

THE MEANING OF BEING CANADIAN: A COMPARISON BETWEEN YOUTH OF IMMIGRANT AND NON-IMMIGRANT ORIGINS

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The meanings attached to national identity are the most salient citizenship issue today. We analyzed over 300 written responses of Canadian high school youth, of immigrant and non-immigrant origins, to the question of "What does it mean for me to be/become a Canadian?" The participants related a greater sense of national identity than of ethnic and/or supranational belonging. Youth of immigrant origins used a discourse of becoming and understand multiculturalism to recognize ethnic identities associated with Charter rights. The findings are contextualized in social unrest in other countries, a global migration pattern, and new forms of economic, social, and political domination.

Keywords: Canadian identity, immigrant youth, ethnic identity, changing economic conditions

Les divers sens donnés à la notion d'identité nationale, telle est la question la plus importante de l'heure en matière de citoyenneté. Les auteures ont analysé plus de 300 réponses écrites de jeunes Canadiens au secondaire, immigrants et non-immigrants, à la question : « Que veut dire être ou devenir Canadien pour moi ? ». Les participants font état d'un plus grand sentiment d'appartenance au pays qu'à des groupes ethniques ou supranationaux. Les jeunes immigrés adoptent un discours axé sur le devenir et considèrent le multiculturalisme comme la reconnaissance des identités ethniques dans le cadre de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés. Les résultats de l'étude sont mis en contexte : agitation sociale dans d'autres pays, mouvements migratoires à l'échelle mondiale et nouvelles formes de domination politique, sociale et économique.

Mots clés : identité canadienne, jeunes immigrants, identité ethnique, évolution des conditions économiques.

INTEGRATION, IDENTIFICATION, AND THE CITIZENSHIP DEBATES

The question of what it means to be Canadian is contextualized in our époque by economic and political globalization, including major migration patterns whose proportions are unseen in Canada since the previous turn of the century. Unlike France where youth riots have crystallized the debate on integration, minority and cultural rights are legally recognized within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Canadian Multicultural Act (1985).

The question of national identification is not new, but has become distinctive in the context of postmodernity. To explain the socially constructed nature of national identity development, we recognize that Canada “imagines itself as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1991, p. 38; italics in original). This community is complicated by struggles over language, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and ecology; by consumption as a constitutive part of identity formation; by the production of images, experiences, and knowledge in a post-industrial economy; and by changing material and symbolic conditions (Côté & Allahar, 2006; Isin & Wood, 1999). This question also calls up the tensions between levels of attachment and belonging, be these linguistic, racial, ethno-cultural, socio-economic, political, local, national, or supranational (Hébert & Wilkinson, 2002; Klusmeyer, 2001).

With the first wave of cultural or identity politics, discrimination could not be based on the categories of race, gender, or ethnicity; whereas the second wave rejected this politics of inclusion as it obscured cultural and political differences between these groups and society, and argued instead for a politics of recognition and/or difference (Taylor, 1994). More recently, a third wave of cultural politics seeks to “think affirmatively about identity without either freezing or dissolving difference among groups” (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 14) which goes beyond identity as essential difference or as social prejudice to be overcome. From this perspective, identity is a strategic competence that acknowledges a desire to affirm identities and to transcend them, and imagining the cultural other is the first step in building a civic identity

(Abowitz, 2002; Hébert, 2002; Hoerder, Hébert & Schmitt, 2005). The strategic identification evokes and involves rights and responsibilities for deliberation and participation, often referred to as a Charter identity in the Canadian context.

The nature of belonging lies at the heart of the relationship between culture and state, establishes minority rights and identifications as part of democratic citizenship with respect to “a wide range of public policies, legal rights, and constitutional provisions sought by ethnic groups for the accommodation of their cultural differences” (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000, p. 2). The notions of minority rights and identifications, however, give rise to contrasting views. On one hand, there are fears that suppose that “minority rights will have a negative impact on citizenship practices, or will inhibit the state’s ability to promote citizenship effectively” (p. 2) and that minority rights will “erode the ability of citizens to fulfill their responsibilities as democratic citizens—e.g., by weakening citizens’ ability to communicate, trust, and feel solidarity across group differences” (p. 10). On the other hand, defenders of minority rights express scepticism about appeals to citizenship because they consider that citizenship has served as a cover by which the majority group extends its language, institutions, mobility rights, and political power at the expense of the minorities (Abu-Laban & Stasiulis, 2000; Battiste & Semaganis, 2002).

The central problem then becomes how to transcend essentialist and constructivist views of identity (Isin & Wood, 1999). Although the production of citizens through educational means has sparked renewed interest in academic fields and government policymaking for two decades, only now is a body of published Canadian research emerging that considers the voices of young people on citizenship issues (Charland, 2003; Hoerder et al., 2005).

In consideration of the disagreements on the theorization of rights and freedoms, the tensions between national identity and diversity require thorough examination with specific case studies, including immigrant and non-immigrant young people, to gain deeper understandings of the various patterns of citizenship in pluralistic democratic societies. In this light, our article contributes understandings of contemporary youth of their citizenship process and identity

affiliations as part of the development and expression of a national identity in a pluralistic nation such as Canada.

How do Canadian youth talk, think, and feel about being Canadian? How does immigration shape conceptions of Canadian identity among young people? To take up these questions, we analyzed a large set of written narrative texts of young people on the meaning of Canadian citizenship, within a major research project on identity formation of immigrant youth as strategic competence. We sought to understand the multiple dimensions of citizenship, to compare different perceptions of being Canadian between immigrant and non-immigrant youth in Calgary, and to explore their understandings of being Canadian.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To capture the realities of citizenship, Gagnon & Pagé (1999) have developed a conceptual framework that encompasses multifarious dimensions and components of different contemporary approaches to citizenship in liberal democratic societies containing diverse populations. The framework, conceptualized on the basis of four major components — national identity; cultural, social, and transnational belonging; an effective system of rights; and political and civic participation — is subdivided into other components that are also logically inter-related.

In this conceptual framework, national identity refers to the collective identity of a political community. Social, cultural, and supranational affiliations refer to how citizens may define themselves in terms of one or several feelings of social and cultural belonging within a society, as well as supranational belonging, according to demographic, geographic, social, or cultural attachments and demands for recognition flowing from this diversity. These feelings of belonging include a set of characteristics that all citizens are invited or encouraged to share. Defined in terms of attachment to a political community, patriotism and allegiance refer to emotional and symbolic attachment to the national symbols, to the government and its structures, to a sense of civic responsibility, and to the traditions and customs of a political community. The emotional dimension of patriotism is characterized by an unconditional acceptance of the country and its institutional structures as well as a very strong sense of belonging toward the

country. Allegiance is defined in terms of loyalty and conformity to the institutions of a political community.

An effective system of rights aims to ensure the quality of citizenship in liberal democracies while political and civic participation brings together the competencies, actions, and steps expected of citizens and their commitment to the governance of the society (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999, p.5). More specifically, civic culture refers to the legal and political principles embodied in a tradition particular to each democratic society (e.g., the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Societal culture refers to everything that characterizes the public lifestyle of individuals in the society such as its food, its recreation, the most prevalent lifestyles, and its distinctive architecture. To schematize the macro-concepts and secondary concepts, Figure 1 below combines the five original figures in Gagnon and Pagé (1999).

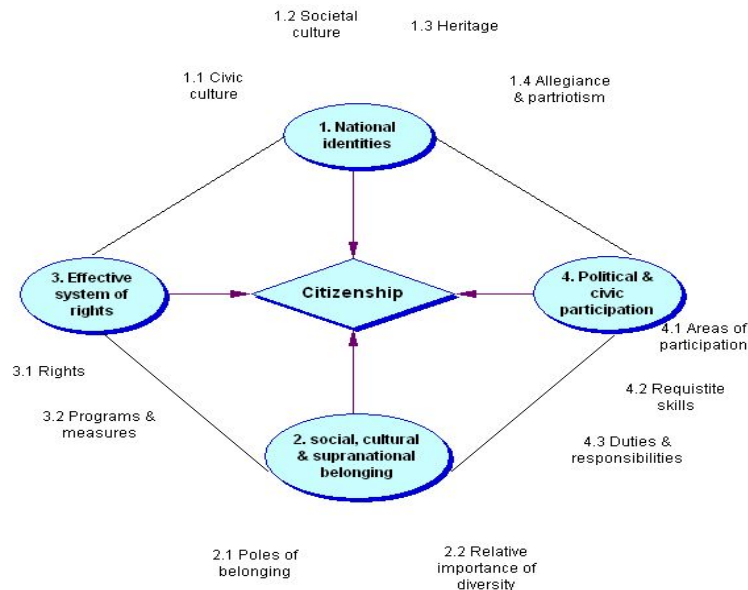


Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Analyses of Citizenship

The four components interact with one another as in a network. For example, the concept of national identity determines how specific belongings are recognized in that society whereas the effective system of

rights is linked to the recognition given to specific forms of belonging, national identity, and participation in civil society. Because the framework conceptualizes and describes the multiple dimensions of citizenship and accounts for the interrelationship among the various elements of citizenship, we adopted it here to analyze young people's meanings of being Canadian.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

In this article, we focus upon the immigrant and non-immigrant status of participating youth in Calgary to understand the influence of immigration on what it means to become Canadian. To do so, we draw upon narrative data or life stories from a larger study, written in response to eight questions in a four-page booklet. One question that focused on the meaning of being or becoming Canadian provides the data for this article.

Participant Profiles

Two participant profiles were identified according to generation of migration in the country and characterized in terms of citizenship, gender, grade, and ancestry. The term, immigrant, refers to youth who are the first generation to live in Canada, who were born in countries other than Canada, and whose parents, one or both, were born elsewhere. The term, non-immigrant refers to youth who were born in Canada and whose parents were both born in Canada. The immigrant group consisted of 95 participants, and the non-immigrant group, 131 participants. Of the immigrant group, most (48%) are Canadian citizens and another 16 per cent hold dual citizenship. Males and females are nearly equally distributed in the immigrant group, with 47 and 48 respectively, whereas there are 46 (35%) males and 85 (65%) females in the non-immigrant group. At the time of data collection, the majority of participants were in grade 11 (77% of the group of immigrant origins and 75% of the non-immigrant groups), a lesser number in grade 12 (18% and 17% respectively), with the remainder in grade 10.

The ancestral origins of the two groups contrast world regions and reflect changing patterns of immigration (see Table 1). Of the non-

immigrant group, over 43 per cent of participants reported their ancestry as originating in Europe, including British (26.5%) and other European countries (16.7%). Almost 15 per cent of these participants identified themselves as Canadian and nearly 27 per cent indicated that they had two or more than two ethnic backgrounds. As for the immigrant-born group, almost 47 per cent of participants reported their countries of origin as East or South East Asian, followed by Middle East/South Asian (23.5%) and Latin American (13.6%). Finally, 29 non-immigrant and 14 immigrant youth did not indicate their ancestry in terms of ethnicity.

Table 1: Distribution of Ancestry by Generation

Ethnic ancestry	Non-immigrant	Immigrant
British	27 (26.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Continental European	17 (16.7%)	5 (6.2%)
Canadian	15 (14.7%)	1 (1.2%)
Latin American	1 (1.0%)	11 (13.6%)
Middle East/South Asian	0 (0.0%)	19 (23.5%)
East/SE Asian	1 (1.0%)	38 (46.9%)
Multi-Origins	27 (26.5%)	3 (3.7%)
Others	14 (13.7%)	4 (4.2%)
Total	102 (100%)	81 (100%)

FINDINGS

Content analysis was used to measure the frequency of the main themes of the conceptual framework, and to compare and generalize across two hundred and twenty-six youth, in terms of their immigrant and non-immigrant origins. The findings are presented in tables and illustrated by typical quotations from participants. Because some participants' short written responses to the open-ended question refer to different dimensions, response frequency is provided in the analysis, rather than the number of participants.

The frequency of responses with respect to the framework's four main themes – national identity; social, cultural and supranational belonging; rights; and responsibilities – is presented in Table 2. A fifth

category of 'other' responses includes 'don't know,' 'not important' and 'negative views.'

Table 2: The Meaning of Being Canadian

Meanings	Non-immigrant	Immigrant
National Identity	Civil culture: 8.5% (12)	Civil culture: 3.7% (4)
	Societal culture: 12.1% (17)	Societal culture: 9.2% (10)
	Heritage: 2.8 % (4)	
	Allegiance & patriotism: 36.9% (52)	Allegiance & patriotism: 14.7% (16)
	Subtotal: 60.3% (85)	Subtotal: 27.6 % (30)
Social, Cultural & Supranational Belonging	Regional: 1.4% (3)	Ethnic: 11.0% (12)
		Transnational: 11.0% (12)
		Subtotal: 22.0% (24)
Rights	Fundamental: 16.9% (24)	Fundamental: 18.3% (20)
	Political: 0.7% (1)	
	Social & economic: 4.9% (7)	Social & economic: 9.2% (10)
	Subtotal: 22.5% (32)	Subtotal: 27.5% (30)
Political & civic participation	7.1% (10)	15.6% (17)
Other	Not important : 3.6% (5)	Not important : 4.6% (5)
	Don't know : 2.8% (4)	Don't know : 1.8% (2)
	Negative views : 2.1% (3)	Negative views : 0.9% (1)
	Subtotal: 8.5% (12)	Subtotal: 7.3% (8)
Total frequency	100% (142)	100% (109)

Immigrant youth appear to be particularly sensitive to the overall idea of becoming Canadian in terms of its status, complexity, and diversity, as revealed in their writing. Reflecting upon the status and expectations of becoming a Canadian in terms of the influences upon the sense of self, belonging, Canadian values, and contribution, a young man of immigrant origins wrote:

To be a Canadian, I need to be open mind about others and willing to accept other cultures. I should have a world-class of view, I should not judging things from a certain perspective instead, I should view them in different sides. To be a Canadian, I have [to] be a well-rounded people, or full person. I have to enjoy outdoor nature and sport[s] because Canada is a great land with a lot of resource. We have to know how to take care of them. (#77, male, immigrant, Chinese, Taiwanese citizen)

Also reflecting deeply on what it means to be Canadian, a young woman of immigrant origins commented on the complex feelings of becoming and being. Her comment is followed by a note on diversity by a young man of non-immigrant origins.

On being a Canadian.... I felt I've being accepted as one part of this group, I've being able to live up their ways of living. I have rights on this land; I have freedom as I always wanted, of course. I am still proud of being a Chinese. It's where I was born, where I've lived for so long, and it's my mother country. Being a Canadian is not really so special, but since I live on the land of Canada, it is important then. I like the Canadian way of living, of study, and of everything. To become a Canadian, I've went through many things. Some are glad, some are sad, but I've walked through it. (#86, female, immigrant, Chinese, dual citizen)

To be Canadian is to be accepting of others in every fact of your life, because diversity is something you deal with every day here. (#139, male, non-immigrant, Swiss, Canadian citizen)

Theme 1: National Identity

The four characteristics of national identity—civil culture, societal culture, heritage, and allegiance and patriotism—were evinced in participants' understandings of the meaning of being Canadian, as illustrated in Table 3. The non-immigrant responses include all four characteristics and the immigrant response eschews heritage; otherwise, the responses are similar.

Civic culture. Almost nine per cent of the non-immigrant participants and four per cent of the immigrant adolescents were proud of Canada as a country that is democratic, multicultural, free, equal, and full of opportunity.

Table 3: Comparison of National Identity

Meaning	Non-Immigrant (60.3%)	Immigrant (27.6%)
National identity	<i>Civic culture (8.5%):</i> Multiculturalism; freedom; security; democracy; justice	<i>Civic culture (3.7%):</i> Peaceful; multi-cultural; security
	<i>Societal culture (12.1%):</i> Two official languages; friendly people; sports team; beer (Molson); respected by others; peacemaker; excellent combination of wealth & respect; highest standard of living	<i>Societal culture (9.2%):</i> Polite people; hockey, beer; having advantage over many countries; respected by others, helping & caring about other countries; high standard of living
	<i>Heritage (2.8%):</i> History; culture; Rockies	
	<i>Allegiance & patriotism (36.9%):</i> Love, respect & loyal to the country; preserving its way of life & making it better; being patriotic; proud of my country; sense of belonging	<i>Allegiance & patriotism (14.7%):</i> Respecting and caring for the country; patriotic during Olympic events; feel cool/good/special/ different/ wonderful; sense of belonging

To be Canadian means to be proud and to be able to accept something different from your self; this is because the people make up a country's identity. Canada is very much like this, comfortably multicultural. (#134, male, non-immigrant, British, Canadian citizen)

I'm proud to be in a multicultural country and I'm proud that Canada is a peaceful country. I don't feel left out being a Chinese and I'm not afraid that Canada will be attacked. (#83, male, immigrant, Chinese, dual citizen)

Societal culture. Slightly over twelve per cent of non-immigrant and nine per cent of immigrant participants associated societal culture with their Canadian identity. Among these adolescents, some considered mass culture as a component of national identity, such as hockey and beer.

I am very proud to be Canadian because it's the best country in the world! I like being known for being nice, polite and peace keepers in other countries. (#267, female, non-immigrant, Irish/French, Canadian, Canadian citizen)

To live in one of the best countries in the world; good beer, good people, lots less violence than other places, coldness, Bob and Doug Mackenzie, 2nd largest land mass in the world. (#148, male, immigrant, Hispanic, dual citizen)

Heritage. Only 2.8 per cent of non-immigrants and, as can be expected, none of the adolescents of immigrant origins, indicated that they were proud of being Canadian because of their Canadian heritage.

I am proud to be Canadian because I know that throughout our history (from colonisation to the present time) we fought for what we believe in and continue to fight. While our health care has decreased in quality, it will probably improve soon. We also produce many of the best musicians, actors, and athletes. (#108, female, non-immigrant, German/Ukrainian, Canadian citizen)

Allegiance and patriotism. Almost 40 per cent of the non-immigrant and 15 per cent of the immigrant adolescents expressed their loyalty and passion towards being Canadian. The youth revealed strong feelings toward the country, the land, the national symbols, and a beer slogan, as noted below, particularly for the non-immigrant youth.

I am proud of my country and am not ashamed to admit it. I feel very proud when I hear or read that Canada is one of the safest nations, has friendly citizens and that people all around the world would love to live in Canada, because they know what a wonderful country it is. I love the Molson commercial—I think it drives the message home that Canada has its own very distinct identity which I feel is very important. (#351, female, non-immigrant, Western European, Canadian citizen)

Canadian mean you are the one of the major important country in the world, most beautiful country, and I am proud to be here, and honour to be a Canadian. (#57, female, immigrant, Bangladesh, dual citizen)

Although very similar statements are given for their pride in being Canadian, such as best country, multiculturalism, patriotism, sense of belonging, or respected by others, the frequency of response dwelling upon national identity for the non-immigrant group was much higher than that of the immigrant group (60.3% and 27.6% respectively). The non-immigrant participants presented their Canadian identity with much more passion and confidence than did immigrant youth who gave rational statements for feeling proud of being Canadian such as good reputation, best country to live in, or peaceful and caring country.

Theme 2: Social, Cultural & Supranational Belonging

Three types of belonging were revealed in participants' responses: regional, ethnic, and supranational, presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Comparison of Socio, Cultural & Supranational Belonging

Meaning	Non-Immigration (1.4%)	Immigrant (22%)
Socio, Cultural & Supranational Belonging	<i>Regional attachment: (1.4%)</i>	<i>Ethnic attachment (11%)</i>
	Loyal to province and city	Proud of my ethnicity; loyal to our own culture/ heritage; keeping my culture & freely expressing my culture; identifying self as own ethnic group.
		<i>Transnational attachment (11%)</i>
		Being a Canadian without changing

	your identity; considering self as Canadian and own ethnicity; integrating Canadian culture with own ethnic culture.
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Only three non-immigrant and none of immigrant participants indicated their strong sense of regional belonging.

It means everything to me, especially being a Calgarian. Throughout the world, Calgarians have the highest standard of living. We have a good life. (#159, female, non-immigrant, Chinese, Canadian citizen)

Yet over 11 per cent of the immigrant youth reported having strong attachments to their ethnic culture and identity. They were proud of their ethnicity, willing to keep their own culture and heritage, happy about being able to freely express their culture, or identifying self as their own ethnic group.

It is actually not bad to be a citizen of two countries, Iran and Canada. But I see myself as an Iranian who comes from the Middle East and represents Islam. (#27, male, 1st generation, Persian, dual citizen)

Another 11 per cent of immigrant youth held a sense of transnational belonging, in which the Canadian identity was predominant, without erasing their specific ethnic identity.

To be Canadian is to be multicultural. To hold the red maple leaf flag in all esteem, to be patriotic during Olympic events, and to cheer, not only for my heritage country, China, but also for my new home Canada. To be Canadian is to be friendly, to SEE with your heart and not with your eyes. Lessons like this I have learned upon arriving in Canada from China and living in Canada for ten years plus. I've adapted to become Canadian, keeping my fundamental heritage roots but also welcoming the Canadian patriotic esteem and values close within me. (#85, female, immigrant, Chinese, Canadian citizen)

Theme 3: An Effective System of Rights

The percentage of immigrant group who identified themselves as Canadians in terms of rights is slightly higher than for the non-immigrant group (27.5% and 22.5% respectively). In addition, the majority of participants in both groups within this macro-concept focused on fundamental rights such as freedom and security (16.9% responses for non-immigrant group and 18.3% for immigrant group). More immigrant youth (10/30 responses) considered opportunities to obtain a better education, choose their life style, and achieve their life goals by becoming Canadian to be the essence of what it means to be Canadian than did non-immigrants (4/32). Only one immigrant participant mentioned political rights. These responses are categorized in Table 5 and illustrated in the quotations following.

Table 5: Comparison of Effective System of Rights Focus by Generation

Meaning	Non-Immigration 22.5%	Immigrant 27.5%
Rights	<i>Fundamental: 16.9%</i>	<i>Fundamental : 18.3%</i>
	Freedom of religion, speech, though, movement; equality, security; independent from others' opinions.	Having the right to many things; freedom of speech & religion; making own choices; feeling safe
	<i>Political rights: 0.7%</i>	<i>Social & economic: 9.2%</i>
	Voting; making own choice of political affairs	Opportunities to improve status, education & find good jobs.
	<i>Social & economic: 4.9%</i>	
	Good quality of life; being well educated; opportunity	

To be Canadian it means freedom and equality. We are free to do whatever we want, wear whatever we want, pray however we want, believe whatever we want. We can speak up for ourselves, and men and women are seen as equal. (#126, female, non-immigrant, information on ancestry missing)

One word – OPPORTUNITY! I can honestly say that I can do whatever I want with my life now and in the future, because school is free. I can play basketball whenever I want. I can go to university or travel or work – it's all up to ME. (#38, male, immigrant, Filipino, dual citizen)

Immigrant youth mentioning rights often associated these with other dimensions of an effective regime of rights, such as “without punishment,” “without fear of making own decision,” “be kept away from killing and murders,” and so on. This may be attributable to the experiences in or notions of their countries of origin, or those of their parents.

Being Canadian offers me safety from wars and a place to call home. Being Canadian means I can be kept away from killings and murders on basis of my skin color, sex or religion. Canada offers me a chance to improve my status/education in a great environment. (#113, male, immigrant, African-Canadian)

Theme 4: Political and Civic Participation

Youth from both groups thought that being Canadian meant taking up certain responsibilities, such as participating in the society, making contributions to society, keeping Canada's good reputation, and so on. As shown in Table 6, the two groups differed, however, regarding responsibilities.

Table 6: Comparison of Political & Civic Participation by Generation

Meaning	Non-Immigration (7.1%)	Immigrant (15.6%)
Political & civic participation	<i>Participation:</i>	<i>Participation:</i>
	Donating, volunteering	Contributing to the people & community
	<i>Requisite skills & knowledge:</i>	<i>Obeying Canadian laws</i>
	Knowing history & the National Anthem; must speak either official language	<i>Keeping Canadian's reputation:</i>
	<i>Keeping Canadian's reputation:</i>	Be a peace lover; be

Be nice, friendly; multiculturalism (accepting diverse people/get along with them)	friendly, polite, good attitude
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More immigrant youth considered political and civic participation as the meaning of being Canadian than did non-immigrant youth (15.6% and 7.1% respectively). As well, according to immigrant youth, their responsibilities were related to obeying laws and civic participation, while non-immigrant adolescents focused on prerequisite knowledge and skills, and accepting diverse people.

I think, to be a Canadian, you must speak the official language of either English or French. For me, I must love and respect my country. Help out in any way possible to make it better. Accept the people. Know all the words to the National Anthem and know the history. How could you be a citizen of a country if you don't know how it came to be or what it's about. (#164, female, non-immigrant, Norwegian/Swedish ancestry)

Being a Canadian citizen to me means obeying the laws that are imposed, participating in community affairs. (#42, female, immigrant, Filipino, Canadian citizenship)

Thus, these findings show, generally, that most participating youth, residing in Calgary, have positive views towards being Canadian. They felt proud of being Canadian, valued the country they live in, and perceived the positive world image of Canada in their daily lives, schooling, mass media, and their traveling experiences. In addition, these young people recognized what kind of rights they possessed and what kind of responsibilities they needed to take up as a Canadian.

The youth of non-immigrant background tended to commit to a national identity by a margin of over 60 per cent, which they presented with much passion and confidence. As their citizenship has been passed on through the generations, it was relatively easy for these youth to feel at home in Canada. With ancestral origins in British or European countries, it was easy for them to be part of Canada, given their colour, religion, culture, and long settlement.

The youth of immigrant origins, however, committed to their Canadian citizenship by a lesser margin of 27.6 per cent. Moreover, they did not have the same relationship with their country of adoption and residence. Recent citizens, youth of immigrant origins tended to use a discourse of becoming expressed in words such as 'feel,' 'can,' and 'become.' By comparison, a discourse of homing expressing an attachment of being at home was used by youth whose families have been in Canada for two or more generations, with words such as love, home, and proud. For the youth of immigrant origins, developing a national identity is a journey that is both challenging and complicated.

The youth also differed according to their understanding of multiculturalism. Youth of non-immigrant background considered multiculturalism as the Canadian identity, which meant accepting cultural diversity and treating others equally. By comparison, youth of immigrant origin thought of it as retaining and recognizing their ethnic identity, such as pride of their ethnicity and expression of their own culture freely.

The youth of non-immigrant background attended mostly to the general notion of national identity, whereas the immigrant youth associated almost equally with all four concepts, thus assuming a Charter identity. These findings indicate that most immigrant youth have understood the tensions between national identity and a diversity of ways of belonging, set with Canadian norms of equality, as manifested in the system of rights that guarantees their security and recognition. Thus, with legal recognition for their ethno-cultural identity and group support, especially in the earliest stages of the settlement period (Hébert, Lee, Sun, & Berti, 2003), immigrant youth tended to have confidence in cultural interchange and identified with the larger political community (Kymlicka, 2003; Kymlicka & Norman, 2000; Modood, 1996).

INTERPRETING AND COMPARING THE PATTERNS

Theoretically, youth have generally been conceptualized as problematic. Over a hundred years ago, adolescent storm and stress was proclaimed to be universally part of humankind's genetic make-up (Hall, 1904), an idea taken up by Erikson (1968), thus creating adolescence as a time of crisis in North America. The impact of these negative perceptions of

youth on research and educational, psychological, and judicial services is amply documented and commented on in a number of studies (Ayman-Nolley & Taira, 2000; Cohen & Ainley, 2000; Côté & Allahar, 2006; Hébert & Hartley, 2006; Karakayali, 2005). Although scholars are sensitive to the negative effects of this limited and limiting perspective, this is not to deny that immigration is problematic for many youth who need additional parental and community support (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Hagan, Dinovitzer, & Parker, 2003).

Youth in Comparable Contexts

Turning now to multiple interpretations of the findings, we set our study in national and international contexts to better understand the significance of the findings and to address social policy issues.

National Comparisons. The Calgary participants hold similar views with respect to national and collectivized pluralist identifications as those reported in studies of youth in two other provinces. British Columbia and Québec youth enrolled in secondary schools constructed their national identity in light of their social studies/history curriculum and life experience (Lévesque, 2003). The immigrant youth's experience in their country of origin may have provided them with a comparison between liberal democracy, oppression, and dictatorship. Such youth exhibited pride and loyalty with reference to living in Canada, and found compability between multiculturalism and citizenship. This view allowed them to express multiple identifications without fear of public discrimination and also encouraged a progressive adaptation into the host society.

This Canadian youth pattern is likely to result in reduced social tensions. It will become increasingly difficult to categorize 'others' and to locate them along racialized fault lines in Canadian society, such as the French-English divide, or the Aboriginal-White divide, as perceived within modernity wherein identity is stable in adulthood, constructed in concrete and steel, and fixed as yellowed images in dog-eared photo albums. Instead, the fluidity and strategic nature of group and national identities requires new forms of complex and changing identifications, educational activities, and pedagogies that focus on the change process

and allow complex identifications that take into account experiences in countries of origin, adoption, and residence.

Whether the youth are in Calgary, British Columbia, or Québec, they are all children of multiculturalism. Because some of the immigrant youth in these three locations have learned the harsh consequences of extreme forms of racialized hatred, intolerance, and allegiance, it is not surprising that they are partial to cultural pluralism. As Seligman (2000) points out,

pluralism as a value implies the ability to exist together with other, competing visions of society and of the cosmos. It implies tolerance of error and of alternative and competing civilizational worldviews, each with their own claims to the public sphere and the organization of communal life. (p. 13)

Thus, the youth's identifications are considered to be in a complementary relation, and to allow for mutual recognition, sympathy for one another's views, and possibly even some form of benevolence.

International Contexts. The integration of youth of immigrant origins is a burning social policy issue as part of the citizenship debates that rage in all pluralist democratic countries. In France, for example, youth have been rioting in the streets since 2002, with the social unrest reaching critical proportions and receiving international attention three years later. Systemic exclusion is rampant with hideous housing in urban perimeters, a harsh educational system, oppressive policing, and an economic system that leaves these youth massively unemployed in a myopic society with a huge race-and-poverty gap due to economic policies that are unfavourable to these social classes (Brouard & Tiberj, 2005; Charlot, 1999; Djouder, 2006; Saunders, 2005; Smith, 2004).

Taking up the possibility of social unrest in Canada of the same nature and intensity as in France, two opposite arguments are possible in light of our findings and those of Lévesque (2003). First, it seems highly unlikely, given the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, its guarantee of multicultural and collective rights, as well as the influences of the social studies/history curriculum, life experiences and understandings, that Canadian youth of immigrant origins would rise up in ultra-violent rebellion. Nevertheless, Canadian urban schools are now beginning to see some of the tensions in major American and

Continental cities, albeit to a lesser degree, such as high drop-out rates, poor attendance, boredom, lack of motivation, lack of achievement, inequity in achievement, high remediation rates, lack of job performance, serious and pervasive school violence, and high student anxiety.

Second, an important growing underclass linked to poverty and scarcity of full-time permanent employment for youth exists in Canada as well as in many other countries. Accessing only low-paying jobs limits the potentiality of young people to be productive contributors to adult society and to be efficacious active citizens. In the global economy, youth are both workers and consumers, spending their limited income on fashion and leisure as part of a prevailing consumer culture (Côté & Allahar, 2006; Klein, 2000). Whether these are the outcomes of social disorganization created as economic changes erode normative structures and safeguards, or whether they are directly orchestrated by controlling interests in society, does not seem to matter.

What is important is that educators and policy makers alike recognize the need to be concerned with the economic disempowerment and political disenfranchisement of all youth. There are immediate social policy implications for restructuring society to assure normative economic, social, and political benefits for all youth, and for enhancing the quality of schooling, the settlement and integration experiences, as well as pluralist understandings and practices that enhance mutual recognition, empathy for one another's views, and benevolence towards others.

CONCLUSION

Given the social, political, and economic normative de-structuring of societies within globalization, it is particularly important that nations and cultural groups continue to provide all citizens and especially youth citizens, with their primary sense of belonging, regardless of the immigrant experience or its absence. Canadian society has moved towards a growing appreciation of cultural difference, as contextualized within Canadian multicultural policies and programs. In characterizing Canadian citizenship, it becomes necessary to consider national identity and ethnocultural memberships in relation to one another. As Gagnon and Pagé (1999) suggest, "citizens whose roots lie in ethnic groups

probably feel a stronger connection with Canadian identity because it recognizes the things that make them different" (p. 21).

The voices of youth in this study reveal that, in practice, a diversity of ethnocultural identities does not necessarily diminish association with the national identity in Canada. On one hand, immigrant youth express a strong attachment to their ethnic origins, which allows them to integrate into Canadian identity while attempting to identify themselves as members of their own ethnic groups and to reveal themselves as sensitive about differences in racial, linguistic, cultural, and immigrant status. On the other hand, their attempts to integrate into Canadian society also give rise to desires to be accepted as full members in good standing. For immigrant youth, a positive interaction among national identity, equality rights, and specific group memberships influences the formation of complex identifications as a Canadian.

These findings are of considerable theoretical and practical significance for there are tensions between two ideals: "the multicultural state that fairly accommodates diversity in its laws and public institutions; and the intercultural citizen who feels comfortable dealing with diversity in his or her individual interactions" (Kymlicka, 2003, p. 158). Generally speaking, the participating youth composed relatively well with diversity in daily school and life situations which highlight the positive impact of Canadian identity on the sense of belonging, values, and expectation of participants' lives. The non-immigrant youth are strongly attached to Canada and appreciate the diversity of Canadian society; whereas the immigrant youth securely exercise their cultural rights within the process of becoming Canadian. Revealing a desired harmony between national identity and minority rights, the participating youth's discourses on the meanings of being Canadian suggest that a country's social policies shape youth's integration possibilities.

An elaborative model of citizenship education is likely to be able to form a citizenry respectful of multiple identities, sharing a common sense of belonging and having full parity of rights and obligations and duties and responsibilities within Canadian society. Nonetheless, unless youth and educators are fully aware of changing material and societal conditions that disempower and disenfranchise young people, and are sensitive to the understanding that society and schooling are not benign,

Canadian youth will certainly develop diffuse feelings of anxiety and exclusion. In the long run, such unease would bring youth to mobilize against their exploitation, to rise up against ineffectual governments, and to target educational institutions as the instrument of the state.

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