

# **Multiculturalism and social justice: Perspectives from the Canadian Prairies**

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## **Outline**

- A Introduction and summary
- B Methododology
- C Principles of social justice and multiculturalism
- D Affirmation or transformation
- E Conclusion

## Abstract

In this paper I discuss meanings of multiculturalism as they have been viewed and applied in Canada. These are matched with David Miller's three principles of social justice – equality, need, and equity. I also use the principles of affirmation and transformation of Nancy Fraser to consider whether multiculturalism is a way of helping transform society in a more socially just direction. Data for the paper come from the text of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and two surveys conducted in Regina, Saskatchewan – one of newcomers to Canada and one of university undergraduates – examining respondents' understandings and acceptance of multiculturalism. Statements from the *Act* and by survey respondents demonstrate that principles of social justice form part of multiculturalism. There is also some understanding of multiculturalism as a dynamic process whereby people from various backgrounds can work together to build a more inclusive society. Some of the hesitation about and opposition to a multicultural approach are related to concerns about limited jobs, overcoming barriers to equal participation, and immigrant integration – issues related to social justice and inclusion. The paper concludes with a recommendation for social justice researchers to place greater emphasis on empirical findings about connections between multiculturalism and social justice. Further, I recommend that principles of multiculturalism be applied more widely to address some of the problems related to jobs, participation, and integration.

## A. Introduction

In this paper, I address issues of multiculturalism and social justice, outlining and analyzing connections between these concepts and ways these connections might be strengthened. For the most part, I refer to aspects of the Canadian experience with multiculturalism. I first state in general terms what I mean by each of multiculturalism and social justice, explain the methodology, and examine connections. A conclusion provides some recommendations.

Most of us would likely agree that multiculturalism furthers social justice, using a common sense understanding of each concept. At the same time, some have questioned a multicultural approach, arguing it is divisive (Bibby), “does nothing to challenge the structural barriers such as racism, sexism, classism” (James, 215), “is a vehicle for racialization” (Bannerji, 78), and does not speak to social justice (Bannerji, 79). In Canada there has been disagreement over the meaning and scope of multiculturalism, and some argue the term may be confusing and overly general (Li, Fleras and Elliott).

I begin with the approach of Parekh, distinguishing multicultural society as “fact of cultural diversity” from multiculturalism as “a normative response to that fact” (p. 6). Later in the paper I outline principles such as equality, harmony, and resource as approaches to and themes in multiculturalism. From this, I consider multiculturalism to be a response by members of a society to cultural diversity, with this response producing a change in social relationships and institutions in a direction of greater acceptance,

respect, and participation. Social responses of extended conflict or reduced acceptance of those of cultures other than one's own do not demonstrate multiculturalism.

My understanding of social justice is something like a fair distribution of societal resources and reasonable treatment of and opportunities for all members of a society, acknowledging there are different views of what fair and reasonable might involve, and what variety of resources, treatment, and opportunities are to be considered. To better systematize an understanding of social justice, I find David Miller's approach outlined in *Principles of Social Justice* and a subsequent paper very useful. Miller refers to the three principles of equality, need, and deserved outcomes – he uses desert, merit, or equity when referring to deserved outcomes. These are principles of social justice by which multicultural approaches can be measured. Another element of Miller's approach is his emphasis on empirical findings as a way to construct views of social justice (Miller, 2003, 5). From this, it is possible that members of a society practicing multiculturalism may develop new understandings of what just social relationships, institutions, and structures involve, leading to new concepts of or standards for social justice.

In addition, I draw on approaches developed by Nancy Fraser (1995, 2000). She focusses on the dual issues of redistribution and recognition as distinct, but interlocking, dimensions of social justice. Further, Fraser considers such approaches to be either affirmative or transformative. Affirmative approaches involve either reallocation of goods and services or respect, a relatively static or redistributive approach to social justice. A transformative approach means restructuring social relations of distribution or recognition, implying a dynamic approach and associated with social change. Again, Fraser's concepts are standards for considering how multiculturalism might assist or detract from achieving greater social justice.

In this paper I use three Canadian sources to match multiculturalism with principles of social justice. The first source is statements from the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. The other two sources are survey responses about understandings of multiculturalism – one a survey of newcomers to Canada and Regina, Saskatchewan, the other a survey of University of Regina undergraduates. I match statements from the *Act* with the principles of social justice outlined in the above paragraphs. From the surveys, I summarize understandings of newcomers and students concerning multiculturalism, demonstrating their relevance to social justice. From these I draw conclusions about the relationship between multiculturalism and social justice, and consider how each approach might be strengthened.

## B. Methodology

Data for this paper come from an analysis of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and two surveys – the Regina Refugee Research Project (RRRP), conducted in 1993, and the Survey of Student Attitudes and Experiences (SSAE), conducted in the Fall 1998 semester at the University of Regina.

Analysis of the *Act* involved simply reading and rereading it and sorting statements in the *Act* into five themes or principles of multiculturalism. This was initially done by Christopher J. Fries and me, with the results listed in Table 2 (see Gingrich and Fries, 1996).

In the RRRP, fifty-five newcomers to Regina and Canada, most of whom arrived as refugees, were interviewed. There was a reasonable cross-section of newcomers by area of origin, although males and newcomers from Central America were over-represented in the sample. The aim of this project was to investigate the meaning of successful settlement and examine barriers to settlement and integration of newcomers. The report from the project contained recommendations for improving settlement services for newcomers (Gingrich, 1995). This project was funded by the Department of Secretary of State, through the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), and with the cooperation and assistance of the Regina Open Door Society (RODS).

SSAE was a survey conducted as part of a class I instructed – Social Studies 306, Applied Methods: Quantitative Approaches – in the Department of Sociology and Social Studies of the University of Regina. The Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, funded the research project “Understandings of Multiculturalism Among Students in a Multicultural Prairie City,” providing financial support for conducting and analyzing the survey and presenting the results.

SSAE was an omnibus survey dealing with student issues, social and political views, academic and personal background, student finances, and job activity. The questionnaire was developed jointly by students in Social Studies 306 and me, with the questions on immigration and multiculturalism designed to meet the research plan for the Canadian Heritage project. The questionnaire was administered in a cross-section of undergraduate classes at the University of Regina in October and November of 1998. Students in these classes completed the survey in approximately fifteen minutes of class time. In total, there were seven hundred and twenty-six usable completed questionnaires. Students from the class coded the survey questionnaires and graduate students assisted in entering data into an SPSS data set. For most of the data analysis, including the open-ended questions, I used SPSS, Release 11.

The student survey was not a random sample of students but was reasonably representative of University of Regina undergraduates. It over-represented females by 2.5 percentage points but in terms of other characteristics of undergraduates, about which there is comparative information, the sample was close to representative. The University

of Regina does not obtain data concerning the ethnic background of students, but the distributions of Table 1 show the sample is representative of the ethnic distribution of the population of Regina. The majority of the population of Regina is of European background, with less than ten per cent of the population being of aboriginal or visible minority origin.

**Table 1. Ethnic representativeness of SSAE sample**

Ethnic origin	SSAE Fall 1998 Sample (n=715)		Per Cent of Regina Population in 1996 (Census of Canada)
	Number	Per Cent of Sample	
Aboriginal origin	62	8.7%	7.5%
Visible minority origin	45	6.3%	5.7%
Other (multi-European)	608	85.0%	86.8%
Total	715	100.0%	100.0%

As with any survey, there was considerable nonresponse to specific questions. As a result, the sample size reported differs from table to table. In particular, questions about multiculturalism were near the end of the newcomer interview, so the response rate for newcomers was only about one-half of the total sample size. The response rate in the student survey was much better than this, but again there were missing responses.

Being derived from a convenience sample of newcomers and a quota sample of undergraduate students, each obtained at a particular time and place, the results reported here cannot be generalized to other populations and places. A limitation of the student survey is the short time given to respondents to complete the survey and the fact that the survey was conducted during class time. In spite of these limitations, the survey included a broad cross-section of undergraduates and yielded useful information. Many of the connections among variables found in these surveys are similar to those found in other studies.

The questions asked in interviews with newcomers and in the student questionnaire did not deal directly with issues of social justice. As Miller notes (2003, 5), there have been few empirical investigations of the connections between multiculturalism and social justice. One of the few such studies I found (Ho, 1990, 266) used only a single question about social justice. Ho asked respondents to state their extent of agreement or disagreement that multiculturalism has enabled ethnic minorities greater access to power. I trust that the data presented here, although not originally intended to deal with social justice, provide insights into how some Canadians think about connections between multiculturalism and social justice.

**Table 2. Principles of multiculturalism in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*****Diversity**

- Cultural and racial diversity of Canada. 3: 1 (a) (h) 3:2 (c) 5:1 (c)
- Preserve, enhance and share cultural heritage. 3: 1 (a) 5:1 (e) (h)
- Recognize and enhance development of communities of common origin. 3:1 (d)
- Respecting and valuing diversity. 3: 1 (e)
- Interaction between individuals and communities of different origin. 3:1 (g)
- Promote reflection and evolving expressions of culture. 3:1 (h)
- Languages: preserve and enhance; acquire, retain, use 3:1 (i) 5:1 (f)
- Multicultural reality 3:2 (d) (f)

**Equality**

- Equal treatment and equal protection under law for all individuals. 3: 1 (e)
- Full and equitable participation of individuals and communities. 3: 1 (c) 5:1 (d)
- Equal opportunity for employment and advancement in federal institutions. 3:2 (a)

**Overcoming Barriers**

- Elimination of any barriers to participation. 3: 1 (c)
- Overcoming discriminatory barriers, including race, national, or ethnic origin. 5:1 (g)
- Encourage institutions to be inclusive. 3:1 (f)

**Harmony**

- Respect, recognition and appreciation. 3:1 (f) (h) 3:2 (c) 5:1 (d)
- Understanding. 3:1 (a) (g) 3:2 (c)
- Harmony. 3:1 (j)
- Sensitive and responsive. 3:2 (f)
- Exchanges and cooperation, sharing. 5:1 (c) (e)

**Resource**

- Fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity. 3: 1 (b)
- Resource in shaping of Canada's future. 3: 1 (b)
- Participation in and contribution to evolution and shaping of Canadian society. 3:1 (c) 3:2 (b)
- Creativity. 3:1 (g)
- Historic contribution to Canadian society. 3:1 (d)
- Make use of language skill and cultural understanding. 3:2 (e)
- Value diversity. 3:1 (e)

**Note:** Numbers and letters in the box refer to the sections or subsections of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. Adapted from Gingrich and Fries (1996).

## C. Principles of multiculturalism and social justice

### 1. Principles of multiculturalism

To develop a set of principles about the meaning of multiculturalism, I use statements from the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. The *Act* is primarily addressed to the operation of federal government institutions and is to govern relationships forming part of these institutions. This is not the only aspect of multiculturalism in Canada, nor is the *Act* necessarily its best or most complete expression. However, the *Act* provides concise and well constructed statements that can be used to derive a set of principles of multiculturalism. These provide one set of principles of a multicultural approach to personal relationships, social interaction, social institutions, and societal structures.

From the *Act* I derive five principles of multiculturalism – diversity, harmony, equality, overcoming barriers, and resource. These are outlined in Table 2 with relevant phrases from the *Act* listed. Diversity is an essential aspect, since without diversity there would be little need for multiculturalism. The principles of harmony and equality are aspects of a multicultural approach, whereby members of society may hope to participate on some relatively equal footing and in relative peace. But some members may face barriers – personal or structural discrimination or racism, lack of knowledge of social institutions, or insufficient resources. Thus a multicultural approach needs to address how barriers can be eliminated or overcome. Finally, diverse peoples and cultures constitute a societal resource that continues to contribute to Canadian identity, social structure, and social change.

Views of students and newcomers concerning these principles are summarized in Tables 3 and 4. From Table 3 it is apparent that most respondents recognized diversity as an essential aspect of a multicultural approach, with harmonious relations also commonly understood as a key aspect. Students much less commonly stated equality, overcoming barriers, or resource as part of multiculturalism. Given the experiences of newcomers, in addition to a different technique of surveying them, newcomers were more likely than students to suggest these three latter principles as aspects of multiculturalism. However, in each group, only a small percentage of respondents suggested these three principles.

**Table 3. Number and percentage of respondent recognizing each of five multicultural themes or principles – newcomers in Regina Refugee Research Project and Survey of Student Attitudes and Experiences**

Theme or principle	Newcomers (n=24)		Undergraduates (n=620)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Diversity	18	75%	578	93%
Harmony	10	42%	250	40%
Equality	7	29%	27	4%
Overcoming barriers	3	12%	8	1%
Resource	6	25%	51	8%

From Table 4, when students were directly asked about principles of multiculturalism, they generally agreed. Over seventy per cent of students agreed or strongly agreed with each statement of principles of multiculturalism. On a five-point scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree, the mean response was 4.0 or above for all statements, denoting relatively strong agreement. Although there was no direct question about the harmony principle, as noted in Table 4, this principle was commonly expressed. Open-ended student responses about the meanings of multiculturalism included the following:

- When everyone's cultural heritages are respected and people of all cultures are able to respect and **get along** with one another.
- **Coexisting** with people from all walks of life in more or less **harmony**.
- Putting together people from different cultures so they can learn from each other and so they can live together **peacefully**.
- Many cultures and religions living together **harmoniously**.
- People from different ethnic backgrounds living together **cooperatively**, yet retaining their cultural identity.

**Table 4. Percentage distributions of responses to statements about multicultural principles – seven hundred students**

View	Diversity essential to Canada	Equal access	Opportunity to preserve heritage	Overcome barriers	Enrichment
Strongly disagree (1)	1.5	0.6	1.7	1.4	0.8
Disagree	3.8	1.8	6.0	4.4	2.5
Neutral	19.1	7.4	19.9	17.7	12.9
Agree	35.0	25.3	33.0	34.1	32.0
Strongly agree (5)	40.6	64.9	39.4	42.4	51.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean on five-point scale	4.1	4.5	4.0	4.1	4.3
Sample size	700	698	697	689	701

From Tables 3 and 4, and other analyses of newcomer and student responses (Gingrich and Fries; Gingrich, 2003 and 2004), I conclude that individuals surveyed have a relatively good understanding of principles of multiculturalism. Respondents either volunteered statements indicating they recognized such principles, or generally agreed that these principles form part of multiculturalism. Not only did these principles form part of an understanding, for the most part survey respondents agreed with the principles. While several newcomers did not support multiculturalism, a strong majority of both newcomer and student respondents expressed support for these principles.



## 2. Miller's principles of social justice

In the paper “Social Justice in Multicultural Societies,” Miller identifies three principles of social justice – equality, need, and merit. Equality refers to equal treatment or identical resources; need refers to how different individual needs may mean that equal treatment, by itself, does not ensure equality; and merit refers to some form of equity in rewards, whereby those who contribute more may justly expect to receive more. In Miller's words, the principles are as follows (Miller, 2003, 9):

The first is equality – everyone in the relevant universe of distribution should be treated in the same way, or receive the same quality of resources. The second is need – it is fair to depart from equality by giving more to those with greater needs. The third is merit, understood for the moment in a very broad sense – those who have contributed more, or whose input into a collective project is greater, should receive more back by way of reward (social psychologists, whose work I shall be using here, usually refer to this as the equity principle).

These principles are summary principles drawn from Miller's more extensive analysis elsewhere (Miller, 1999). One of the aims of his 2003 paper is to demonstrate that that multiculturalism is not necessarily at variance with these principles of social justice.

In Table 5, I match Miller's principles of social justice with the principles of multiculturalism in Table 2, those derived from the *Canadian Multicultural Act*. Boxes checked with an X are those where I considered there to be common principles.

**Table 5. Miller's three principles of social justice and principles of multiculturalism**

Miller's principles of social justice	Principles of multiculturalism				
	Diversity	Equality	Harmony	Overcoming barriers	Resource
Equality		X	X		
Need	X			X	
Equity				X	X

The equality principle of social justice is undoubtedly easiest to match – this principle is mentioned in each set. While principles of social justice do not mention harmony, it is difficult to imagine a situation of equality without some degree of harmonious relations. Perhaps the strong recognition of harmony by survey respondents demonstrates that social justice should pay more attention to this form of social relationship. Miller may recognize this by identifying “trust” (Miller, 2003, 19) as a key feature and arguing “a theory of justice needs a sociology to go with it – an account of how social relations must be constituted so as to make the theory feasible” (Miller, 2003, 23). Harmony as a principle for social relationships appears to be understood by respondents, who commonly use concepts such as cooperation, harmony, coexistence, and getting along (see Table 8) to describe multiculturalism.

Analyses of multiculturalism may pay inadequate attention to the social justice principle of need. Need is implicit in diversity in that without diversity there would not

be different needs, although exactly what needs these might be or how different needs might be addressed is not always clear. The *Act* mentions eliminating barriers, with reference to overcoming discrimination and making institutions inclusive. Survey respondents who were newcomers to Canada, often refugees, identified barriers such as limited language training, lack of Canadian work experience, discrimination, and limited recognition of educational qualifications. But, as noted in Table 3, respondents in neither the student nor newcomer surveys commonly associated overcoming barriers with multiculturalism.

When asked about how immigrants should be treated, student respondents expressed reasonably high levels of support for providing the education and training to help produce success in the Canadian labour market. In Table 6, percentages in the column labelled E3 summarize responses to the statement “Government should assist immigrants in developing the skills and knowledge they require to fill jobs,” with more respondents agreeing than disagreeing. Overall though, student respondents did not agree that employers should create more jobs for visible minorities (E1), nor did they generally agree that opportunities for nonwhites are restricted (E2). Respondents, especially male respondents, were concerned that white males may lose jobs because of equity requirements (E4). From these responses, views relating need and social justice are much less clear than those related to equality. Equality is generally accepted as a principle of multiculturalism; there is support for some aspects of need, but it is more limited and appears focussed on bringing those regarded as disadvantaged to a level where they can help themselves.

**Table 6. Percentage distributions of responses to statements about employment – seven hundred students**

View	E1 – jobs for visible minorities	E2 – non-white jobs restricted	E3 – government assistance for immigrants	E4 – white males lose jobs from equity programs
Strongly disagree	33.5	20.1	8.5	14.4
Disagree	23.5	24.1	17.5	17.3
Neutral	27.3	31.4	36.5	27.7
Agree	10.7	17.8	26.2	23.1
Strongly agree	5.0	6.6	11.3	17.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The third component of social justice is equity, or what Miller refers to as merit or desert. While there appears to be no explicit recognition of this equity principle in the *Act*, there may be an implicit recognition, although in a negative way, in the principle of overcoming barriers. That is, overcoming barriers can mean that equitable treatment is not to be denied to deserving individuals. Further, the resource principle may imply a sort of equity, in that contributions of people from different cultures and groups are stated to be an essential aspect of Canadian history and evolution. The last column of Table 4 demonstrates that student respondents strongly support the statement “Canadian society is

enriched by having people from many cultural backgrounds,” with students giving this statement the second highest level of support of all statements about multiculturalism.

As Miller notes, the equity and equality principles may sometimes appear to be in conflict (Miller, 2003, 10). Analysts of multiculturalism sometimes point to this, arguing that preservation of culture is divisive (Bibby, 23; Inglis, section on “Critique”). Student respondents were not overly concerned about this as an issue, with thirty-two per cent saying it was divisive, thirty-one per cent indicating it was not, and thirty-eight per cent neutral on this issue. The issue of divisive aspects is a major criticism of multiculturalism, and deserves more exploration at the theoretical and empirical levels, when examining social justice and approaches to multiculturalism.

To conclude this section, principles of social justice match those of multiculturalism, so it is no great surprise that Miller finds that social justice is not threatened by multiculturalism. Analysis of “official multiculturalism” in Canada, as expressed by the *Act*, and survey results demonstrate that principles of social justice are either implicitly or explicitly understood to be part of multiculturalism. At the same time, the conflict between the equity/merit/desert and other principles of social justice will be difficult to resolve, given that multiculturalism sometimes maintain differences and makes what some consider “deserved differences” difficult to justify to others. This is where I find Miller’s three principles somewhat limiting and rather static – they primarily focus on existing situations and provide only a limited way of dealing with the social change inherent in cultural contact and social transformations resulting from such interaction. Here I turn to Fraser’s analysis, which I consider to provide a more dynamic, transformative option, with multiculturalism as an aspect of social change.

#### **D. Affirmation or transformation?**

Much of the discussion of multiculturalism refers to preservation of cultures and languages or recognizing and respecting existing differences, with little reference to the manner that cultures continually change, especially as people of different cultures interact with each other. Fraser identifies “mainstream multiculturalism” as “surface reallocations of respect to existing identities of existing groups” that “support group identification” (Fraser, 1995, 87). This may be expressed as respect or tolerance for cultures other than one’s own, or in phrases such as “preserve, enhance and share culture” (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, Table 2).

But as an approach to social relationships, multiculturalism deals with social interaction and other aspects of social life that have an inherent dynamism, even where social institutions and structures may appear fixed and slow to change. This is especially the case in North America, where increased diversity is associated with immigration and population movements. While lack of recognition may be associated with assimilation and dominance by a majority culture, this is not the only side of immigrant integration. One aspect of the history of immigration is changes in social institutions, structures, and relationships among all members of a society, as newcomers integrate. While immigrants may feel they must adapt to a new culture and society, long time residents of that society

may feel that immigrants bring too much change and dislocation. Integration of newcomers into a society is a two-directional and dynamic process, changing institutions and relationships within the society, at the same time as newcomers themselves are changed. If this process can proceed relatively harmoniously, then multiculturalism can be a dynamic process transforming a society and its members, and changing forms of social interaction and institutions.

This is where Fraser's approach, distinguishing affirmative from transformative aspects of social justice, is worthwhile considering (Table 7). Affirmative aspects include conventional redistributive processes in the political and economic spheres and "mainstream multiculturalism" in the sphere of culture and identity. More thoroughgoing processes of social change are transformative, with Fraser pointing toward socialism in the political and economic sphere and deconstruction or reconstruction of identities in the cultural sphere. Fraser explains how these aspects of social justice are interconnected, but their analytic distinction provides a useful way to sort through the meaning of various aspects of multiculturalism.

**Table 7. Fraser's four-celled matrix of political orientations**

Remedy	Aspects of social justice	
	Affirmation	Transformation
Redistribution	Liberal welfare state or reallocations of existing goods and services	Socialism or restructuring relations of production and distribution
Recognition	Mainstream multiculturalism or surface reallocations of respect to existing identities	Deconstruction or restructuring relations of recognition and identities

Adapted from Fraser, 1995, 87.

In examining multiculturalism in light of the matrix of Table 7, I concentrate primarily on the cell in the lower right. While redistributive issues influence and are influenced by multiculturalism, in Fraser's approach redistribution refers more to allocation of goods and services than to social relationships and recognition of identities. What Fraser terms mainstream multiculturalism has been addressed in section C of this paper. This leaves the transformative aspects of recognition – deconstruction, or what I prefer to call reconstruction, as the topic for this section of the paper.

Words and phrases in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (Table 2) provide evidence that some Canadian approaches to multiculturalism include transformative aspects. Most of the statements from the *Act* fit within Fraser's mainstream multiculturalism – recognition of, respect for, maintenance of, and promoting existing cultures. But words in the diversity theme, such as sharing, interaction, and evolution (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> bullets, respectively) suggest transformation. Some of this is repeated in the last bullet of the harmony theme, where "exchanges and cooperation" and "sharing" are identified. The equality and overcoming barriers themes appear primarily affirmative,

calling for equal treatment and participation, overcoming existing barriers so institutions can become more inclusive. The resource principle is perhaps where transformative aspects are most fully suggested – “resource in shaping Canada’s future,” “evolution and shaping,” “creativity,” and “historic contribution” (2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> bullets, respectively).

Only a few newcomer survey respondents suggested transformative aspects, for example, the responses

- Putting together people from different cultures to be unified in one idea and to learn each from the other and to live together.
- One culture and another come together, bring cultures together.


indicate ways that peoples and cultures may not just live alongside each other but interact to create new and different cultural forms. For the most part though, newcomer responses were restricted to statements of multiculturalism as equality, participation, and being able to practice one’s own culture.

It was student respondents who presented a great variety and strong set of images of possible transformative aspects of multiculturalism, so their responses are discussed in greater detail than those of newcomers. In an earlier paper (Gingrich, 2003), I sorted student responses into different categories, but did not attempt to relate these categories to principles of social justice. Of the six hundred and twenty student respondents who provided written statements of the meaning of multiculturalism, seventy-nine per cent used words or phrases suggesting ways that people relate to each other in a manner consistent with principles of multiculturalism. I term this the Expression aspect of multiculturalism – words and phrases expressing such responses are in Table 8. In this table, I consider responses in the Condition and Cultures columns as similar to what Fraser terms affirmation, or mainstream multiculturalism. These might serve as background social conditions for ensuing that principles of social justice and multiculturalism are met (Table 5).

Responses in the Process/Activity, Relationship, and Product boxes represent approaches that are more transformative in character. Words collected in the Process/Activity column represent ways that multiculturalism is more than groups merely living alongside each other – these words suggest active processes of social transformation and provide images of social change and integration. Words in the Relationship column suggest ways that multiculturalism can structure social relationships, consistent with principles of social justice. Finally, the Product box at the bottom of Table 8 suggests a societal outcome different from the original state of affairs.

In order to illustrate some of the imaginative and resourceful images students respondents presented, I provide the following responses. Each of these full statements by student respondents to the question of what multiculturalism means to them suggests an aspect of transformation. Words in bold are those I used to match the statement with the concept – for example, “combining” in the first statement is an example of a process or activity.

**Table 8. Schematic diagram for Expression aspect of multiculturalism**

<b>Condition (288)</b>	<b>Process/Activity (50)</b>	<b>Cultures (57)</b>	<b>Relationship (67)</b>
allow (8)	form (5) create (8) blend (6) combine (18) incorporate (4)  integrate (9)	Distinctiveness:  variety (3) diverse (12) distinct (5) separate (4) division (2)   Processes:  practice (12) retain (5) express (7) maintain (7)	coexist (13) get along (5)
exist (10) bring together (4) put together (4) consists of (2) present (2) composed of (4) live/live in (60) made up of (14)			peace (14) harmony (8) cooperate (4)
come together (14) function (3) live together (63) ----- mixture (13) experience (5) interact (23)			equality (15) freedom (5) rights (3) ----- no (5) without (10) racism/ discrimination
work together (35) contribute (3) participate (2) involved in (2) join (2) share (15)			

<b>Product (45)</b>	whole (5) union/unity (11)		
	melting pot (10)	mosaic (10) Canada (5)	not assimilation (4)

**Note:** Numbers in brackets indicate the number of times each word was mentioned by student respondents. From Gingrich (2003).

### Process/Activity

- People of different ethnic backgrounds **combining** to make a new "multiculture."
- **Blending** cultures and learning to live together by learning from each other.
- A web of many cultures formed to **create** a whole society.
- Where the views, need, traditions etc. of all cultures are **incorporated** (yet indiv[dually] recognized) in one culture "Canadian."
- Multiculturalism is a culture that has **integrated** different people and their beliefs in one common place.

### Relationship

- Putting together people from different cultures so they can learn from each other and so they can live together **peacefully**.
- Many cultures and religions living together **harmoniously**.
- Many differences of people working, **cooperating** to achieve common goals, needs.
- People from different ethnic backgrounds living together **cooperatively**, yet retaining their cultural identity.

**Product.** Responses implying a product for society tended to fall into two categories – those suggesting a general product such as whole or union and those suggesting a specific product. Examples of the general product for society, including simply Canada, through multiculturalism are:

- **Canada**, the country of many cultures.
- Is what **Canada** is - a multicultural country - a country of many cultures living together as **Canadians**.
- Multiculturalism is the **union** and interaction between many cultures.
- Cultures can **unite** together without discrimination.
- Several different cultures living and working together as a **whole community**.
- Many cultures working together as a **whole**. No discrimination.

In terms of specific products of multiculturalism, the two most common words or images used were melting pot and mosaic, both standard sociological interpretations of cultures coming together. While the concept of melting pot may be inconsistent with multiculturalism, perhaps there is less difference between melting pot and mosaic than commonly imagined. After all, the so-called melting pot of the United States is associated with the survival of many ethnic cultures, even from the immigration of the 1800s. Examples of these responses are:

- A **melting pot** of cultures and beliefs and the collapse of the moral society.
- Cultural **mosaic**. Living in **unity** with individuals who possess an array of knowledge, everyone capable of teaching each other because we are all so different. Fun.
- **Mosaic** of people and their beliefs, morals, etc.

Finally, there were several interesting and unique images of the product of multiculturalism. The first three statements below present images of different types of food to describe product of multiculturalism. One respondent combines a musical image (jazz) with a sophisticated explanation. The final two examples below use images that have sometimes been associated with descriptions of multiculturalism – as web, network, or a patchwork quilt.

- Like a **tossed salad**, the more you add the better it is.
- Like **mulligan stew**, a carrot there, a potato here a piece of meat there, some celery.
- Diversity is the **spice of life**.
- **Jazz music**. Because it's a combination of European harmony, African and Latin rhythms, instruments from every culture, East Indian philosophies.
- A **web** of many cultures formed to create a whole society.
- A **patchwork quilt** of cultures, people and activities.

While it was not a majority of student respondents who provided such imaginative responses about multiculturalism, there were enough such responses to establish that these transformative views are accepted by some and form part of their view of multiculturalism.

From statements in the *Act* and responses of some of the students, there is evidence that a transformative aspect of multiculturalism is understood by some Canadians. When these are added to the dramatic changes that have occurred in restructuring social relations in Canada over the last few decades, there is certainly evidence that multiculturalism is part of transforming society. Whether this will lead to social relations being restructured in a more socially just manner is still unclear. But given the views of these young student respondents, there is certainly hope that social justice can be expanded and strengthened through multiculturalism.



## E. Conclusion

I find it curious that criticism of multiculturalism focuses on division, lack of unity, injustice, and misrepresentation (Li, Bibby, Bannerji, Inglis), while ignoring processes of recognition, redistribution, and social change. While preservation and protection of some aspects of culture are important aspects of participation and inclusive citizenship (Kymlicka), just as important are dynamic processes of social change. Cultures are not primordial and fixed but are products of social relationships, chance, and interaction – surely social interaction drives these processes. Some societal processes produce greater inequality but others provide opportunities for flexibility and participation among all involved and lead in the direction of greater equality and social justice. Many student respondents appear to understand this, but some social theorists and others involved in analyzing multiculturalism appear to write with preconceived ideas about multiculturalism.

As is often the case, ordinary people can point the direction toward a better understanding of social relationships and social change. After all, it is they who have to practice the mundane and everyday aspects of social life. In this case, I regard the student respondents as ahead of many social scientists. Many of these students understand what multiculturalism means and appear to accept it; we can also hope they practice it – they indicated they would. These understandings, along with Miller's three principles of social justice, and Fraser's emphasis on transformative aspects of social change can assist us in developing societies that are more socially just.

In conclusion, I have two recommendations:

- Researchers in each of the areas of social justice and multiculturalism make greater attempts to determine how people understand each of these concepts and connections between them. This could lead to more research on understandings and practices related to social justice and multiculturalism.
- Broaden the multicultural approach to make participation, respect, and inclusion deal with more than cultural aspects of social life. Policies with respect to redistribution and recognition attempt to understand and broaden a multicultural approach, including dealing with economic and political issues such as employment and political participation.

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