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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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Introduction

Canadian citizenship, as both an institution and set of normative values, underwent multiple changes since its formal implementation in 1947 (Winter and Madulea 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 (*fil*s) 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

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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).

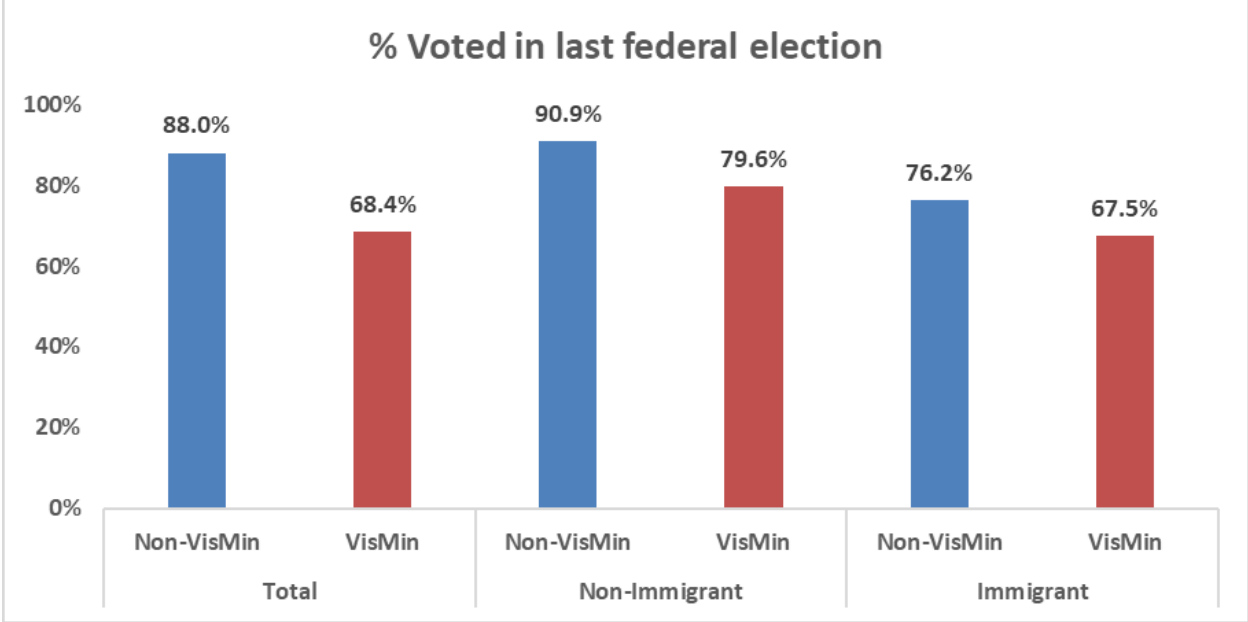
They've also established a connection between immigrant integration and voter participation as illustrated in the European Commission's handbook on integration, which notes that: "The political participation of immigrants is one dimension of the integration process: the greater the political participation,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

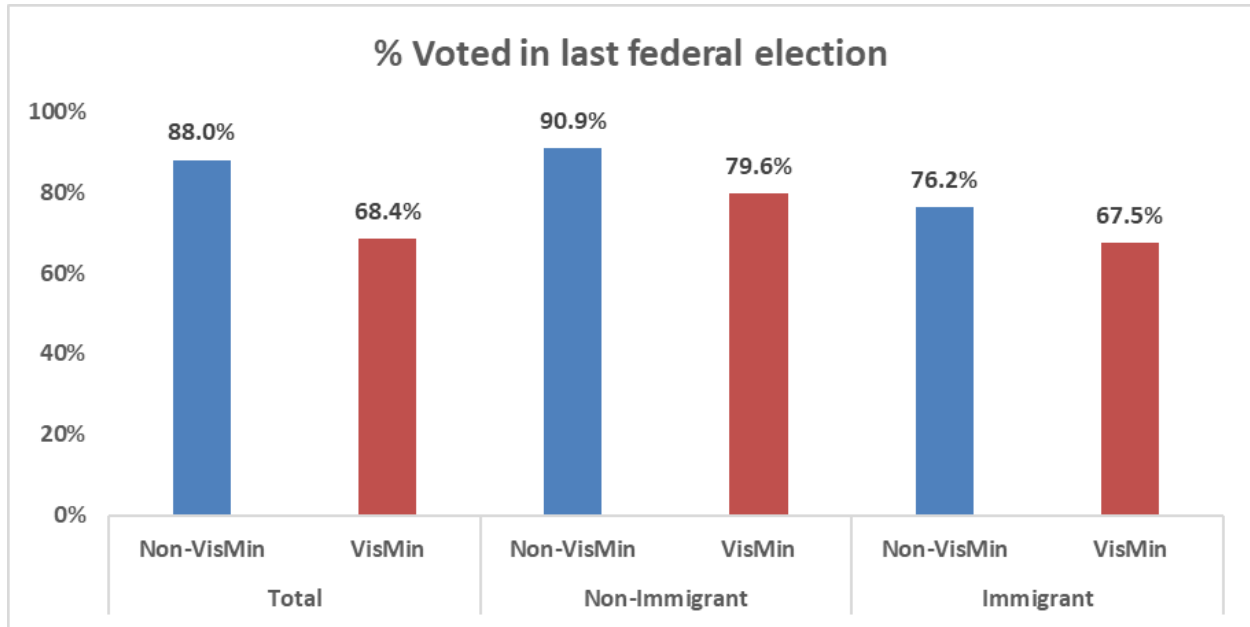
Chart 1



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.

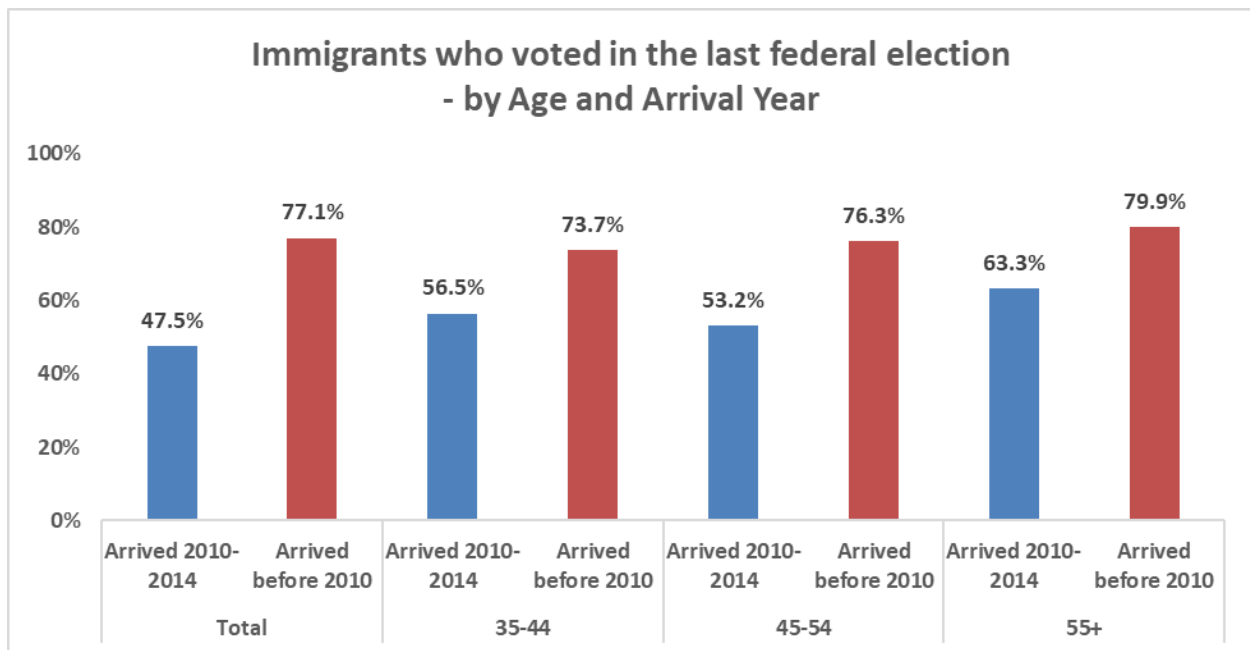
Chart 2



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.

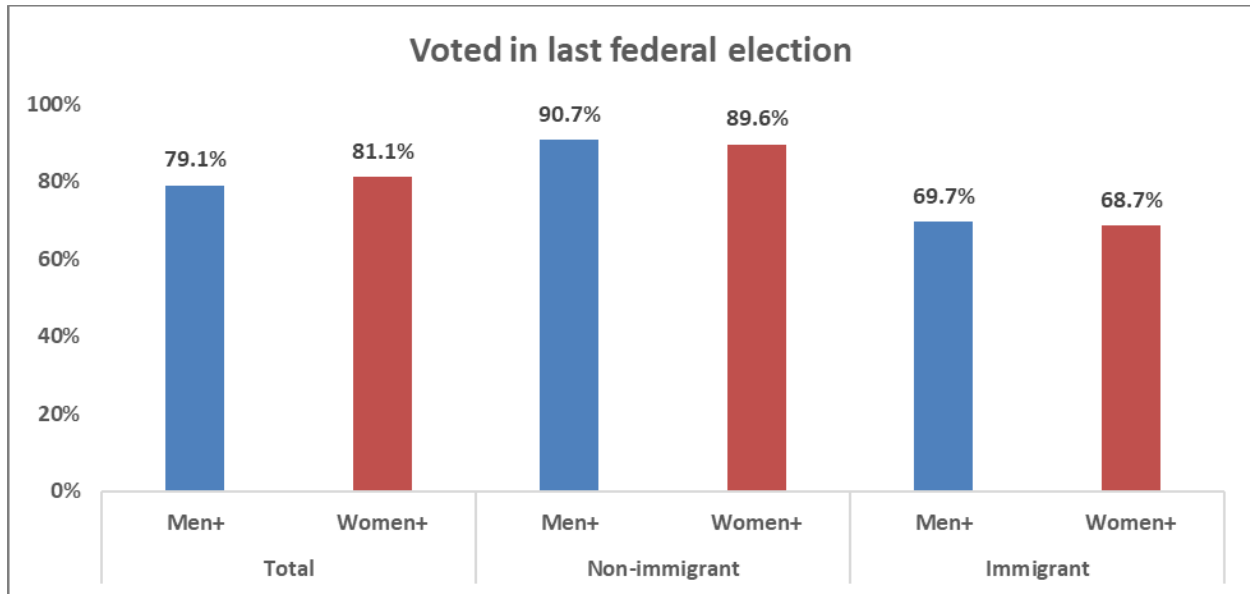
Chart 3



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-	35-	
						34	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-	35-	
						34	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 $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

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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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Citizenship: Three Illustrations of an Evolving Concept

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

By Catherine Broom

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

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***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.

‘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.