

# **Multiculturalism as Transformative?**

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## **Abstract**

The practice of multiculturalism can be a way for a diverse society to transform itself. By providing opportunities for all members of society to participate in social life and employing principles of multiculturalism such as equality, respect, and harmony, a society can become more socially just. Multiculturalism is not always thought of this way, and is often considered a means of preserving cultures, emphasizing difference, and separating people from each other.

In this paper, I explore the possibility that multiculturalism provides a means of social transformation in a more socially just direction and provide evidence that some Canadians think of multiculturalism this way. That is, some consider it as a framework for working together to create a society that reduces barriers to participation by ending discriminatory treatment of some members and providing an opportunity for all members of the society to participate more fully in social life. The data I employ come from analysis of a student survey I conducted, from some national surveys, and from official statements about multiculturalism.

The frameworks I use for organizing these data are those provided by Nancy Fraser and Cecil Foster. Fraser focuses on the dual issues of redistribution and recognition as distinct, but interlocking, dimensions of social justice. For Fraser, the criterion for a socially just transformation is parity of participation. Cecil Foster explores the possibility that multiculturalism has presented Canada with an opportunity that it should not ignore. Focussing primarily on race, but also on citizenship, Foster argues that multiculturalism could transform Canada into a society that eliminates racial distinction.

In the paper I analyze the data in light of the approaches of Fraser and Foster, developing implications for social policy and practice.

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## Multiculturalism as Transformative?

Multiculturalism is the story of our search for and hopes about social justice.  
Cecil Foster, 2005, xi.

Blending cultures and learning to live together by learning from each other.

A web of many cultures formed to create a whole society.

Statements of two students about the meaning of multiculturalism.

### A. Introduction

By changing the structure and operation of its institutions and social relationships, the practice of multiculturalism can be a way for a diverse society to transform itself. A society where principles of multiculturalism – equality, respect, harmony, recognition, participation – are practiced will attempt to find ways of integrating members from all backgrounds and cultures, allowing all to participate in social life. While it is difficult to predict the direction this may lead, it is unlikely to leave social relationships and social institutions unchanged. Social interaction on the basis of the principles and practices of multiculturalism can help produce a more socially just outcome, with improved opportunities for all to participate in the life of society.

In this paper, I explore the possibility that multiculturalism can provide a means of social transformation in a more socially just direction. Multiculturalism is not always thought of this way, and is often considered a means of preserving cultures, emphasizing difference, and separating people from each other. In the paper, I present evidence that some Canadians think of multiculturalism as a framework for working together to create a society that reduces barriers to participation, ending discriminatory treatment, and providing a opportunity for members of the society to participate more fully in social life. The data I employ come from three sources – a student survey I conducted, national surveys, and federal government statements. In this paper I do not attempt to present a comprehensive view of the diverse meanings and implications of multiculturalism and what they might mean for addressing issues of social justice.<sup>1</sup> Rather, I am primarily interested in whether and how a transformative view is expressed in the data

The theoretical framework I use for organizing and analyzing the data is provided by Nancy Fraser (Fraser, 1995, 2000; Fraser and Honneth, 2003). Fraser argues that social injustice can be a result of maldistribution in the material sphere of society or misrecognition in the cultural and symbolic sphere. She considers the material and symbolic spheres to be two distinct, but interlocking, dimensions of social life. Achieving social justice involves both redistribution of resources in the material sphere and achieving a form of recognition that allows all members of society to have the status of full partners in social interaction.<sup>2</sup> For Fraser, political and social solutions to injustice must move beyond affirming or recognizing difference and involve transforming society by deconstructing the meaning of different and reconstructing the social relationships of distribution and recognition. Her criterion for achieving social justice is parity of participation, or participatory parity (Fraser and Honneth, 2003, 38).

A second author whose approach I use is that of Cecil Foster (Foster, 2005), who explores the possibility that multiculturalism has presented Canada with an opportunity that it should not ignore. Focussing primarily on race, but also on citizenship, Foster argues that multiculturalism can assist in transforming Canada into a society *Where Race Does Not Matter*, (the title of Foster's book) and where "all members of society will be sharing Canada's culture of sharing" (Foster, 2005, 173).

In analyzing these issues, I also employ the approach of Bhikhu Parekh, who considers multiculturalism, or a "multiculturalist society" as a normative approach to diversity within a multicultural society (Parekh, 2000, 6). That is, by definition a culturally diverse society is multicultural, while multiculturalism (or multiculturalist society) represents a set of norms and principles governing social relationships and the practices of social institutions. Multiculturalist practices include principles such as respect, equality, harmony, participation, and recognition. In contrast, a society that does not practice multiculturalism may have social practices that encourage discrimination, marginalize or ignore some, create increased inequality, and limit or prevent some members of society from participating fully in social institutions. The Department of Canadian Heritage appears to take this approach in stating that "The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding, and discourages ghettoization, hatred, discrimination and violence" (*Inclusive Citizenship*). While no evidence is presented to support this statement, and while no society will ever be able to fully practice all the ideals of multiculturalism, this contrast illustrates the difference between multiculturalism and approaches to social interaction that create misrecognition.

The plan of the paper is as follows. In Section B, I summarize the approaches of Fraser and Foster. I then present findings from survey data and federal government statements about multiculturalism and analyze them in the light of the approaches of Fraser and Foster (Section C). Section D provides a summary and conclusion.

## **B. Framework – Fraser and Foster**

### **1. Fraser's social justice framework**

Nancy Fraser sets her analysis of recognition within a social justice framework, examining sources of injustice and suggesting means of correcting and overcoming injustices. Historically, injustice was often associated with inequalities in the distribution of resources, resulting in the exploitation of individuals. In this context, struggles for social justice tended to be class conflicts centred in the economic sphere and concerned with ending maldistribution of resources. In the political sphere, reformist solutions include the welfare state and achievements of the trade union movement. Socialism and communism represent radical or revolutionary solutions that transform social institutions and relations in a more comprehensive manner.

Fraser argues that, in recent years, struggles for redistribution have been eclipsed by struggles associated with recognition of identity. Misrecognition of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality has resulted in “*institutionalized patterns of cultural values*...that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life” (Fraser and Honneth, 29). Achieving social justice means according recognition to all members of society and replacing patterns of exclusion with patterns of inclusion. Fraser considers there to be two analytically distinct dimensions of injustice – maldistribution and misrecognition – that emerge in different social spheres and require different solutions.<sup>3</sup> Maldistribution of resources is associated with exploitation, economic marginalization, and deprivation while misrecognition is associated with cultural domination, nonrecognition, and disrespect (Fraser, 1995, 70-71). Redistribution of economic resources will not necessarily solve problems of misrecognition; the latter are in the cultural or symbolic sphere and “the remedy for cultural injustice ... is some sort of cultural or symbolic change” (Fraser, 1995, 73). Fraser also argues that each specific social inequality, such as discriminatory or inequitable treatment of immigrant groups, has elements of both maldistribution and misrecognition. Because of the close connection between maldistribution and misrecognition, social justice can be achieved only by tackling and eliminating the causes of both injustices.

One means of reducing cultural or symbolic injustice is accordance of recognition to individuals and groups whose culture has been devalued, ignored, or considered inferior by those who have been able to exercise subordination over individuals and groups who practice that culture. Fraser terms this an affirmative approach, one of recognizing and respecting the individuals, groups, and cultures that had been misrecognized and not respected. A more radical, or what Fraser terms a transformative approach, is to deconstruct group identities and differences. This means changes that “redress disrespect by transforming the underlying cultural-valuational structure” (Fraser, 1995, 83). Deconstruction could transform social relationships and social institutions, leading to new and restructured identities and institutions.

Table 1 summarizes Fraser’s approach, showing two distinct social spheres that have associated with them different sources of injustice and different solutions to economic and cultural injustice.<sup>4</sup> Fraser sets misrecognition in the sphere of culture and the symbolic, emerging as a result of status subordination. This is not social status in terms of prestige or an index of socioeconomic status, but in the Weberian sense of social honour and status group (Fraser and Honneth, 17). This form of status affects how members of a society interact (or how some are not permitted to interact) with each other and the extent to which all members are considered full participants in social relationships. In Fraser’s words, “status represents an order of intersubjective subordination derived from institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute some members of society as less than full partners in interaction” (Fraser and Honneth, 49). In Fraser’s model there are two analytically distinct sources of inequality (maldistribution/misrecognition) with two distinct solutions (redistribution/recognition). In addition, there are two levels of processes (affirmation/transformation) that can help achieve social justice, with a comprehensive solution emerging only from transformative processes. These orders and processes are interlinked, so that achievement of social

justice requires attention to both spheres or orders and to both affirmation and transformation.

**Table 1. Nancy Fraser's social justice framework**

Order of subordination/ sphere	Form of subordination	Remedy for injustice	Aspects of social justice	
			Affirmation	Transformation
Class structure  Economy	Objective subordination (FH, 49)  Maldistribution of resources – inequality and exploitation	<b>Redistribution</b> of resources  End economic subordination	Liberal welfare state or reallocations of existing goods and services	Socialism or restructuring relations of production and distribution
Social status  Cultural or symbolic order  Institutionalized patterns of cultural values affect relative standing	Intersubjective subordination as some are less than full partners (FH, 49)  Misrecognition – inferior, wholly other, invisible, exclude, racism, discrimination	<b>Recognition</b>  End status subordination  Reciprocal recognition and status equality (FH, 29)	Mainstream multiculturalism or surface reallocations of respect to existing identities	Deconstruction of difference and symbolic oppositions (FH, 74)  Restructuring relations of recognition and identities

Source: Adapted from Fraser, 1995, 87; 2000, 117; Fraser and Honneth, 2003 (FH).

In her analysis, Fraser points to the need for deconstruction of difference and reconstruction of the relations of recognition. Since she considers transformative approaches to be necessary in order to achieve social justice, she cannot provide a roadmap – the form such a solution takes depends on how members of society transform social institutions. Fraser does, however, provide a guideline for reconstruction when she argues that the norm of “parity of participation” or “participatory parity” is the standard for overcoming misrecognition (Fraser and Honneth, 31). Subordination “denies some individuals and groups the possibility of participating on a par with others in social interaction” (Fraser and Honneth, 31). As a corrective, she argues that “justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members to interact with one another as peers” (Fraser and Honneth, 36). For Fraser, such participatory parity must be rooted in social institutions and not merely in interpersonal psychology (Fraser and Honneth, 31) meaning “participatory parity as a normative standard” (Fraser, 2000, 119).

Table 2 summarizes Fraser's parity of participation approach, where participatory parity applies to both distribution and recognition, in the economic and cultural spheres, respectively. By applying this principle or norm, there is a possibility for some form of equality of opportunity and for all members of a society to have “the status of full partners in interaction” (Fraser and Honneth, 36). The objective condition, that of greater equality

of distribution of resources, is necessary “to ensure participants’ independence and ‘voice’” and provide “the means and opportunities to interact with others as peers” (Fraser and Honneth, 36). The intersubjective condition means eliminating misrecognition and “requires that institutionalized patterns of cultural value express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem” (Fraser and Honneth, 36).

**Table 2. Parity of participation**

Sphere	Condition		Result or product
Class structure Economy Distribution	Objective	Participatory parity produces equal worth (FH, 45)	Independence and “voice” Means and opportunities to interact with others as peers – wealth, income, leisure time (FH, 36)
Social status Cultural/symbolic Recognition	Subjective or intersubjective		Equal respect, fair conditions of equal opportunity for achieving social esteem, full partners in interaction (FH, 36) Reciprocal recognition and status equality (FH, 29)

Source: Adapted from Fraser, 1995, p. 87; 2000, 117; Fraser and Honneth, 2003 (FH).

One example of reconstruction that Fraser provides is that of practices that marginalize or exclude ethnic and religious minorities in France. Fraser argues that affirmative steps to include minorities could have transformative consequences such as “reconstructing French national identity to suit a multicultural society” and “refashioning Islam for a liberal-pluralist and gender-egalitarian regime.” (p. 82). This example illustrates a transformative solution that focuses primarily on eliminating institutionalized disparities in participation. In other cases, transformation may require more attention to deconstructing differences that impair such participation.

Fraser does not consider multiculturalism to be sufficient to achieve participatory parity or transformation in the cultural and symbolic spheres (Table 1). Rather, she argues that mainstream multiculturalism requires continued reallocations of respect to existing identities. This parallels a reformist approach in the economic sphere, where continual redistribution of material resources may be necessary to counter new forms of inequality. While I employ Fraser’s general framework, I will attempt to place multiculturalism in both of the two lower right cells of Table 1. That is, I consider some aspects of multiculturalism to be primarily affirmative and other aspects transformative, with the latter having the possibility of deconstructing differences, creating new social relationships and institutions, and leading to greater participatory parity.

## 2. Foster's new spirit of modernity

In the book, *Where Race Does Not Matter: The New Spirit of Modernity* (Foster, 2005), Cecil Foster analyzes blackness, whiteness, and multiculturalism, examining aspects of Canadian history and laying out possibilities for social relationships in the present and future. Foster reviews Canada's earlier restrictive immigration policy of exclusion, presenting it as an object of shame in the "collective memory that is our history of sharing a land together" (Foster, 2005, x). At the same time, he argues that multiculturalism gives Canada an opportunity to overcome this shame and presents Canada and "the entire Americas and the world" with a moment that is "new, fresh, and full of hope" (Foster, 2005, xi).

Foster's approach is less analytical than Fraser's, and is presented as a hope and vision, with evidence from historical and contemporary situations. In Foster's view, multiculturalism provides the possibility for deconstructing race, racism, and racializing thought by creating a radical form of equality. He is critical of those who base identity and recognition on the longevity of claims, arguing that these are often bogus, can be essentializing, and tend to view some as superior and others as inferior. Foster argues for the possibility of creating new identities that are not associated with categorization and boundaries. There is a "dignity of difference" (Foster, 162) and nation building can and should be associated with diversity, rather than "attempting to produce merely a sameness and a singular totalization from out of the multiplicity that is humanity" (Foster, 158). Further, multiculturalism need not be associated with isolation and ethnic enclaves if a culture of sharing becomes the main form of identity (Foster, 173).

In order to achieve this vision, Foster argues that it is whiteness that will have to end, since it is whiteness that is the source of racialization and inequality, the categorization "into superior citizens and inferior ones" (Foster, 153). In this argument, there would be diversity in a nation, but all citizens would be equal and be able to participate in negotiating the future of the nation. It would not just be members of "visible minorities" or racialized groups that would have to negotiate, but those who identify themselves as white would have no special privileges either, so there would be partnership among all citizens in exploring directions and developing new forms of social relationships and institutions. Foster states that "Multiculturalism is an attempt to overcome and transcend whiteness in our time and through human effort" (Foster, 187).

Foster draws inspiration and evidence for this vision from three sources: the constitution of Haiti, Trudeau's vision of diversity, and current views of a new generation. The 1805 constitution of Haiti is a model, in that it did not argue for freedom of a particular people but sought to include as citizens all persons who had previously been excluded. The constitution treated all humans as equal and Haiti welcomed everyone other than those who attempted to become masters over or proprietors of other human beings. This is the radical equality that Foster proclaims as a model, where "all human beings were equal, whether they owned any physical property or not" (Foster, 67). It is a long way from this constitution to multiculturalism, and the meaning of the latter is highly contested. However, Foster approves of Trudeau's vision

of Canada as a diverse society, where “uniformity is neither desirable nor possible” and “there is no such thing as a model or ideal Canadian” (Foster, 173). And by establishing an official form of multiculturalism, Trudeau helped set in motion a dynamic that has created a different Canada, one that has new possibilities. Much racism still exists in Canada, but Foster argues that Canada has changed and some portions of the Canadian population have accepted an alternative vision of Canada. Just as Fraser does not state how social relationships and institutions will be reconstructed in the future, Foster also leaves this to Canadians of the future to negotiate and develop. But to achieve what he terms “real multiculturalism” there will have to be means of providing freedom and equality of all individuals.

### **C. Findings about meanings of multiculturalism**

#### **1. Introduction**

##### **a. Data sources**

In order to investigate how Canadians interpret the meaning of multiculturalism, I employ three data sources (see Tables 4 and 1xxx). First, I will examine statements made by undergraduate students at the University of Regina. These come from a survey of seven hundred plus undergraduates conducted in 1998 and from an undergraduate Sociology class of forty students in 2004. Second, I will examine responses to questions from several national surveys – the Angus Reid Survey of 1991, the New Canada and subsequent surveys, the Ethnic Diversity Survey, and surveys from the Association of Canadian Studies. While none of these address the issues in the framework developed here, responses to some of the questions shed light on how Canadians consider diversity and multiculturalism to operate in Canadian society. Third, I analyze words and phrases in four federal government statements in the light of the theoretical framework outlined above.

##### **b. Issues emerging from the analyses of Fraser and Foster**

From the analyses of Fraser and Foster, I draw four issues – affirmation, deconstruction, participatory parity, and reconstruction or transformation. I provide a brief summary of each and follow this with findings concerning these four issues from the surveys and federal government statements.

- i. **Affirmation.** Fraser argues that mainstream multiculturalism is primarily concerned with surface reallocations of respect to identities that currently exist, without challenging or changing these identities. A large number of student responses, views from the attitude surveys, and federal government statements address issues such as respect, harmony, diversity as a resource, and preservation of cultures and identities. There is no doubt that what Fraser terms the affirmative aspect of multiculturalism has been central to the discussion of multiculturalism in Canada, with Canadians generally expressing support for this meaning of



multiculturalism. Since the affirmative aspect of multiculturalism is not the focus of this paper, I do not analyze this aspect in any great detail in this paper.<sup>5</sup>

- ii. **Deconstruction.** Both Fraser and Foster consider deconstruction of socially constructed identities and differences to be central to achieving a transformation in a socially just direction. For Fraser, this involves deconstructing identities associated with race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. Foster primarily concentrates on race, arguing for the elimination of the concept of whiteness and of race. While there were few student responses that addressed this issue, some survey evidence points toward ways of accomplishing this.
- iii. **Participatory parity.** Fraser develops parity of participation as a standard for inclusion, in that a socially just society will eliminate barriers that prevent participation of all in social institutions. Foster does not use the same framework as Fraser, but points in the same direction by arguing for real equality of all citizens. Each of the data sources provides evidence that some consider this an important principle, although few state it in the same way as do Fraser or Foster.
- iv. **Reconstruction and transformation.** Both Fraser and Foster consider it possible that society could be transformed to become more socially just. Neither provides exact guidelines and both consider it necessary for members of society to reconstruct institutions so all can be included as equals. Again, each of the data sets provides evidence that some Canadians look on multiculturalism as being a means of transforming society. In particular, undergraduate students mentioned interaction and working together as the meaning of multiculturalism, thus creating the possibility of new forms of social relationships.

In the following sections, I outline findings from the three data sources that provide evidence relating to these four issues. Section 2 examines statements of undergraduate students, section 3 provides responses from national surveys, and section 4 contains an analysis of some of the words and phrases from federal government statements about multiculturalism.

## 2. Student statements about the meaning of multiculturalism

On two different occasions, I asked students to respond to the question “What does multiculturalism mean to you?” The first occasion was a 1998 cross-campus, omnibus survey of undergraduates at the University of Regina, the Survey of Student Attitudes and Experiences, 1998 (SSAE98). This question was the first in a section dealing with issues of multiculturalism and immigration and responses were from one word to one or two sentences. The responses gave an off-the-cuff, initial, and short summary statement of the views of students about what multiculturalism meant to them.

The second occasion where I obtained views of students was to ask the same question, “What does multiculturalism mean to you?” of students on the first day of a second year class in the sociology of multiculturalism. Responses were one or two

sentences and I did not retain copies of the detailed comments. However, I classified the words and phrases used by students into several categories and handed these back to the students. This categorization and listing is in Table 3.

**Table 3. Student statements of what multiculturalism means**

<p><b>Descriptive characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diversity</li> <li>variety of backgrounds</li> <li>different people/backgrounds</li> <li>many cultures</li> <li>mixture</li> <li>network of community, goals, values</li> <li>Canada</li> <li>Mosaic (Regina festival)</li> </ul> <p><b>Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equality</li> <li>same/human rights</li> <li>participation</li> <li>learn</li> <li>tolerance</li> <li>acceptance</li> <li>respect</li> <li>harmony</li> <li>interaction</li> <li>cooperation</li> <li>practice own cultures/traditions</li> <li>maintain own identity</li> <li>encouragement of cultures</li> <li>different cultures fostered and valued</li> <li>share culture</li> <li>integrated/merging of cultures</li> </ul> <p><b>Attitude</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>celebrate differences</li> <li>pride in multicultural identity</li> <li>understanding and not passing judgment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promote healthy social structure</li> <li>come together</li> <li>interact/work together</li> <li>live as one community/same society</li> <li>cohesion/unity</li> <li>blending</li> <li>amalgamate into a larger culture</li> <li>not assimilation</li> <li>accommodates all ethnic groups</li> <li>something society must “do”</li> <li>responsibilities of living in a multicultural society</li> </ul> <p><b>Barriers/discrimination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>without fear of persecution</li> <li>eliminate biases</li> <li>non-absolutes/non-confrontational</li> </ul> <p><b>Historical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>built by immigrants</li> </ul> <p><b>Problematic aspects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>divides society/segregates</li> <li>hurts visible minorities</li> <li>racism and prejudice increase as more groups together</li> <li>conflicts can develop</li> <li>racism and hostility</li> <li>outlawed cultural practices</li> <li>equality a myth</li> <li>polemics</li> <li>unequal treatment</li> </ul>
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**Source:** Summarized from statements of forty students in a second year undergraduate class in the sociology of multiculturalism.

Referring first to Table 3, I find it notable that many of the terms and concepts used by students were more than simply descriptive of diversity (the first category in Table 3). While the classification in Table 3 was not constructed in accordance with issues identified in this paper, many of the terms in the “Characteristics” category fit with the affirmative notion of multiculturalism. Given debate about problems of multiculturalism, and perhaps reflecting some of the students’ negative experiences in

society, it is no surprise that a number of problematic aspects were mentioned. What I find most interesting, is that relatively few students mentioned aspects that are solely related to attitudes toward others (bottom of first column), while many more mentioned aspects of multiculturalism that I consider to represent aspects of social relationship (top of second column). Many of the words used in section, and some of those in the “Characteristics” section of Table 3 represent concepts that match some of the transformative and reconstructive aspects identified earlier.

Given that the responses in Table 3 came from students in a sociology class, perhaps not too much should be read into these words. At the same time, in the larger SSAE98 survey, I found a similar result, that is, a tendency to identify meanings and concepts of multiculturalism associated with social dynamism, where societies change or transform themselves. In the following paragraphs I address the four issues identified earlier and provide examples of student statements from SSAE98.

**a. Affirmation.** Probably the bulk of statements about the meaning of multiculturalism made reference to what Fraser terms the affirmative aspects of multiculturalism. Words used in connection with diversity that I considered to express this approach include tolerance, respect, harmony, acceptance, appreciate, understanding, awareness, and celebrate. I also considered phrases such as encouragement of cultures, understanding different cultures, distinct cultures, maintaining culture, and free to be distinct as expressing affirmation. For the most part, the latter phrases are associated with a vision of multiculturalism as one of different cultures and peoples who coexist or get along with each other. But these phrases do not present a view of cultures as changing or society as being transformed. From the student responses in SSAE98, a few examples of what I consider to be affirmative approaches are as follows.

- The celebration of diverse cultures and heritage. (id 131)
- To some it means a greater diversity of cultures across a country therefore creating more knowledge and acceptance of other cultures. (id 150)
- Being objective and fair-minded to the traditions of different cultures. (id 286)
- Many cultures in my community - being aware of who they are - having respect for cultures and customs. (id 335)
- Many different backgrounds, beliefs, etc. that are free to be distinct. (id 415)
- A diverse country of different races. (id 775)
- Living in an integrated society with distinct cultures. (id 176)

Each of the above responses represents a view of multiculturalism that is consistent with much of the policy, program, and discourse of Canadian multiculturalism. But I take these statements as examples of an affirmative view that accords respect to cultures other than one’s own, without envisioning possibilities for multiculturalism as being transformative.

**b. Deconstruction.** As used by Fraser, deconstruction involves eliminating socially constructed differences that impede parity of participation. In connection with multiculturalism, this involves deconstructing race, ethnicity, national origin, and religion

in a way such that differences associated with these categories no longer impede the ability of anyone to participate as a peer in social institutions and relationships. Foster adopts a similar approach, arguing that differences of race and ethnicity should become irrelevant, so all can participate equally as citizens. Especially important in Foster's approach is eliminating the privileges of whiteness.

In the student responses it is difficult to find statements that are exact expressions of this form of deconstruction. The only statement using the word deconstruction was made by a sociology student who responded in a manner consistent with Fraser and Foster:

- Including self-definition of culture. Deconstructing current rigid definitions/categories of what "cultural" is. (id 506)

Two responses that express the ideas raised by Foster are:

- Canada being full of every race and hopefully, not seeing one another as a colour. (id 628)
- A land of equal opportunity for all minorities. this equality should be real and not just a lie. (id 871)

The former represents the vision that race and colour should not matter and the latter states Foster's ideal of real equality.

At the same time, there were a number of responses that mention culture and social life in a way that implies change that could produce a new culture and way of life. Examples of these are as follows.

- A culture created by many backgrounds. There are individuals, traditions and behaviours from many other cultures which create a new distinct culture. (id 64)
- People of different ethnic backgrounds combining to make a new "multiculture." (id 66)
- Several different cultures coming together, each sharing aspects of their culture until their cultures merge or unite. (id 244)
- A whole bunch of cultures thrown together that form a bond between them. (id 386)
- Several cultural groups blending together. (id 406)
- Many people of different cultural backgrounds living in one area and forming a new cultural identity with many cultures contributing. (id 563)

While it is difficult to know exactly how the students might follow up on these statements, the view expressed is one of creating a new culture. This implies some deconstruction of differences created by earlier cultures, so that new social relationships and culture emerge. The above statements certainly contrast with a response such as "Different cultures allowed to be themselves" (id 136), where no change in culture is suggested. Many of the students expressed the concept of cultural change and development of a new culture through multiculturalism. Words such as bond, blend (6 mentions), combine (18 mentions), create (8 mentions), form (5 mentions), and join (2 mentions) were used in many responses, indicating the possibility of change to new forms of social relationships.

Another approach to the issue of deconstruction is to examine student responses for evidence that multiculturalism is associated with treating some individuals or groups as different or “wholly other” (Fraser and Honneth, 29). For example, in Table 3, there were mentions of problematic aspects such as “racism and hostility” and “unequal treatment.” However, the student responses in SSAE98, I found few examples of statements of this type. One student responded in a way that privileged his own culture:

- Allowing people to maintain a culture without being persecuted while not overstepping our laws. (id 63)

While this respondent would allow maintenance of other cultures, he views others as outsiders, with permission required (allow), and the laws are “our laws.” But I found few responses expressing such an us-them or Canada first approach. Student responses generally implied what I consider to be a more inclusive and symmetrical view of cultures and peoples. The following examples are typical illustrations:

- Multiculturalism - a wide variety of norms, values, beliefs, traditions in a society. (id 162)
- Many people from many backgrounds sharing parts of their heritage. (id 311)
- Different cultures working and living together while retaining their individual character. (id 458)

This more common approach appears consistent with survey findings that indicate Canadians generally consider multiculturalism to apply to everyone. In MAS91 (see description in Table 4), seventy-six per cent of respondents said multiculturalism refers to “Canadians of every ancestry.” This was the most commonly selected option among a set suggesting multiculturalism refers to immigrants, racial minority groups, etc. While respondents were not asked a similar question in this project, there were many more responses indicating a symmetrical approach to relationships among cultures and peoples than there were indicating a selective approach. While these findings are not strong evidence for a deconstructive approach, they point in this direction. That is, they tend to negate the claim that multiculturalism is nothing more than a new way of treating some as outsiders or as other.

**c. Participation.** For Fraser, a standard of participatory parity is necessary for achieving social justice. This means the elimination of socially constructed barriers in both the material and symbolic spheres so that all can participate as peers in social relationships and social institutions. While Foster does not use the same terminology, he anticipates a society where all can contribute as equal citizens.

A few students used “participation” in their responses and several used related concepts such as inclusion, no exclusion, and equal opportunity. Examples are:

- Equal participation in Canadian mosaic. Contributing to Canada's diversity. (id 502)
- A country or society that has many different cultures participating in it. (id 123)
- Inclusion of many different people from different races and backgrounds. (id 766)
- Interaction of all cultures and socialization of everyone with no exclusions. (id 73)
- Is an attitude of respect for the diversity of cultures in Canada which includes equal opportunity for all. (id 604)

Two related concepts that were commonly mentioned were equal or equality (15 mentions) and recognition (21 mentions). The former is important in the analyses of both Fraser and Foster and the latter is a central concept in Fraser's work. However, my interpretation of the manner that students used these terms is that they did not carry the meaning that Foster and Fraser attribute to them. The first response below is typical of how equality was used. The second response (id 188) may come close to the more comprehensive approach to equality that Foster develops.

- People of different backgrounds treated equally. (id 314)
- Complete equality, free expression of cultural roots. (id 188)

My reading of the use of "recognition" in the student responses is that they generally considered recognition to be equivalent to respect or understanding, rather than the more comprehensive form of mutual recognition suggested by Fraser. A few examples of the way "recognition" was used are contained in the following responses.

- Recognizing and allowing all cultures to practice their beliefs within Canada's laws. (id 571)
- Recognition/respect for all. (id 820)
- Diversity. Positive recognition. (id 239)
- Multiculturalism means that our country contains many different cultures and we recognize and accept these cultures. (id 146)

In these examples, recognition is used in a manner that gives positive consideration to others, but does not appear to include the concept of intersubjectivity.

**d. Transformation and reconstruction.** As noted earlier, in their writings Fraser and Foster do not provide a roadmap for how society can be reconstructed in a socially just manner. Neither did the students in their responses. But what I found interesting is how many students suggested ways that multiculturalism can transform society. Many students used terms such as blend, combine, incorporate, and integrate – suggesting that multiculturalism is a process or an activity that changes society. Others used terms such as get along, cooperate, coexist, peace, harmony, and no racism or discrimination – suggesting that multiculturalism means social relationships can be constructed in a more socially just manner. Perhaps the most commonly used word in this setting was "together." Students used this in various phrases, such as "come together," "put together," "bring together," "live together," and "working together." Again, I cannot be certain that students meant transforming or reconstructing society when they used these terms, but I consider many of these uses to point in this direction. A few examples of how students expressed this are as follows.

- All the different cultures to combine [and] work together. (id 167)
- All different cultures, interacting together and sharing but not assimilating. (id 256)
- Multiculturalism - many different people interacting together in the same setting. (id 261)
- A joining together of different cultures. (id 467)
- Multiple cultures that live and interact together. (id 504)
- Many cultures working together as a whole. no discrimination (id 610)
- Blending cultures together to create a new culture - working together. (id 22)

A further set of responses by students dealt with some of the results of interaction and working together. Students used common images such as web, mosaic, quilt, and spice of life, and less common images such as tossed salad, mulligan stew, and jazz music as possible meanings for multiculturalism. Some of these responses are as follows.

- A web of many cultures formed to create a whole society. (id 199)
- Incorporating aspects of various cultures into everyday life; open-mindedness. (id 250)
- Uniting persons of various ethnic/cultural backgrounds, races, creeds, etc. (id 761)
- A combination of many cultures into one. (id 844)
- Many cultures coming together as a united group. (id 807)
- The structural integrity of multiple systems of distinct cultural values and performative acts. (id 892)
- Multiculturalism is the union and interaction between many cultures. (id 60)
- People of different ethnic backgrounds combining to make a new "multiculture." (id 66)
- A culture created by many backgrounds. There are individuals, traditions and behaviours from many other cultures which create a new distinct culture. (id 64)

In summary, the image of multiculturalism presented by some of the student responses is that diverse peoples and cultures not only live alongside each other, but work together and interact in ways that may result in a different society. This is clearest in the words such as combine, integrate, create, whole, and union. This is not an image that commonly appears in discussions of multiculturalism. More commonly there is a static image of different cultures and people having reasonably harmonious relations with each other, but not creating something new. Many students appear to adopt a more dynamic approach to multiculturalism, where these social relations lead, in an interactive way, to a new form of society. After all, if people from diverse backgrounds live together and communicate with each other, there will undoubtedly be interaction of a form that changes each people and culture, thus producing a new set of social relationships and system of life. I think Parekh makes a similar point when he says that in a multicultural society "communities are open and interactive and cannot be frozen, and ... public institutions and policies should recognize and cherish their evolving identities and nurture a community of communities" (Parekh, 340-341).

**e. Conclusion.** While student responses do not always match the concepts and approaches of Fraser and Foster, many of the students made statements that point toward multiculturalism as an active social process that can lead to social change. While many of the responses presented no more than an affirmative approach to multiculturalism, larger numbers of students stated that multiculturalism was a way of expressing social relationships. While many of the statements implied no more than a static form of relationship, that of respect, harmony, and understanding, others had dynamic implications. The latter tended to consider individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds to be actively involved in interaction, sharing, working together, and creating a new or different culture and set of social relationships.

### 3. National surveys

None of the national surveys directly address the meaning of multiculturalism in the framework of this paper. At the same time, responses to some survey questions provide an insight into how Canadians view social relationships in connection with multiculturalism.

Views and opinions are drawn from the survey sources listed in Table 4. These surveys had diverse aims and researchers did not construct the survey questions with the aim of measuring views within the framework of this paper. But responses to some survey questions can be used to draw inferences about views of Canadians on issues associated with the analyses of Fraser and Foster. While each survey refers to a slightly different population base and has its own sampling and nonsampling errors, I generally ignore these in the following discussion, except where I draw attention to them. Other than SSAE98, I treat the survey results as reasonable representations of the views and opinions of all Canadian adults. When reporting the survey results, I give the short title along with the question number or name (eg. MAS91, Q7 for question 7 of the Multiculturalism and Canadians survey).

**Table 4. Survey data references**

Short title in paper	Survey description			
	Survey name and source	Scope	Sample size	Date
MAS91	Multiculturalism and Canadians: Attitude Study 1991	Canadian adults	n = 3,325	1991
SSAE98	Survey of Student Attitudes and Experiences 1998	University of Regina undergraduates	n = 714	1998
NC	New Canada: CRIC- Globe and Mail. "The New Canada"	Canadian adults	n = 2,000	2003
EDS	Ethnic Diversity Survey	Canadian adults	n = 41,695	2002
ACS	Association for Canadian Studies surveys	Canadian adults	various samples	2004-5
DS	Diversity Survey, CRIC	Canadian adults	N = 2,032	2005
Ipsos	Ipsos Reid	Canadian adults	N = 7,307	2006

**Source:** See survey references and notes at the end of the paper.

As an overview, national surveys generally find that a majority of Canadians support diversity and multiculturalism. An Ipsos poll conducted in January of this year found that seventy-five per cent of those surveyed agreed "It is better for Canada to have a variety of people with different religions" and seventy-four per cent agreed that "Canada's multicultural make-up is one of the best things about the country." In



addition, sixty-four per cent disagreed with the statement “It is better for Canada if everyone shares the same customs and traditions.” But more than half of those surveyed would like newcomers to become “more like most Canadians” rather than accepting “minority groups and their customs and language.” From these, Canadians support diversity but they also expect change on the part of newcomers. It is less clear whether respondents consider integration to be a two-directional process so that those born in Canada or who are long time residents of Canada are also encouraged to change their customs and culture in response to diversity.

In the following paragraphs and tables, I summarize some of the survey responses that may be relevant to the issues addressed in this paper. Given that questions asked in the surveys are not focussed on the four issues identified earlier, I organize this section differently than the section on student responses. The section is organized around questions and issues that may be relevant to how social relations are transformed through multiculturalism and social justice.

**a. Deconstruction?** As noted earlier in connection with the student responses, there is evidence that Canadians consider multiculturalism to be applicable to everyone, not just to immigrants, aboriginal people, or visible minorities. In MAS91 (question 4), seventy-six per cent of respondents said multiculturalism refers to “Canadians of every ancestry.” While seventy-three per cent also said it applied to “immigrants, regardless of colour” only one-half of respondents said “When I hear people talking about multiculturalism, I think they are referring to non-white immigrants.” These results tend to support the view that Canadians think of multiculturalism in a symmetrical manner, involving all Canadians.

**b. Importance of ethnicity.** An indication that ethnicity and maintenance of ethnicity may not be as central to personal identity as several other factors is provided by the New Canada survey (NC, question 14). Respondents were asked how important each of the six factors in Table 5 were “to one’s personal feeling of identity.” The percentages stating whether the factor was important or not important are reported in Table 5.

**Table 5. Percentage of NC respondents indicating factor important to personal identity**

Factor that may contribute to personal identity	Per cent of respondents stating factor is	
	Important	Not important
Nation	84	16
Language	75	25
Region or province	67	23
Gender	65	35
Ethnicity or race	58	42
Religion	52	48

While this is a general question, these results demonstrate that ethnicity and religion, by themselves, are less important sources of personal identity than are nation and region. If only the affirmative aspect of multiculturalism were operative, one would expect to find that ethnicity, race, and religion are the key factors in personal identity. While language is very important to personal identity, a large part of this appears to be related to French in Quebec, and related to bilingualism more than multiculturalism.

Data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey present a similar picture concerning the importance of first ancestry (EDS, question SNQ0601), with sixty-one per cent of respondents stating that their first ancestry is important to them. However, when asked about sense of belonging, ethnic or cultural group is the least important of six groupings asked of respondents. In Table 6 a larger mean is associated with greater importance. Similar to Table 5, ethnicity is the least important factor in the list.

**Table 6. Mean strength of sense of belonging, ranked from most important to least important grouping (EDS, questions AT\_Q010 to AT\_Q060)**

Strength of sense of belonging to:	Mean response
Family	4.65
Canada	4.29
North America	3.71
Province	3.83
Town, city, municipality	3.59
Ethnic or cultural group	3.39

Note: Response on a five-point scale from 1 indicating “not strong at all” to 5 indicating “very strong.”

**c. Circles of friendship.** One way that individuals interact in society is through friendships, acquaintances, and neighbours. Table 7 provides a summary of the number of friends with the same first ancestry that EDS respondents reported. This demonstrates that friends with the same ancestry are common among children and youth but less common once an individual reaches adulthood. The new friendships are presumably with individuals of other ancestries and backgrounds, thus providing for the possibility of interaction outside a narrow ethnic circle.

Table 8 reports responses to the question “How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place in Canada because of your ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion?” for respondents who are not members or a visible minority and for those who reported belonging to a visible minority. These results come from the EDS, where the finding of discrimination against visible minorities has been widely reported (Statistics Canada, 2003). While less publicized, the data in Table 8 also show that there is some distance to go in Canada before all members feel at ease. At the same time, a majority of even visible minority respondents state that they never feel uncomfortable because of their ethnicity, race, or skin colour. While there is no historical comparison

for this, these results point in the direction of change in the forms of interaction for those who have visible minority status.

**Table 7. Percentage distribution of respondents by number of friends with same first ancestry, under age 15 and current (EDS, questions SNQ0201 and SNQ0301)**

Number of friends with same first ancestry	Per cent of respondents with each number	
	Until age 15	Current
All of them	27	11
Most of them	20	24
About half of them	12	15
A few of them	26	34
None of them	15	16
Total	100	100

**Table 8. Percentage distribution of amount of time respondents felt uncomfortable or out of place, by visible minority status (EDS, questions IS\_Q010 and IS\_Q030 cross-classified by EAIND)**

Feel uncomfortable or out of place	Per cent of respondents with each response	
	Non-visible minority	Visible minority
All of the time	<1	1
Most of the time	1	3
Some of the time	7	20
Rarely	11	21
Never	81	55
Total	100	100

**d. Marriage and diversity.** One way that there can be a transformation of ethnicity and race is through marriage across ethnic and racial lines. If such intermarriage becomes widespread, the mixed offspring of such marriages may make ethnic and racial divisions increasingly irrelevant. From the survey data, there is evidence that some Canadian say this is the case.

In MAS91, only sixteen per cent of respondents agreed with the statement, “It is a bad idea for people of different races to marry one another” (MAS91, 12f). In the New Canada survey, the percentage of respondents who expressed agreement with the same statement was eleven per cent. Among those aged thirty and under, only seven per cent

agreed with the statement (NC, Q16\_2, SCR1). Further findings from the New Canada survey are provided in Table 9, where ethnic background is the least important among the factors listed for deciding how to choose a spouse.

**Table 9. Mean importance of various factors for choosing a spouse, ranked from most to least important (NC, Q15)**

When choosing a spouse it is important to have similar:	Mean response
Attitudes toward family/children	1.39
Moral values	1.47
Attitudes toward work/leisure	1.88
Sense of humour	1.91
Religion	2.62
Educational background	2.63
Class (economic background or income)	2.80
Political views	2.83
Ethnic background	2.95

Note: Response on a four-point scale from 1 indicating “very important” to 4 indicating “not at all important”

**Table 10. Distribution of undergraduate students by number of ethnic or cultural groups in their ancestry (SSAE98)**

Number of ethnic or cultural groups in ancestry	Per cent of respondents
1	37
2	37
3	17
4	7
5	2
Total	100

One of the effects of marriage across ethnic lines is to produce children with a diverse ancestry. In the survey of undergraduates at the University of Regina, just over one-third stated a single ethnic origin. The findings in Table 10 demonstrate that an equal percentage (thirty-seven per cent) stated that they had two ethnicities in their ancestry, and twenty-six per cent had three or more ethnic lineages. The above contrasts with the Canadian cross-section in EDS, where sixty-one per cent of respondents had a single ethnic origin and only thirty-nine per cent had multiple origins (EDS, EAIND). The greater extent of diverse ancestries of the undergraduates may be a result of the greater diversity of ethnic origins in Saskatchewan, where the bulk of undergraduates were born and lived.

A similar point has been made by Jack Jedwab, writing on behalf of the Association of Canadian Studies. He claims that data on ancestry of Canadians in the 2006 Census of Canada will demonstrate “that a majority of Canadians will have something other than Canadian, British and French as part of their ethnic ancestry.” (Jedwab, 2005, 1).

**e. Diversity and learning.** Another way that societies can transform themselves is by learning from other societies, cultures, and peoples and by incorporating this learning into societal practices. Integration can be considered a two-directional process. One part of the process is that newcomers to a society change their practices and views as they incorporate themselves in the society. At the same time, a truly integrative process will change the society into which newcomers enter, and the social relations and institutions will change in the society. Hopefully those who were members of the society prior to newcomers arriving will also change their social practices so that all members of the society can be included, accommodated, and participate in social life. Some of the survey questions deal with issues connected to these processes.

The New Canada study found that two-thirds of respondents agreed with the statement “A society that has a variety of ethnic and cultural groups is more able to tackle new problems as they occur” (NC, Q16\_1), while only twelve per cent disagreed with this statement. In the same study, only twenty per cent of respondents agreed with the statement “Canadian children growing up surrounded by people of different ethnic and cultural groups will be left without a solid cultural base” (NC, Q16\_4). Sixty per cent disagreed with this statement. These responses demonstrate an appreciation of diversity, and a view that diversity provides a way of learning and tackling problems.

**Table 11. Percentage distributions of respondents views concerning openness to learning from different groups (DS)**

Do you feel we should be:	Learning from and adopting practices of group: (per cent with each response)			
	Immigrant	Aboriginal	French speaking	English speaking
More open	38	48	37	33
Same	38	34	43	54
Less open	22	15	16	9

Note: Percentages taken from the CRIC slide show do not add to one hundred.

“Assuming that every culture and society has something that another society can learn from and apply to its own ways of doing things, people were asked if they felt that Canadians should be more open when it comes to learning from and adopting practices of immigrant (aboriginal/French-speaking/English-speaking) groups.” (DS, 2005, p. 2). Responses to the series of questions are given in Table 11. While respondents also indicated that it is important to transmit their own culture to children (approximately

eighty-five per cent), the findings in Table 11 generally support a view that there is value in learning from and adopting practices from cultures other than one's own.

Three questions in the MAS91 study are also relevant to this issue. Responses in Table 12 generally demonstrate support for diversity and the strengthening of Canadian culture on the basis of this diversity.

**Table 12. Percentage distribution of respondents for three statements concerning diversity and Canadian culture and society. (MAS91)**

Statement	Per cent with each view		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
A society that has a variety of ethnic and cultural groups is more able to tackle new problems as they occur. (MAS, Q12b)	14%	20%	66%
Multiculturalism means that working together we are better. (MAS, Q8c)	11%	—	89%
Enrich Canada's culture – could happen as a result of Canadian multiculturalism. (MAS, Q9b)	11%	11%	78%

**f. Equality and participation.** The analyses of Fraser and Foster are built around the principles of equality and the ability of all to participate as peers in social life and institutions. Canadian survey respondents generally express strong support for the principle of equality. For example, ninety per cent of undergraduates agreed with the statement “Canadian institutions should provide equal access, regardless of ethnic, racial, or cultural background” (SSAE98, M2). This matches the support among Canadian adults as a whole. When asked about multiculturalism “ensuring equal access to jobs regardless of ethnic or racial background,” ninety per cent agreed (MAS91, Q6c).

Several questions related to the issue of equal participation were asked in the 1991 survey. For example, seventy-four per cent of respondents agree that Canadian multiculturalism could provide greater equality of opportunity for all Canadians, while only thirteen per cent disagreed with this statement (MAS91, Q9c). In the same study, ninety per cent of respondents considered it believable that multiculturalism means that “working together we can stop racism.” Only ten per cent found this not believable (MAS91, Q8d). The findings in Table 13 also demonstrate that equality, equal access, and equal opportunity are the most strongly supported aspects of multiculturalism.

While views about participation are more difficult to find, an Association for Canadian Studies poll found a high level of support for equity policy. In response to the statement, “affirmative action and equity create a fairer Canada,” two-thirds agreed (ACS, 2004, Table 7). In commenting on this result, Jedwab notes that this is in contrast to the United States, where support for affirmative action is declining and close to equally split between agree and disagree (Jedwab, 2004, Table 7).

**Table 13. Mean level of support for some possible elements of federal multicultural policy, ranked from greatest to least support. (MAS91, Q6)**

Element of federal policy	Mean response
Promote equality	6.42
Ensure equal access	6.39
Eliminate discrimination	6.29
Eliminate racism	6.28
Help police	6.09
Help immigrants	6.04
Help deal with diversity	6.04
Ensure institutions reflect diversity	5.79
Recognize diversity	5.72
Fund festivals	4.70
Help preserve heritages	4.69

Note: Response on a seven-point scale from 1 indicating “totally oppose” to 7 indicating “totally support.”

**g. Conclusion.** For the most part, Canadians express strong approval for the principles of equality, participation, and ending racism and discrimination. While the survey data do not provide information about how these views translate into social practice, it is encouraging to see that Canadians rate these as important principles. It also appears that Canadians generally view diversity as a resource that has a positive social and cultural contribution. In terms of friendship and marriage, ethnicity does not appear to be a strong force for division, although the findings demonstrate that it is a factor governing these.

The difficulty with addressing the social justice frameworks of Fraser and Foster is that, apart from the questions on equality, participation, and discrimination, few of the survey questions deal directly with the issues that are central to their approach. In the future, it would be useful to have more survey information on how Canadians construct difference and categorize people into race, ethnic group, and other. In addition, it would be useful to have more information about how Canadians view multiculturalism as changing Canada. From the survey data examined here, it is clear that many Canadians understand multiculturalism as a process. But it is not clear how they envision social change and transformation unfolding.

#### 4. Federal government statements

In this section of the paper, I briefly examine views of multiculturalism, as outlined in official statements about multiculturalism in Canada, in the light of the analyses of Fraser and Foster. Official policies and programs have evolved since multiculturalism was introduced in Canada in 1971. At the same time, there are continuities in official statements about the meaning and importance of multiculturalism in Canada. The four official documents I use are the following – the short form on the left is used as a means of reference in this section of the paper.

<i>CMA</i>	<i>Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1985</i>
<i>Renewed Program</i>	<i>Renewed Multiculturalism Program, 1998</i>
<i>Inclusive Citizenship</i>	<i>Canadian multiculturalism: An Inclusive Citizenship, no date</i>
<i>A Canada for All</i>	<i>A Canada for All: Action Plan Against Racism, 2005.</i>

I selected these documents since each provides an official and summary federal government statement about multiculturalism. The documents are spaced across time, from the establishment of the *CMA* in 1985 to the present. Each statement represents a shift in the emphasis of the federal government, while at the same time representing a continuity in the meaning of multiculturalism. While the *Inclusive Citizenship* document has no date, it may have first appeared as a statement of the Department of Canadian Heritage in the late 1990s; it remains on the web site of the Department and is accompanied by the three words “Respect, equality, diversity.” It must, of course, be remembered that these are only statements in documents, not practices or achievements of institutions and members of society.

The main result of the analysis I conducted is contained in Table 14. There I list words and phrases contained in the four federal government statements. I first read each document several times and listed words and phrases that appeared to describe the meaning of multiculturalism. In each case, I subdivided these into three or four categories. For the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, I used the categorization in Gingrich and Fries, 1996; for each of the *Renewed Program* and *Inclusive Citizenship* documents I used the three-fold categorization contained in the document. In *A Canada for All*, I organized the words and phrases into three themes that seemed to catch the thrust of this document. After listing and categorizing these words and phrases, I then reorganized them into which might be considered affirmative and which transformative. While some of the words and phrases could be placed in both categories, and while my categorization might differ from others who conduct a similar form of analysis, the results in Table 14 at least provide a means of approaching these documents. In the remainder of this section, I briefly comment on the four issues emerging from the framework of Fraser and Foster.

**a. Affirmation.** Much of the discussion of multiculturalism revolves around preservation of cultures and languages, recognizing and respecting differences among groups, and solidifying group identities. In such discussions, there may be little reference to how cultures continually change, especially as people of different cultures interact with each other. Fraser identifies this as “mainstream multiculturalism” with



“surface reallocations of respect to existing identities of existing groups” that “support group identification” (Fraser, 1995, 87). While Fraser does not minimize the importance of these struggles, she argues that such approaches can “drastically simplify and reify group identities” (Fraser, 2000, 108). She refers to such approaches as *affirmative*, in that they aim to correct injustices by providing affirmation for devalued group identities. But the reallocations of respect that emerge do not challenge the manner in which the identities are formed and maintained, leaving “intact both the contents of those identities and the group differentiations that underlie them” (Fraser, 1995, 82). In Fraser’s view, such an approach often emerges from struggles for recognition and group identity.

The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act (CMA)* contains many examples of this when it refers to respect or tolerance for cultures other than one’s own, and in phrases such as “preserve, enhance and share culture” and “recognize and enhance development of communities of common origin. (CMA, sections 3:1 (a) and (d), 5:1 (e) and (h)). The *Renewed Program* continues to emphasize identity in a manner consistent with the affirmative approach. *Inclusive Citizenship* focuses mostly on the multicultural principles of respect, equality, and diversity, primarily associated with Fraser’s mainstream multiculturalism. *A Canada for All* also includes the affirmative approach, although it changes the emphasis somewhat, with more emphasis on eliminating barriers, dealing with problems created by racism and discrimination, and placing more emphasis on inclusion.

**b. Deconstruction.** The words and phrases listed in the first three documents referenced in Table 14 contain little reference to deconstructive aspects associated with difference and categorization into ethnicity, culture, and race. In fact, concepts such as “preserve” and “enhance” of the CMA may lead to emphasis on such difference. But by emphasizing anti-racism, *A Canada for All* addresses these issues in a different way. Phrases such as “free from racism” and “inclusion” provide a vision of a different type of society and is the document most clearly connected to Foster’s approach. In addition to the words listed in Table 14, this document encourages “all sectors of society...to embrace action against racism as a shared task with shared responsibilities and shared benefits” (Canadian Heritage, 2005, 3). This is similar to Foster’s vision that “all members of society will be sharing Canada’s culture of sharing” (Foster, 173). At the same time, it is not clear how anti-racism will work as a plan of action. For example, there is reference to “real equality,” “equality of outcome,” and “help close the gap in socio-economic outcomes for all Canadians” (Canadian Heritage, 2005, 5). These are laudable goals but it is not at all clear how these outcomes can be achieved through this plan. In Fraser’s approach, more attention would need to be paid to redistributive issues in the economic and material sphere in order to achieve this aspect of social justice. It is also not too clear how some of these statement are connected to federal multiculturalism policy and program.

**c. Participation.** Among the federal government documents analyzed here, the statement that comes closest to matching the concept of participatory parity is from the CMA, section 3(1)(c), where multiculturalism policy is to “promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution

and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barriers to that participation.” However, the *CMA* did not develop this idea more fully and it was only with the *Renewed Program* that there were stronger and more comprehensive statements about participation. In fact in the *Renewed Program*, civic participation became a central goal of multiculturalism, and is connected directly to achieving social justice. There are strong statements about participation in this document, such as “assist in the development of strategies that facilitate the full and active participation of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural communities in Canada” and “encourage and assist in the development of inclusive policies” (Canadian Heritage, 2001). Unfortunately, this document is not highlighted in current Canadian Heritage publications and the concepts of participation and social justice appear to have been downgraded. There is little mention of them in *Inclusive Citizenship* although *A Canada for All* does mention participation and inclusion.

**d. Transformation.** There are many words and phrases in the federal government documents that can be related to the concept of transformation. Some of these refer to past contributions of immigrants while others point toward the future. It is not clear that all the words and phrases that I have placed in the right column of Table 14 are consistent with the approaches of Fraser or Foster. What is clear though is that these statements recognize possibilities of social change and consider multiculturalism to have some of these possibilities.

**e. Conclusion.** In light of the frameworks developed by Fraser and Foster, the four federal statements represent an evolution in thinking about multiculturalism. The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* presents a good summary of affirmative approaches to multiculturalism and contains some statements about transformation, but is deficient in dealing with issues such as overcoming barriers, participation, and dealing with racism and discrimination. The *Renewed Program* move forward in the sense of identifying social justice as a component of multiculturalism. The renewal also included civic participation as a key thrust, an aspect that was mentioned earlier but was not treated as central. After this renewal, *Inclusive Citizenship* almost appears as a step backward and it seems unfortunate that it is the major statement about multiculturalism and diversity currently on the web site of the Department of Canadian Heritage. While its organizing principles of respect, equality, and diversity represent an affirmative approach, summary statements in this document do not capture much of the deconstructive or transformative aspects of multiculturalism. In *A Canada for All* deconstruction appears as a primary goal, although in emphasizing the importance of anti-racism and anti-discrimination, the document may ignore other transformative aspects. In particular, how inclusion, participation, and equality of outcome are to occur could be given more emphasis.

**Table 14. Principles of Canadian Multiculturalism – Federal Government Statements**

Principle	Affirmative	Transformative
<i>Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1985. (CMA)</i>		
Diversity	cultural and racial diversity, multicultural reality; preserve, enhance, share heritage; appreciation; value diversity	promote reflection and evolving aspects of culture
Equality	equal treatment and protection under law; equal opportunity in federal institutions	full & equitable participation; equal opportunity to make life
Harmony	respect, appreciation, understanding, exchanges, interaction	recognition, cooperation, sharing
Overcoming barriers	eliminate barriers to participation, overcome discriminatory barriers	encourage institutions to be inclusive
Resource	fundamental to Canadian heritage and identity; historic contribution; value diversity	creativity; evolution and shaping of Canadian society;
<i>The Multiculturalism Program: The Context of Renewal, 1998. (Renewed Program)</i>		
Identity	recognition, respect, diversity, belonging, attachment to Canada	
Civic participation	active citizens	opportunity and capacity to participate in shaping communities and country
Social justice	fair and equitable treatment, respect dignity	accommodates all
<i>Canadian Multiculturalism: An Inclusive Citizenship. (no date). (Inclusive Citizenship)</i>		
Respect	acceptance, common attitudes; security; self-confidence; harmony, understanding	
Equality	equality before law; equality of opportunity; basic freedoms, citizens, responsibilities, individual rights protected	participate, integrated and inclusive citizenship
Diversity	national asset; keep identities; pride in ancestry; sense of belonging	
<i>A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism – An Overview, 2005. (A Canada for All)</i>		
Anti-racism and no discrimination	Shared task, responsibilities, benefits; break down barriers to opportunity and participation; provide knowledge and expertise to combat racism	free from racism, eliminate racism, full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
Real equality	equality of opportunity, strengthen social cohesion, human rights, assist victims	equality of outcome, close gap in socio-economic outcomes
A Canada for all	Promote diversity, partnerships between government and civil society, every Canadian	participation, inclusion, taking action together, forward-looking approaches

## **D. Concluding comments**

The frameworks developed by Fraser and Foster provide a powerful vision of how societies can be transformed in a way that promotes social justice. Their analyses provide a way of analyzing and understanding various aspects of multiculturalism.

From the analysis in this paper, it is clear that some Canadians have a view

Continued emphasis on affirmative factors

Attempt to deconstruct socially constructed differences that impair parity of participation and inclusion in institutions. Need to change social practices and social institutions.

Partly government policy but partly something that all members of society must engage in.

Participation.

Transformation

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### Survey references and notes

- ACS.** The Association for Canadian Studies commissions polls on issues related to multiculturalism and diversity as well as other issues. Many of the results of these polls are available at the web site [http://www.acs-aec.ca/English/acs\\_polling.htm](http://www.acs-aec.ca/English/acs_polling.htm).
- DS.** The Diversity Survey was commissioned by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) and conducted by Decima Research. Sample size of 2,032 randomly selected Canadians interviewed by telephone, August 4 to 14, 2005. Summary available at [http://www.cric.ca/en\\_re/analys/index.html](http://www.cric.ca/en_re/analys/index.html), May 22, 2006.
- Ipsos.** Ipsos Reid poll conducted for CanWest New Service/Global News from January 6<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Results available by subscription at web site <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm?id=2934>
- MAS91.** Angus Reid Group, Inc. and Multiculturalism and Citizenship. 1991. *Multiculturalism and Canadians: Attitude Study. National Survey Report*. Data set 91MAS from Department of Canadian Heritage. Sample size of 3,325 Canadian adults. Data in paper from the *Survey Report* and, when using 91MAS, variable WTVAR was used for weighting individual cases to obtain the results in this paper.
- NC.** *The CRIC-Globe and Mail Survey on "The New Canada."* 2003. [computer file]. Centre for Research and Information on Canada, the Globe and Mail and the Canadian Opinion Research Archive [producer], Canadian Opinion Research Archive, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario [distributor]. CRICGMNC03-ENG.SAV obtained from <http://jeff-lab.queensu.ca/poadata/info/cric/cricgmnc03.shtml>. Sample size of 2,000 Canadian adults. Variable WT used for weighting individual cases to obtain the results in this paper.
- SSAE98.** *Survey of Student Attitudes and Experiences, Fall 1998*. Survey of 714 students at the University of Regina. Further details available from author.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> In Gingrich, 2005, I present a more comprehensive evaluation of the extent to which multiculturalism may address issues of social justice. There I use the framework of David Miller, who argues that social justice is built around the principles of equality, desert or merit, and need.

<sup>2</sup> In a recent paper, Fraser argues that the concept of citizenship or member of society is increasingly untenable (see Fraser, 2005). In this paper, I do not address the issues associated with multiple and shifting citizenship.

<sup>3</sup> Axel Honneth argues that there is only one dimension, that of recognition, with maldistribution emerging from misrecognition. Fraser and Honneth debate with each other is the content of their coauthored book. See Fraser and Honneth, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Raymond Breton adopts a similar distinction to that of Fraser, although he does not focus on the issue of social justice directly. See Breton, 1984.

<sup>5</sup> See Gingrich, 2003 and Gingrich, 2005 for detailed analyses of undergraduate student views on approaches to multiculturalism. Data from national surveys and federal government statements are also included in the latter paper.