UN agency for refugees in Geneva, Beirut and New York. In Canada, she served eight years on the Immigration and Refugee Board and held various policy roles with international humanitarian agencies focusing on development, immigration and refugee issues. She is also the co-author of* The Making of the Mosaic: The History of Canadian Immigration Policy (2010)*, with Michael Trebilcock, and they are currently writing a book on contemporary Canadian immigration policy. Her other publications are in the areas of human rights law, citizenship, refugee protection, gender-related persecution, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. She is a lawyer by training.*

Ninette Kelley spoke with Randy Boswell, guest editor of this edition of Canadian Issues, in December 2023

What comes to mind for you when we think about citizenship in Canada?

When we take in the whole object of bringing in immigrants to Canada — and it's in the objectives of our immigration act — they're supposed to contribute to our communities. And we are, in turn, supposed to do everything that we can to help integrate them into our community. And so citizenship, in a sense, is the end of a long process for people who make the application, who come, who take the time they need to settle and meet the requirements of the Citizenship Act, and then they get citizenship.

What we've seen, I think, should cause us to worry, because in the last five or six years, citizenship rates have plummeted. And they've plummeted due to a number of different factors. It’s unclear, because it still needs to be assessed, but one is that when the Conservatives came into power (2006), they made a lot of amendments to the act and regulations because they thought that immigrants were abusing the system. And among them were to raise the requirements of citizenship — things that the Liberals (in power after 2015) have kept in place.

Requirements more difficult

So the requirements to become a citizen became much more difficult. The language requirements, the citizenship tests — which, I think last summer, there was a survey that said most Canadians would not pass. The fees for citizenship became higher. So this has really, I think, created a dampening effect on people acquiring citizenship. And the problem is that there are studies in Europe, for example, which show that citizenship also hastens integration. So by not helping people become full citizens — by not encouraging that project, by creating barriers

to it — I think we are working against the objectives of our own act and institutions. And we need to take a hard look at that.
Now, I also have to say, it's not always the case that it's barriers keep people from becoming citizens. The other thing is that we have (immigrants from) countries that come in here, like Chinese immigrants, who are not able to have dual citizenship. So some of them may delay — and they make up a large proportion of our immigrants. It's unclear what the reasons are.
But the fact is, we've got a decline in citizenship rates, and we need to look at it. We've also put in, I think, punitive laws . . . In 2006, during the Lebanese crisis, there were a lot of Lebanese Canadians that sought to be evacuated from Lebanon to Canada. Some of them had not spent much time in Canada, and they were labeled abusers. And in a swing to stop this, the government imposed what's called a second-generation ban, so that if you were born outside of Canada, and your child is born outside of Canada, that child can't be a Canadian citizen. Makes a lot of sense in one sense, except now we live in an international world where we have people working in international agencies and for multicultural and multinational organizations. We have a lot of Canadians who are living abroad (and who) still consider themselves Canadian, still contribute to Canada, (and they) may come back. But yes, this law is a kind of a punitive law that prevents that from being transmitted. It's a small point, but I really think it's time that we looked at Canadian citizenship much more closely.
Because it is a privilege, but it is also a right. And do we understand the importance of newcomers gaining Canadian citizenship? What does that do to our communities, and are our laws presently facilitating it or creating obstacles to that? From what I can see, I think we're creating more obstacles than we should.

We, as a country, celebrate — and our government touts — the high rate of immigration. I know it's contentious in some parts of the public conversation, but generally speaking, we recognize we need immigration to prosper as a nation. But you're saying there's a distinction between just bringing people in and then processing them successfully to become citizens?

There's a need for . . . anchoring them here, too. Because there's a high rate of emigration, too. I think the last survey showed that 35 per cent or more of recent arrivals are leaving. And that's for a lot of reasons. That can be an inability to be reunited with their families. That can be discrimination in the workforce. Like maybe they don't like it here. I don't know. The point of this (new) book that I'm writing (on contemporary Canadian immigration policy) is that these things are interconnected. And we need to do much more transparent and deep study and analysis than we've done so far. Right now, immigration policy, and to some extent citizenship policy, is being determined by the ministries responsible. Their acts have given them wide latitude to change and adjust policy without the kind of informed public discussion, debate and study that characterized our processes — at least in immigration legislation — in the 1970s, '80s and '90s. That is completely no longer the case. And that is, I think, a significant worry.

Fundamentally, why is it that we want to bring immigrants in, and we want them all — as many as possible — to become citizens? In Canada, it seems generally, we want to continuously enhance our population this way. But there are a lot of countries — and sometimes here, too —where this is highly contentious.

Immigrants are great. I mean, I've worked my whole life for immigrants. I think there are serious arguments to be made that there is an economic need, there is an aging population. There is, you know, all of these things — that immigrants bring prosperity, and that's certainly been (the case) in the past. And I don't think anyone doubts that that's also the way of the future.

I think where the debate happens right now is (in determining) how many immigrants and how quickly we should be bringing them in. Is there enough infrastructure support — healthcare, housing, that kind of thing — to manage a doubling in numbers that we've seen in the last few years? Are we prepared for that? Do we have the settlement services in place to ease the transition? So, I think it's not a question as to whether or not we need immigrants. I think it's how many, and on what basis are we deciding the proportion of economic and permanent to temporary and that sort of thing. That is (what is) getting people a little bit nervous, and wanting to look more closely at (this issue). And, as citizens, we all have an obligation to pay more attention to that, while still embracing the notion that we are in a country of immigrants. We've done well by that. And we should in the future, as well.

Citizenship: Three Illustrations of an Evolving Concept

By Dr. Daphne Winland

Dr. Daphne Winland is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at York University and teaches and researches identity, citizenship, transnationalism and diaspora studies. She is the author of many articles exploring the politics of identity, citizenship and ethno-nationalism, as well as the book We Are Now a Nation: Croats Between 'Home' and 'Homeland'. *She has conducted extensive research on diaspora involvement in nation-building projects and citizenship regimes as well as historical revisionism and populism in Europe.*

The goal of "The Canada We Dream Of"— a two-minute video produced for the Canada 150 celebrations in 2017 — was to convey a feel-good narrative of shared Canadian values of diversity, collaboration, and inclusion. For decades, these have been championed as central to the fabric of Canadian identity. Among the commemorative events listed on the Canada 150 website was Sir John A. Macdonald Day, in honour of Canada's first prime minister, who was responsible for (among other things) the Chinese Head Tax and the establishment of the Residential School system.

The negative backlash that ensued was swift. The irony of the invitation "what you can do to celebrate Sir John and learn more about Canada" was not lost on those familiar with his controversial legacy.

In this paper, I focus on responses to challenges to the stories that we tell ourselves as reflected in citizenship policies, practices and principles. What follows is a brief discussion of three examples that I have investigated over the course of my research career that provide some insight into how Canadian citizenship has manifested historically and the challenges it poses for citizenship discussions and debates. These are, the Private Refugee Sponsorship Program (introduced in 1976), the Canada 150 festivities (2017) and the Tribute to Liberty memorial to "Victims of Communism" (2023), all contexts where citizenship values and claims have been prominently displayed and, in some cases, became flashpoints for debate and disagreement about the principles that are foundational to Canadian citizenship.

Private Sponsorship Program

I begin with the Private Sponsorship Program (PSP) for refugees, as it was one of the most significant tests of citizenship ideals and their reception in the face of shifting geopolitical realities. The history of the PSP can be traced back to Canadian government responses to the post-World War II crisis in large-scale population displacements (Cameron 2020). Decades of advocacy by religious groups and government collaboration with many support groups, such as the Mennonite Central Committee, resulted in changes to refugee support programs, precipitated in large part by the Indochinese "Boat people" refugee crisis in 1979 (Lenard 2020, Hyndman et al. 2021, Winland 1993).

There has been a great deal of scholarship on the PSP, some of it critical and some laudatory. The program has served as a model; "the longest-running and most successful" policy of its kind (Lenard 2020) due to its successful outcomes when compared to those of government-sponsored refugees (Agrawal 2019). Its detractors, though, point to flaws in the refugee determination process, criticism of paternalistic attitudes towards refugees, the "rescue complex" of sponsors (cf. Kyriakides' et. al. 2018 discussion of refugees as agentive, rather than victims) as well as the deleterious consequences of downloading/privatization of refugee support (Ilcan 2009).
What is of particular importance to the discussion of citizenship are the perspectives of sponsors themselves — their motivations and expectations — if and how these cohere with the project of resettling refugees as future citizens.
Macklin and others have argued that citizenship and Canadianness are continually "made" and "remade" through the experience of sponsorship (Macklin et al. 2018, 38).
For example, Mennonite sponsors of Hmong Indochinese frequently reiterated that their own experiences of flight resonated with refugees and how it was their mission to sponsor them but felt more comfortable with sponsoring Hmong, who shared their
Christian values, particularly those who converted to Christianity in Thai refugee camps before their arrival to Canada. Hmong refugees often attended Mennonite churches and established their own congregations (Winland 1992).

Canada 150

The goal of Canada 150 was to celebrate, "what it means to be Canadian" in line with the major contours of Canada's national narrative for both domestic and international consumption (Nijhawan et. al. 2018). Canada 150 in 2017 was an important national event, not only in highlighting historical milestones but in the multiplicity of responses to them.
Even before multiculturalism became official policy in 1971, the Canadian government was in the process of developing a national-identity narrative focused on liberal cosmopolitan values and principles of fairness and equality. Federal government efforts to forefront and reinforce these principles have been on display at national days of remembrance and commemoration.
The history of the Canadian state features a disturbing record of historical injustice that disrupts these aspirational narratives — systemic racism, the fight for Indigenous sovereignty and self-government, separatist sentiments in Quebec and more. Federal governments of all political stripes have variously endorsed and promoted a 'recognition' framework through inquiries, commissions and apologies for the suffering of Indigenous peoples and the Residential School system, the Chinese Exclusion Act (and the imposition of Head Taxes), Continuous Journey regulations that discriminated against Punjabi-Canadians, Japanese internment camps during World War II, and the refusal to admit Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.
The Canadian government response has been to acknowledge Canada's difficult past, often in the form of apology and redress. This often takes the form of efforts towards reconciliation, which the Indigenous scholar Audra Simpson has referred to as; "performance[s] of empathetic, remorseful, and fleetingly sorrowful states" (2016, 2), which underscores the many challenges to celebratory declarations.

Memorial to the Victims of Communism: Canada a Land of Refuge

The final illustration highlights an important dimension of the changing landscape of citizenship in Canada. Mass migration, global communication and travel, the proliferation of visa designations, permits and passports are expanding at an accelerated rate all over the world, and

Canada is not immune. Aside from continual pressures to address the global predicament of refugee and asylum claimants, Canada has numerous, large and some influential diasporas. Diaspora has come to refer less to those who have been banished/exiled from their places or origin to those who maintain connections to their countries of origin (Adamson 2012). Witness the shift over just a few decades from 'immigrant' to 'diaspora' in the language of government and in daily parlance. Of the many federal, provincial and municipal/community efforts to honour the difficult pasts of diaspora groups, few have been as controversial as the Tribute to Liberty foundation's Victims of Communism: Canada a Land of Refuge memorial in Ottawa.

The influence of diasporas reveals the pressures that can and are brought to bear on governments, which challenges the borders and boundaries of what it means to be a Canadian citizen. The Tribute to Liberty memorial initiative of participating diasporas from post-communist states is an extension of the Black Ribbon Day annual commemoration adopted in a 2009 resolution in the House of Commons, a national day of remembrance for "the victims of Nazism and communism".

The memorial initiative began with the Conservative government's response to diaspora entreaties to recognize historical and/or ongoing conflicts, primarily in East European and Southeast Asian countries of origin (Dolgoy and Elżanowski 2018, Winland 2022). The official rationale for this monument — initially scheduled to be unveiled in November 2023, but postponed to 2024 — is to honour those who suffered and died abroad and their descendants who found refuge in Canada. The memorial itself though has been troubled by controversy over its (original) location, cost overruns resulting in the federal government having to underwrite half the costs, as well as over contributions from donors honouring fascists and Nazi collaborators (Noakes 2021).

Concluding Thoughts

Together these three examples demonstrate the inevitability of challenges to what it "means to be Canadian." The recent fiasco surrounding Yaroslav Hunka — the Ukrainian "guy in the gallery" — which revealed the complicity of the Canadian government in controversial yet politically expedient decisions during the Cold War (reviewed by the Deschênes Commission of the 1980s), exposed the complex and sometimes flawed process by which citizenship has been and continues to be determined. Efforts to craft a singular and all-encompassing narrative of Canadian identity with citizenship values at its centre falters when it elides the historical and other challenges that are guaranteed to emerge. A reflexive and responsive approach to the inexorable challenges to core citizenship claims and ideals provides an important alternative to global trends towards increasingly exclusionary and, in many cases, nativist renderings of national belonging.

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Time to take citizenship seriously

By Andrew Griffith

Andrew Griffith is the author of "Because it's 2015…" Implementing Diversity and Inclusion, Multiculturalism in Canada: Evidence and Anecdote *and* Policy Arrogance or Innocent Bias: Resetting Citizenship and Multiculturalism *and is a regular media commentator and blogger (Multiculturalism Meanderings). He is the former Director General, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Branch, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. He has worked for a variety of government departments in Canada and abroad and is a fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and Environics Institute.*

The Census 2021 revelation that the naturalization rate of recent immigrants (five to nine years) in Canada had plummeted to 45.7 percent in the 2011-15 census period compared 60.4 percent for the equivalent period from the 2016 Census provided a needed shock for the government to take citizenship more seriously. An earlier Statistics Canada study noted a longer-term trend of declining naturalization which reinforced that need. The analysis indicated that the main factors influencing naturalization were family income, knowledge of official languages, and educational attainment.

Some factors are outside the Canadian government's purview. Whether or not an immigrant source country permits or prohibits dual citizenship, and the extent to which it enforces a prohibition, affects naturalization. However, recent analysis by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship indicates the net effect on naturalization is small despite the fact that a larger number of immigrants come from countries that do not permit dual citizenship.

The relative economic and other benefits of Canadian citizenship have changed for some developing countries, resulting in some immigrants returning to their country of origin or keeping their options open. However, there are a number of measures that the government could take to strengthen the efficiency, oversight and meaningfulness of citizenship.

Operational efficiency, oversight and accountability

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the federal department responsible for these issues, has made progress in moving to online applications and updates to manage increased numbers and improve applicant service. Investment in AI and automation for routine applications is a logical next step, particularly given that citizenship is straightforward compared to the multitude of immigration pathways, and should result in faster processing. A pilot program integrating citizenship and passport applications is a welcome initiative.

IRCC needs to publish more citizenship statistics on the Open Government Portal, as currently the portal only has monthly statistics on countries of birth with no data on citizenship applications (unlike for permanent and temporary residents along with international students). Backlog (inventory) statistics need to be integrated into the portal. Moreover, regular publishing of citizenship proofs (citizenship certificates), broken down by those submitted from within

Canada and those submitted from outside Canada, should resume given these provide a reality check on the number of "lost Canadians" from earlier parliamentary testimony.

While broader than citizenship as it will allow for deeper analysis of health and immigration linkages, IRCC, Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) should provide more precise information on birth tourism (women travelling to Canada on visitor visas to obtain Canadian citizenship for their child) by separating out women international students and temporary foreign workers from the overall numbers of "non-resident" births.

Moreover, MPs need to challenge those advocating the easing of citizenship requirements and policies given the disparities between claims of the numbers of people affected and actual numbers and the risks that additional complexity brings to citizen service.

While the number of "Lost Canadians" claimed was around 200,000, the actual number was about 20,000. Restrictions on voting rights for Canadian expatriates were lifted in 2019 but out of the estimated 3.6 million adult expatriates, fewer than 30,000 voted in the 2021 election, a tripling compared to the 2015 election but still a minuscule number. Similarly, while the number of persons subject to the first generation citizenship transmission cut-off will grow, it is likely that the numbers of those who have a meaningful connection to Canada will be relatively small and advocates for change have relied more on anecdotes and country comparisons.

More systemically, all MPs need to recognize that not every situation requires a specific legislative solution, which only further complicates overall service delivery, as some are best handled through a discretionary grant in section 5(4) of the *Citizenship Act* or the permanent resident application route.

Meaningfulness

The government needs to issue a revision to *Discover Canada*, the citizenship study guide, first announced in 2016 four IRCC ministers ago, and reportedly ready for ministerial sign-off for some time. The current guide, while a significant improvement from its predecessor, is dated in terms of approach, emphasis and examples, and is not aligned with the government's inclusion emphasis.

The government also needs to decide whether it intends to implement, in whole or in part, its election platform's commitment in 2019 and 2021 to eliminate citizenship fees, currently around $1,400 for a family of four. The high fees contribute to lower citizenship take-up among disadvantaged immigrants. Given that citizenship provides both private benefits such as security and passports and public benefits such as greater inclusion and political participation, halving the current fees would balance private and public benefits.

The government needs to abandon its proposed self-administration of the citizenship oath and revert to in-person citizenship ceremonies for the majority of ceremonies. Moving to "citizenship on a click" combined with virtual ceremonies largely removes the recognition of the immigration journey and its celebration by family and friends. The government's justifications for the proposed change focusses on saving three months and unspecified savings given that "participation in ceremonies would be lower than it is currently, and there would likely be fewer ceremonies overall". However, it is silent on the more substantive impact that being in a room

together with other new (and already) Canadians brings in terms of belonging and inclusion. Efficiency should focus on application processing, not the ceremonial and celebratory moment.

Treating citizenship as transactional, much as a driver's licence, undermines the fundamental objective of reinforcing integration, a fundamental objective of the Citizenship Act since 1947. Public commentary has been highly negative, as have the majority responses to the Gazette notice, and a parliamentary petition was launched to oppose the change. The government should shift the relatively small needed funds from the integration program (about one billion dollars outside Quebec) to maintain the in-person citizenship oath and ceremonies.

Ongoing work by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship is focused on understanding the link between dual citizenship prohibitions and Canadian naturalization, disaggregating average time between permanent residency and becoming a citizen by gender, immigration category and place of birth. To further understand the reasons behind declining naturalization, a detailed comparison between Census 2021 and Census 2016 citizenship data will assess the relative impact of income, labour force participation and education.

The government also needs to set meaningful performance standards. The current standard is an 85-per-cent naturalization rate for all immigrants, whether recent or many years ago, essentially meaning no accountability for the government given that until the 2021 census, it always met this meaningless standard. A more valid approach, consistent with Statistics Canada methodology, would be to set the standard for recent immigrants (five to nine years) rather than all. Recent data suggests a benchmark of 75 per cent of recent immigrants would be appropriate.

Just as the government needs to strike a balance between easing the path to becoming a citizen and operational efficiency, the government needs to ensure that citizenship reinforces the sense of belonging and inclusion that citizenship brings. Efficiency improvements in application processes are needed and welcome but should not be to the detriment to the one moment in immigration journeys that celebrates and honours this achievement by new Canadians. Prime ministers, immigration ministers and MPs all treasure these celebratory moments, as do the vast majority of new Canadians. It is important that this in-person moment not be limited to the few but provided to all.

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‘It's really important that there is a greater understanding of Canada's complex colonial history’

Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson has represented the Northwest Territories in the Senate of Canada since December 2018. She is a proud Inuvialuk and mother of five. She was born and raised on the shores of the Arctic Ocean in Tuktoyaktuk. Anderson has a bachelor’s degree in child and youth care from the University of Victoria and spent more than 20 years as a senior public servant in the NWT, including as Director of Community Justice and Policing. In 2021, Sen. Anderson led the Senate’s passage of Bill C-8, which revised Canada’s Oath of Citizenship to include reference to Aboriginal and treaty rights, requiring all new citizens to declare: "I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada, including the Constitution, which recognizes and affirms the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.” Sen. Anderson later witnessed the first citizenship ceremony incorporating the new phrasing in June 2021, when Citizenship Judge Suzanne Carrière (Canada’s first Métis and first Indigenous citizenship judge) presided over the administering of the reworded oath for 31 new Canadians. The following is an edited transcript of an interview with Sen. Anderson about the change to the Oath of Citizenship, the challenge of educating all Canadians — including newcomers — about the history of Indigenous peoples on these lands, and the tensions and injustices experienced by Inuit communities around issues of Canadian citizenship and identity.

Sen. Dawn Anderson spoke with Randy Boswell, guest editor of

this edition of Canadian Issues, in March 2024

RB: Canadian citizenship is typically understood in positive terms as a credential, a marker of identity that is a privilege to possess. That has not always been the viewpoint expressed by Indigenous people in this country. Convincing Indigenous people to become, quote, ‘full-fledged’ Canadian citizens has been viewed by some Indigenous people at different times as part of the Canadian state's Indigenous assimilation project. Indigenous leaders have long advocated for a ‘citizen-plus’ model in which

Aboriginal and Treaty rights are respected and protected, along with the rights and benefits that Canadian citizenship bestows. Can you talk about the compatibility and tensions involved in being both a Canadian citizen and a member of an Indigenous nation in Canada?

Sen. Anderson: You have to go back in history. When looking at the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples, it's important to understand your history with Canada. I'll speak from the Inuit perspective, because that's what I'm familiar with. Now, to begin with, we were sold to Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company for $300,000, and a certain percentage of arable lands. We were unaware we were being sold, or bought, or owned by any entity, or 'dominion.' And that I think, in and of itself, speaks to the disconnection of Canada or a country with a people that live on these lands — that lived on these lands before they came, that survived on these lands, that thrived on these lands. So first, you have that aspect. But you also have the impacts of colonialism through the whalers, through the bringing of disease, through the imposition of the Roman Catholic church, the Anglican church. Then you have the case where Canada had instructed Quebec that they were responsible for all Inuit, which at the time, I don't think they really defined as Inuit. And Quebec, taking them to court, and the Supreme Court coming back with a ruling that Canada is responsible for the Inuit. And Canada not recognizing the diversity of (Inuit) and then putting them in under the Indian Act — not distinguishing the difference between the First Nations peoples and the Inuit. Then came the imposition of residential schools, which started in the late 1890s, I think in my area — taking away people's children and placing them in a school. And then you have the imposition of the Eskimo identification program that then saw all of Canada divided into two regions, 12 districts. So, the region I'm from came under the Western Arctic. So there was the west and the east, though I fell under the West, and Tuktoyaktuk came under Western Arctic region number 3.

My grandparents then became numbers. Literally, my daduk (grandfather) became W3-776. My nanuk (grandmother) became W3-777. My mother became W3-779. So, then this goes on, until 1968, when Canada has now decided: Oh, perhaps they should have names. Now that number was your distinguishing identifier. That's how your mail came. That's how you were identified. And now you have a name. In our culture, we only had Inuk, or Inuit names — no first name, no last name. My mother had five Inuk names. So, now they've taken your traditional (name away). She somehow became Sarah Martha Nasogaluak, which was an anglicized version of my daduk or my grandfather's name.
So we're only at 1968. At some point, my mom — because she married a non-Indigenous man — lost her status. Yet, non-Indigenous women marrying Indigenous men were getting status, right? So my mother did not get her status back until 1977, in and about there. She had lost it, and then she got it back. And then you have a government, at some point between 1952 and 1962, if I recall, correctly, that created an Eskimo committee in the House of Commons. There were no Eskimo Inuit members on that committee; there were clergy, there was the Hudson's Bay Company, there was the federal government — but no one who was directly impacted by the legislation that was being made. So, you have all this very complex colonial-compounded harmful history that continues to resonate in my area . . . The history is very complex. I don't think Canadians — never mind immigrants who come into Canada — understand this history. And the history I'm speaking of is for a select population — the Western Arctic

Inuit. The Eastern Arctic has their own stories. So, I think that it's really important that the history not be diminished. I think it is being diminished. I think that quite often when apologies are done, they think, 'Oh, it's done and it's over.' But the fact remains that it's still problematic. There are still issues. Just because an apology has been done does not mean the steps have been taken to rectify that issue. And these issues have continued decade after decade, and have not fully been resolved. So, I think it's really important that there is a greater understanding of Canada's complex colonial history with Indigenous peoples by region, and the fact that Canada sees fit to lump us into Inuit, First Nations and Métis, which is nowhere near as descriptive of the diversity of the people, their cultures, their traditions, their lands, and their own individual experiences. Yes. Right. Because we each have a different history with Canada. And most of it is not a good history. I mean, you don't have to look very far with First Nations and see one community that's still on its 29th year of boil-water advisory. I think that there needs to be a greater understanding, and more efforts put into, changing the narrative. I'm a huge collector of historical documents. And I do collect a lot of government books from both the US and Canada. And throughout these books over 200-250 years, there's a constant narrative about Indian people — which we were lumped in with — that they're lazy, don't want to work; that when alcohol was introduced, they're all have drinking problems, you know, that they need to conform to the ways of the white or non-Indigenous world. And that narrative has not changed. And that's problematic.

You're describing an incredibly fraught history that cuts across literally hundreds of individual nations, including the multitude of Inuit communities across the North. How does that play out in having a sense of identity of being 'Canadian'? That's something many of us are born into — a sense of identity that's relatively clear. I take it that sort of clarity of identity isn't available in the same way.

Growing up, I would never have identified as Canadian. My first identity is that I was an Inuk. That's my identity. That's who I am. To give you example, when my daughter was quite young, I believe around eight or nine, her dad — who was very much Canadian — had a conversation with her and proceeded to tell her she was Canadian. Well, she told him very clearly that she's not Canadian, that she is Indigenous, that Indigenous peoples were on these lands first, that she identifies as Indigenous, and not as Canadian. And I think when you're Indigenous, and you grow up in a culture — a culture that still is rooted in tradition, language, a system that is aligned with our historical ways of living, such as consensus government — that there is a sense of belonging and ownership to the group that you come from. And to me, that's the Inuvialuit. That's how I identify. The only time I identify as Canadian is on a form when I'm travelling. I would never say, 'I'm Canadian.' I always say, 'I'm Inuk.' Inuk will always come first out of my mouth. I think that, in a sense, that with Canada laying claim over us as a people — without us being active participants in that decision-making — that, quite often, is a disconnect. For us, as Indigenous peoples on what is our traditional land — a land that we knew before it was called Canada — I think it's a disservice to my ancestors to do that. My ancestors travelled, were nomadic. They travelled through Alaska, into the Yukon, into the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. They roamed

freely. The identification of Canada becomes a very restrictive position in my opinion. I clearly identify as Inuk before I would say I was Canadian.

Some would say the whole process of reconciliation is partly aimed at creating a situation where Indigenous people on these lands might feel more fully Canadian. It doesn't sound like you would put it that way.

For me, reconciliation is not to feel more fully Canadian. Reconciliation for me means that Canada will be making amends for the wrongs that Canada has done to us as Indigenous peoples. It means that there's concrete steps that are taken to do that. I personally do not see reconciliation as a means for me to identify as a Canadian. That's probably one of the furthest things from my thought when it comes to reconciliation. Reconciliation means that Canada owns up to its wrongs.

Canadian citizenship is something that is craved by many people from different parts of the world. They want to become Canadians. Previously these newcomers made a pledge to identify with and honour this country, including its Queen (now King). But you helped lead the push to change that Oath of Citizenship, to incorporate a clear reference to the inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples. Can you describe why you felt that was important to do?

I think any opportunity to provide education and inform individuals who are non-Indigenous about the Indigenous history of Canada is integral. It's important for all individuals — not just the ones that are coming into Canada, but for those in Canada already — to understand the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, to gain an understanding and a commonality with the people that live on these lands, and not base their opinions and their decisions on narratives that are negative, that are often heard out in public, that have been passed through the generations. I think it's important to recognize, honour, the diversity of the Indigenous peoples that live on these lands and respect that. I find quite often that Canadians themselves do not know the history of Indigenous peoples on these lands. And that in and of itself is hugely problematic. So any opportunity to be able to create a situation where we can educate and fully inform individuals about Indigenous peoples, I think, is vitally important.

What does it mean to you, personally, to have steered that legislation successfully through Parliament — and to create that historic moment, three years ago almost, when the oath was actually changed?

I don't know if it's me personally. In my culture, it's not about yourself. It's always about the collective. It's about where you come from, who you represent. It's about honouring. And doing this is a way of honoring my nanuk, my daduk (grandparents) — the culture that I come from, the community that I come from. It's a way of ensuring that I do my part — a part of a bigger picture — to ensure that we right wrongs. That we — that my nanuk, and my daduk and my mother, who suffered a lot under the colonial system — that there is some form of repair.

It's not personal. It's a collective history — not even just for my culture, but for Indigenous peoples. I think it's important that to honour and respect the wishes (of Indigenous people), and this came out of a Truth and Reconciliation call to action. So it's important to honour that. So it's not so much personal as it as it is a professional and cultural responsibility.

In one of your speeches — in the discussion on this legislation — you stated the following: "Until the story of life in Canada, as aboriginal people know it, finds a place in all Canadians' knowledge of their past, the wounds from historical violence and neglect will continue to fester." How close or how far do you feel that this country's population — both the newcomers arriving here, and those who've been lifelong residents, like myself and my parents — are from achieving the level of knowledge about Canada's past that would reassure Indigenous people that we've been educated?

A visual comes to mind when you're saying this. I come from Tuktoyaktuk. And a lot of tourists come, and they dip their toe in the Arctic Ocean. So the visual that comes to mind is: You have this toe, let's say, which is Canada. Well, it's dipped. That's it. It's dipped in this vast Arctic Ocean. And maybe there's a couple of ripples in it. What needs to happen is they need to jump in. They need to go out into the middle of that ocean. They need to put an effort into going out, they need to experience and understand how our history has continued to be profoundly impacted by the wrongs that have happened and continue to happen . . .

If you go back and look at my speeches, one of the things I'll constantly speak to is equity and equality. There is no equity and equality between southern Canada and any of the three territories. I'll give you a clear example . . . We still have chief firearms officers residing in the south for all three territories . . . We don't have language rights on our lands . . . So, these injustices continue, despite the TRC calls to action, despite UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), despite historical treaties, land claim agreements, modern treaties, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls calls for justice, calls to action. And in the face of the government talking about reconciliation, these wrongdoings continue at a high rate. It's present in almost every bill I deal with.

When I have national groups come to my office, my first question is: Do you have representatives from any of the territories? Over 90 per cent do not. Right. So how do you purport to be national, when you have no representation from any of the territories? So it's a huge issue . . .
Part of the problem with immigration is that the booklet [a new immigration guidebook to replace

2012's *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*] was supposed to come, but has not come yet. So the information contained in this (current guidebook) is problematic information. It's old information; it in no way now reflects the new oath in the manner that it should . . . I don't want to see this just being a checkmark — 'Oh, we've accomplished this TRC call to action.' No, you have not. You've accomplished getting the oath in there. Have you accomplished the significant piece that accompanies this as a whole? No, you have not. So, in my opinion, the obligation by Canada has not yet been met . . .

What are some of the specific things that you are hoping for in the *Discover Canada* document that the government is said to be preparing?

My hope is that I get to review it before it becomes public. I believe that there needs to be greater representation of Indigenous peoples in Canada, perhaps a map that outlines the Indigenous groups — where they live — that clears up the misguided belief that we all live on reserves, that there's a clear, definitive delineation between reserve lands, land claim agreements, historic agreements, and that Canada takes more ownership for their wrongdoings than they have . . . I definitely think a map that that clearly shows where people live, that speaks to that diversity of languages — that Canada is not just French and English. (It should) speak to the importance of our Indigenous languages, as well. . . I find that the current (guide) seems to erode our existence, actually minimize our existence, and puts it down to these unimportant little facts that are listed in the citizenship book.

And you've spoken about the categorization of Indigenous peoples in Canada as 'First Nations Inuit, Métis' as, obviously, a great generalization.

I think it further just diminishes Indigenous people, that it continues to be a form of assimilation of Indigenous people, that it minimizes our importance on the land that is Canada.

The Oath of Citizenship is just one tiny thing — as you put it, a 'toe in the ocean,' a very good analogy. So where else does it need to continue, this educating of the population about the history of indigenous peoples on this land and all of the injustices that flowed?

I think in every aspect. Education. Health. I think health is a huge issue for us as Indigenous peoples. I'm not sure if you're familiar with the non-insured health benefits that cover Inuit and First Nations. Non-insured health benefits is a quagmire of rules, legislation — approval for which comes from the south, as

well. Our approvals come from Ottawa. There's pre-approvals for medication. We have people sharing puffers in communities. You have to get pre-approval for asthma medication, which could take 7, 14 days, 21 days, because we don't have hospitals, we have health centres. And we don't have pharmacies, just in certain locations, especially in the Beaufort Delta. Our people die 20 years younger than non-Indigenous peoples. And it's highly concerning. The education around that — really, there needs to be some education around that. Specifically with MAID (medical assistance in dying), it's hugely problematic the direction it's headed in . . . [*Sen. Anderson has previously highlighted how the systemic inequalities in health care and mental health services faced by many Indigenous people can place them in more vulnerable situations in relation to MAID decisions*].

And people seem to think, you know, we can just pop in an EV and a heat pump, and that'll bring down (emissions), but they have no concept of the geographic challenges we face — the weather challenges we face, the aging infrastructure we have. There seems to be a common refrain we hear about — 'Oh, the numbers don't warrant it' — which is hugely problematic. Yet, when there is an asset that Canada wants, we (in the North) become important, right? So, I think education in every area is central.

I think when a bill comes up in the House of Commons, and the Senate, instead of just using a gender-analysis lens, there should be an Indigenous lens that is applied to these bills. I think that is really important. And I think that's how I look at all the bills when they come in.

Regarding the first ceremony that followed the change of the Oath of Citizenship. You were a witness to that. Can you describe your thoughts at that time? Did you feel like you were witnessing a significant moment? Or do you feel — as I think I'm beginning to gather — that you witnessed a one-millimetre advance in the cause?

This was during COVID, so it was all online — which created a disconnect in some ways. The part I found very heartwarming, I would say, at some points we did get to speak to the citizens who were being sworn in. That was probably one of the most memorable pieces for me, was their excitement about the whole event. And I found that heartwarming. Being indigenous, I just don't have that same feeling. Yeah. My experiences are different with Canada. But (the new oath) was definitely a shift, I think, in the way Canada incorporated Indigenous peoples, which was good to see. I would like to know if that's continued — if they've changed that practice or if that was a one-off . . . ? When you have an opportunity — and for some, it may be their first time — but when they're interacting with someone who's Indigenous, that's important that there's a connection, that there is a sense of camaraderie, a sense of support, and welcoming. And I think for everyone it's important — and it's not just important for the immigrants, but it's important for us as Indigenous peoples to be part of that process. Because this is still our lands. We live on these lands. And I think you can start to build relationships. I think relationships are central and key to learning about each other.

You've described the legislative process and some of the bills that arrive without enough appreciation of history and the presence of Indigenous peoples, or even the existence of the territories. How do you feel in your day-to-day interactions on Parliament Hill, about the level of knowledge that you are seeking for Canadians to possess about the Indigenous 'compatriots'?

I can tell you that in my office, I have three very good staff. And I always add an Indigenous lens to every interaction — and not just bills. We have a lot of lobbyists. And when they come for meetings, we will always ensure we ask the question about inclusion of not just the territories but of Indigenous peoples in the work that they do. What does that mean? What does that look like? Why is that not happening? So, for us, it's a daily thing. It's actually not just a daily thing. It's a meeting-to-meeting thing. It's very much a part of how we work in our office. We've had to learn to do that. Because it's very clear to all of us in our office, that it is very much an overlooked aspect . . . So actually, I will go out of my way to meet with people who I know have no connection to Indigenous peoples on the land or no knowledge of the history, because I think it's a very important aspect to build into my conversations. It's a conversation we have every day. Sometimes we're repeating ourselves copiously in a day.

It sounds exhausting.

It is . . . At what point (can) we . . . stop educating, and someone has a responsibility to start educating themselves? I can't speak for anyone else, but definitely it is an ongoing issue.

I've actually traveled internationally a bit lately. And the narrative that Canada puts out there is how well they treat Indigenous peoples. And what a great land this is for Indigenous peoples. Well, I'm Indigenous. And I can tell you that's not true — absolutely not true. And even as senators, there's a belief that you should be grateful, you're in your job and you were chosen. At what point is Canada grateful that you accepted the job, that you've agreed to put yourself out there to speak to some of these historical wrongs. Right? I've mentioned this to one of the ministers that as an Indigenous person, doing politics is very difficult. It's extremely hard, because your values, your morals, your whole sense of being is a collective being. And I say this, because we continue to carry on Inuk names. So my Inuk name is Paniyok. So growing up, I was never just me, I was also Paniyok.* I was recognized as her, I was acknowledged as her, I was gifted things as her. So you never grow up being just a singular unit, you grow up being a 'we', being a part of something greater than you are. And you have this whole sense that you have this responsibility — this greater responsibility. It doesn't come to you getting a promotion, a better job, better pay. It comes from the inherent sense of accountability, responsibility that you have to accomplish for the greater good of the collective.

**Sen. Anderson later explained that her Inuk name honoured a community member named Paniyok: "My early recollections were of her daughter . . . calling me mom and gifting me items. I still have a gift given to me as a young child made of otter . . . Within my culture, naming of a child is a complex tradition. Names reflect what is important in our culture and this includes family, animals, spirits and the environment. A name/s are given to a newborn child usually by an elder. This may be decided by dreams or visions whereby an elder is visited by someone who has passed; this is seen as a sign to bestow a child with the name of the deceased. The name/s a child is given holds significant meaning. The child in turn is treated like their namesake/s. It is a tradition stemmed in remembrance and honour. In this respect, I am intrinsically linked to Paniyok, her life and family as well as all those before me who carry or carried the name Paniyok. In this context, I have never been an 'I'. I started out as a 'we'."*

‘Belonging is What Matters to Everyone’: How the Institute for Canadian Citizenship Nurtures ‘Hope, Aspiration and Fulfillment’

By Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Canada’s 26th Governor General from 1999-2005, is universally acknowledged to have transformed the office during her six years at Rideau Hall and to have left an indelible mark on Canada’s history. She is the bestselling author of the 2014 CBC Massey Lectures Belonging: The Paradox of Citizenship, Heart Matters: A Memoir, Room for All of Us: Surprising Stories of Loss and Transformation, *and a biography of Dr. Norman Bethune. She has made the astonishing journey from a penniless child refugee to an accomplished broadcaster and distinguished public servant in a multi-faceted lifetime and has received numerous prestigious awards and honorary degrees in Canada and abroad. In 2005, Madame Clarkson co-founded the Institute for Canadian Citizenship to help new citizens in Canada integrate into Canadian life.*

When I was appointed the 26th Governor General of Canada, I was the first refugee and immigrant to hold the office. I was also the second woman. When I left after six years of an exciting and innovative time, I felt that what I wanted to do was to carry on the message that my appointment had inherently advertised — that people coming to Canada could take their place in the foremost office of the land and that Canada was a place of diversity and inclusion.

With John Ralston Saul, we began the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. I wanted it to have that name so that it would reflect what I believe is one of the most important messages that I embodied and that means the most to people living in Canada: being a citizen of this country. And I wanted it to have a certain *gravitas,* which is why it’s called an Institute. I did not want it to be named after me because people can have different opinions about me as a personality or as a historical figure: but I felt that almost everybody in Canada believes in Canadian citizenship and will always believe in it.

I had the idea for the first program many years ago. I have always lived very close to the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario. I would see the little yellow school buses with the children of every race coming out with their teachers for a tour. And I knew the same thing happened at the Ontario Science Centre. But I always thought: “I'm happy that these kids are having the chance to go into our cultural institutions, but what about their parents? The ones who are working on assembly lines or on shift work. When would they ever have the chance to go to see a painting or to see an Egyptian mummy?” So, one of our first programs that we instituted was called the Cultural Access Pass. It now rejoices in the name CANOO. Quite simply, it gives free access to every new Canadian citizen for one year to over 1,400 cultural institutions in Canada, including provincial and national parks and a trip on Via Rail for a family of up to four children with a 50-per-cent reduction on the fare.

I wanted to make sure that anyone who has chosen to become Canadian has access immediately to all the things that have made us what we are — our art, our historical backgrounds, our continuing discoveries. And it seemed to me to be only fair: everybody working here in Canada pays income tax, and part of those tax dollars go to support our cultural institutions. So, newcomers to Canada should see where their working dollars go. I didn't want them to be intimidated or to feel that they didn't have the right clothing or wouldn't be welcomed. Luckily, the first three institutions we approached — the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Ontario Science Centre and the Royal Ontario Museum — were very enthusiastic and now the rest is history.

The CANOO app is available once you swear your oath for citizenship as an app on your phone and the benefits are tremendous. We never dreamed that CANOO would be such an enormous success and could bring new citizens immediately into the domain of not only of our national and provincial parks and all of our cultural institutions, but into a real sense of belonging. We have 300,000 alumni along with 250,000 active CANOO members. This is our most lively and exciting program, which touches and will continue to touch hundreds of thousands of Canadians. And it all began with my looking at those yellow school buses!

Another program that we had before the COVID-19 pandemic, and which operated very successfully for a long time, was our Enhanced Citizenship Ceremonies. These involved a normal group of citizens being sworn in — usually about 50 — and we would have round tables before the swearing-in where new citizens would sit with established citizens and exchange ideas and discussions. Afterwards there would be cake, coffee and a party. These in-person ceremonies were of a vital nature for everybody — new citizens got to see each other and to see the different countries they came from. And if there are about 50 citizens to be sworn in, they often come from about 20-25 different countries. We were told over and over again how meaningful it was for them to see each other in person and then to share cake, donuts and coffee afterwards.

For a few years we also had a program called 6 Degrees in which we brought together dozens of people from different countries to speak to new citizens in a two-day, free conference setting. We also carried these out in countries that wanted to do what we were doing for new citizens — Mexico and Germany. COVID, unfortunately, put a stop to these kinds of in-person forums, but the idea of people exchanging their thoughts about what it is to be a citizen — and what it is to create countries in which citizenship is meaningful — will never die.

The Institute seeks new directions to help people belong right from the moment they have made the important decision to become Canadian citizens. Belonging is what matters to everybody as a human being and the longing is what we must always try to promote and encourage as a country. There's no other way in which we can continue to be a G7 country with influence far beyond our population. We have the second largest landmass of any country in the world and the weight of that should push us even with our small population into the forefront of all things that matter to human beings, so that they can behave decently and fairly towards others. That is what Canadian citizenship is about and that is what the Institute for Canadian Citizenship is guided by. In the years to come, the Institute will develop even more through its CANOO pass and other programs.

We are now facing enormous challenges in citizenship in Canada. I would never have believed that we would come to a time when people would not immediately become citizens at the end of their permanent residency. But unfortunately, problems such as housing, recognition of professional credentials and misunderstandings about students have led to a precipitous decline in the desirability of Canadian citizenship. Our challenge now is to make Canada the kind of destination it always has been – one of hope, aspiration and fulfillment.

In order to do this, we have to ensure that we are honest with our immigrants and that we can fulfill any promises that we made to them. We have to be able to provide education that they can use to perfect their capabilities, and housing where they can be lodged decently — as all Canadians should be lodged. For the first time, we are seeing that Canadians are not overwhelmingly in favour of immigration. This is a challenge which we have to meet.

We always believed that immigrants could come like us and make a difference to the country. We still have to provide the means by which that can become true. We can't simply pretend that we are the best country in the world if we don't provide a decent living, adequate accommodation and free public education, so that immigrant children can learn English and help their parents fit into their new society. These sound like very simple things, but in fact they have very complicated roots and all of us have to make sure that we work in these different dimensions to make sure that the Canada that we always dreamt of remains the Canada of our dreams.

I feel that our Institute is one which can do the research, develop the programs and be one step ahead of the curve to make sure that Canadian citizenship is maintained as the precious and yet accessible goal it has been since 1947.