CHAPTER 25

Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and Immigration: Mapping the Complexities of Inclusion and Exclusion Through Intersectionality

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INTRODUCTION

In announcing changes to Canada’s citizenship legislation in October 2017, Canada’s Liberal then-Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Ahmed Hussen highlighted that Canadian citizenship was central to the “integration” or inclusion of immigrants, to the enjoyment of opportunities, and to even being part of Canadian “family.” In his exact words:

One of the strongest pillars for successful integration into Canadian life is achieving Canadian citizenship and becoming part of the Canadian family. The Government encourages all immigrants to take the path towards citizenship and take advantage of everything that being a Canadian has to offer. (Hussen, cited in Canada 2018)

The legislation to which Hussen was referring, namely Bill C-6, was designed to amend 2015 legislation introduced by the Conservative government of Stephen Harper. Specifically, Bill C-6 removed some barriers for newcomers to
obtaining Canadian citizenship and made it impossible for naturalised citizens (those not born in Canada) to lose it—an action called revocation—on grounds of treason, terrorism, or spying by dual nationals. Instead, the 2017 changes specify that all Canadians convicted of such crimes would be dealt with in the Canadian criminal justice system.

The 2017 changes illustrate a number of relevant themes when thinking about issues relating to citizenship from the standpoint of Canadian politics, immigration, inclusion, and gender. First, it is apparent that the details of citizenship policy can change quickly with new elections and new governments; they are not static and respond to a variety of presumed state imperatives, such as security and the prevention of terrorism, amongst others. Second, citizenship is linked to ideas of inclusion (and by extension, exclusion), and consequently, because the details of citizenship policy can change, the grounds for both exclusion and inclusion are also not static. Third, citizenship is linked to ideas of belonging that are heavily connected to kinship—evident through discourse about a “Canadian family.” However, as feminist scholars have observed, whenever kinship and family are invoked by state officials or in state policy, differences relating to gender, sexuality, race, and other forms of difference typically follow (Stevens 1999: 3–49). As such, gender analysis is critical to a fulsome understanding of citizenship.

The purpose of this chapter is to further concretise these themes relating to citizenship through a discussion of policies and debates about immigration and multiculturalism in contemporary Canada. In particular, we argue that using an intersectional lens attuned to gender, sexuality, race, and other forms of difference is critical to understanding the inclusionary and exclusionary elements of Canadian citizenship and how they can be variably contested by state and societal actors. To make this argument, we take a three-fold approach. We begin by addressing how citizenship has been theorised with a focus on both international and Canadian scholarship. We then analyse recent trends relating to immigration policy for what they tell us about the extension of citizenship to newcomers, as well as how ideas of who belongs are evolving and informed by power relations relating to race, gender, and sexuality. Finally we conclude by addressing multiculturalism as a policy that articulates a particular relationship between states and citizens and as an increasingly contested practice similarly informed by power relations relating to race, gender, and sexuality.

**Theorising Citizenship and Its Formal and Substantive Aspects**

While philosophical discussions of citizenship can be traced back to ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle, British sociologist T. H. Marshall has provided the guiding text for post-World War II discussions of citizenship (Abu-Laban 2000). Rooted in his understanding of British history, Marshall (1965) conceptualised citizenship as an evolutionary unfolding and layering of distinct
sets of rights starting with civil rights in the eighteenth century (such as free association), political rights in the nineteenth century (such as the right to vote), and social rights in the twentieth century (the rights associated with the development of the welfare state). Marshall saw citizenship and the equality it offered to be in tension with the inequality produced by the capitalist system, and consequently his work was attentive to economic differentiation.

In contrast to Marshall, feminist scholars have approached citizenship with an eye towards gender differentiation. As such, it has been noted that Marshall effectively “wrote out” women from his schema since many were not granted voting rights until the twentieth century, a reality he did not note. Indeed, Sylvia Walby finds that in Britain, the geographic focus of Marshall’s analysis, women achieved voting rights later than the nineteenth century and civil rights only followed from political rights (Walby 1997: 172). Additionally, over twenty-five years ago, Nira Yuval-Davis (1991) used an intersectional approach developed from the scholarship of African American thinkers such as legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), to point out that Marshall also ignored any concrete discussion of race and immigration. Yet it is precisely around these issues where citizenship debates were the most boisterous and alive in Britain and elsewhere (Yuval-Davis 1991: 61). This insight from intersectional feminist theorising is important because the intense focus on citizenship in relation to immigration has grown in the past decade, a feature that will be discussed further (Paquet 2012; Abu-Laban 2017).

While scholarly interest in citizenship has ebbed and flowed, since the 1990s there has been a proliferation of research relating to citizenship globally (Isin and Nyers 2014). This interest stems from welfare-state retrenchment, population migrations, and growing forms of ethnic and racial diversity (Kymlicka and Norman 1994), sometimes expressed as “multicultural citizenship.” Feminist and queer theorists have also explored “sexual citizenship” by unpacking the foundational relationship between citizenship, sexuality, and gender (Richardson 2018: 13–15). In this same period, Canadian political scientists and other scholars concerned with gender, sexuality, and other forms of social hierarchy have made contributions attuned to the particular nature of the Canadian polity as a settler-colony where Indigenous peoples experienced French and British colonisation, along with repeated waves of immigration, initially from Europe, and more recently from more locales (Abu-Laban 2014). Canadian interventions on the citizenship debate draw attention to how legislation has historically worked to deny citizenship to women, those without property and Indigenous peoples (Strong-Boag 2002: 40–41).

While the post-World War II human-rights revolution and the introduction of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian Constitution in 1982 introduced pathways to greater inclusion, challenges remain that make the experience of citizenship uneven when it comes to social relations of power relating to gender, race, sexuality, language, (dis)ability, and other markers of difference (Abu-Laban 2014; Orsini 2012). For example, in the Canadian context feelings about identity and citizenship are complicated by the hegemonic
status of the English language, and the particular concentration of franco-
phones in the province of Québec (Cardinal 2004; Labelle et al. 2004). Miriam
Smith notes that despite the ongoing struggles of LGBTQ2 citizens for rights
in light of heteronormative dominance, they are behind other groups of citi-
zens in having their varied needs routinely considered in policy processes and
practices (2007: 104–105). Not least, in the contemporary context, where
more attention has been paid to Indigenous peoples and the impacts of colo-
nialism in the wake of the calls to action of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation
Committee dealing with residential schools, citizenship from the vantage point
of Indigenous peoples is especially complicated. As Joyce Green (2017) reminds
us, the experience of Indigenous peoples in the settler-colonial context of
Canada fundamentally challenges the idea that modern state-based citizenship
is a virtue. She notes that “For those who have found their nations and com-
munities to be subjected to oppression by the state since its inception … citi-
zenship is not an unalloyed good. Such is the experience of Indigenous people
in Canada (and in all of the settler states)” (Green 2017: 177).

Considering these contested and uneven experiences of citizenship, it is
helpful to analyse the inclusiveness of citizenship along two dimensions: formal
and substantive (Abu-Laban 2000). Formal citizenship addresses the relation-
ship between the state and its citizens and relates to institutional-political
acceptance (Arat-Koc 2005: 41). Here, citizenship is a status, evidenced in
legal standing and documents like a passport. In contrast, substantive citizen-
ship relates to relationships among citizens and represents a lived and practical
form of cultural acceptance (Arat-Koc 2005: 41). “Full” and inclusive citizen-
ship has tended to describe membership in a bordered community based on
both formal citizenship (the ascribed legal status, or the status of individuals
vis-à-vis political authority) and substantive citizenship (the relationships of
belonging, engagement, and solidarity amongst its members) (Abu-Laban
2000; Macklin 2006: 22; Nath 2016: 29). Consideration of LGBTQ2 rights
helps to elucidate the differences between formal and substantive citizenship.
In Western countries, kissing between opposite-sex partners has become more
widely accepted and represented in popular culture in recent years and over the
2000s countries like Canada (2005) and the UK (2014) have made same-sex
marriage legal. However, Hubbard notes that despite this formal equality,
same-sex kissing in a public space may still be subject to judgement, recrimina-
tion, and violence from some co-citizens, and in the case of the UK can still
encounter legally sanctioned prohibition at local levels (Hubbard 2013). In
this way, kissing is not a right enjoyed equally by all citizens, pointing to hier-
archies in sexual citizenship.

Recognition of the complexity of both formal and substantive citizenship
presents an opportunity to examine the varied experiences of citizenship in a
more nuanced way. In what follows, we find it useful to make this distinction
when adopting an intersectional lens to examine two important policy areas in
Canada: immigration and multiculturalism.
Immigration Policy and Entry or Non-entry into Canadian Citizenship

With the distinction between formal and substantive citizenship in mind, it is helpful to cut into the question of immigration by considering the fact that as a settler-colony, immigration was a defining feature of Canada’s emergence as a modern state. In contrast to colonies of exploitation, settler-colonies are places where there was a widespread movement of people from Europe for permanent settlement (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995). As a consequence of having a diverse and pre-existing Indigenous population alongside repeated waves of immigration, initially from France and Britain and later other locales, settler-colonialism in Canada produced complicated social relations of power. An intersectional analysis reveals that these social relations pertain to Indigeneity, race, ethnicity, language, class, gender, and sexuality, amongst other forms of difference (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995).

With the founding of the modern Canadian state with Confederation in 1867, and the adoption of a federal system of governance, these social hierarchies were evident in how populations were treated internally. Broadly speaking, both state policies and social power reflected an Angloconformity, favouring the dominant British-origin group, which also became the ideal as well as the norm against which other groups were measured. Consequently, in terms of practice, federalism itself has not always reflected a respect for the vision of francophone “founding father” of Confederation George-Étienne Cartier, namely respect for “different ways of life” as concerns ethnolinguistic pluralism (see LaSelva 1996). Likewise, important citizenship rights, such as the franchise, were historically denied to women, Indigenous peoples, and those without property through a combination of legislation at municipal, provincial, and federal levels (Strong-Boag 2002: 40–41).

Angloconformity and exclusions in citizenship not only were a consequence of how different groups were treated within Canada but were enabled through state policies regulating immigration. For most of Canada’s history from 1867, immigration policy explicitly favoured white heterosexual Protestants, especially from Britain, who were seen as model settlers and citizens, and exceptions to this tended to occur only in periods when there was insufficient labour (Abu-Laban 1998). An intersectional lens is helpful to thinking about the manifold consequences of this form of immigration policy in relation to both settler-colonialism and citizenship. For example, as it evolved, Sir John A. MacDonald’s national policy emphasised building a railway and supposedly “settling” western Canada, a discourse that worked to make Indigenous peoples invisible, and normalised the expropriation of Indigenous land. To complete the hard labour required to build the railway, between 1880 and 1884 thousands of workers, mostly men, were recruited from China, often undertaking the most dangerous tasks for little money (Abu-Laban 1998: 71). Indicating how those that fell outside the British ideal were only welcome in times when there was a perceived need for labour, following the completion of the railway...
the federal government introduced the 1885 Chinese Immigration Act. This Act introduced a “head tax” on Chinese immigrants that would have to be paid for each person entering Canada from China.

The head tax was set high by the standards of the day and would continue to increase, starting at $50 and going to $500 by 1903 (James 2004: 889). The head tax, coupled with the almost complete banning of Chinese immigration from 1923 to 1947, were clearly aimed at restricting permanent settlement by making it next to impossible for Chinese women to enter Canada as the spouses or the mothers of the children of Chinese men already settled in Canada (Das Gupta 1995). As Matt James sums, “the head-tax legislation deprived early Chinese migrants of family support, created psychological scars, delayed the formation of a viable Chinese-Canadian community and exposed those Chinese women who did manage to immigrate to an unusually harsh environment of sexual and reproductive pressure” (2004: 889).

It is important to note that discrimination against racialised families was not confined to the Chinese; immigration practices also discriminated against Japanese and South Asian families, a feature in evidence until well after World War II (Das Gupta 1995). In dramatic contrast, the federal government over this same period of time actively strove to recruit female British-origin domestic workers, who, following the heterosexist script, were seen as ideal future wives of white British-origin men and potential mothers who would reproduce the nation—a task socially constructed and assigned to women in relation to biological and childrearing roles (Abu-Laban 1998).

Additionally, the particular vulnerability of non-citizens in Canada was historically evident in state surveillance directed at the Canadian population on the basis of immigration status, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality (Abu-Laban 2014). In this way, certain groups were “securitised,” that is, treated as security threats. This was also seen in deportation campaigns, with one such instance occurring in the wake of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike when Austrians, Galicians, and Jews were accused of being “dangerous foreigners” for their perceived radical-left views (Tulchinsky 2008: 187). Likewise, it was seen in 1952 immigration legislation which treated “homosexuals” as subversive, joining a spate of state efforts aimed at surveilling and criminalising the LGBTQ2 community, and banning their entry to Canada until 1977 (Kinsman and Gentile 2010: 74). With the introduction of the passport at the end of World War I, and particularly with its widespread adoption across states by the end of World War II, the movement of populations in general also came to be subject to ever-greater state regulation and control globally. However certain hierarchical exclusions came to be challenged, given the association of immigration with citizenship and new discourses stressing equality and fairness. In the 1960s, Canada’s immigration policy became formally non-discriminatory as expressly concerned race and nationality and, as will be discussed further, an official policy of multiculturalism was proclaimed in 1971. Such transformations may be rooted in the broader human-rights revolution following World War II, as well as in the mobilisation of Canadians themselves (Abu-Laban
These transformations also made their way into the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, so ideals relating to equality, non-discrimination, and multiculturalism now form part of the highest law of the land, Canada’s Constitution.

A testament to the combined impact of these transformations can be seen in the incredible movement of Chinese Canadians, beginning in 1983, and their ultimate success, in the face of initial unwillingness on the part of many governments, to receive an apology from the federal government for the historic head tax (James 2004: 890). The federal government’s redress for the head tax involved a symbolic ($20,000) compensation to living payers or their spouses as well as an official apology. The apology was delivered by the newly elected Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2006 and reflected on citizenship in both a formal sense (because family, typically women and children, were not admitted to Canada) and in a substantive sense as impacting the entire community by preventing them “from seeing themselves as fully Canadian” (cited in Edwards and Calhoun 2011: 81).

However, while certain past exclusions have been subjected to new challenges, hierarchies remain. For example, in 1967, while immigration policy was not to carry any distinctions with respect to race or nationality, Canada nevertheless adopted a point system of selection. This point system assesses all applicants on the same criteria relating to such factors as education and training. While the details and exact points assigned to criteria have shifted over time, overall the point system has been seen as a model that favours human capital and people with high skills and money for permanent residence and settlement in Canada. This system also tends to favour economically advantaged male applicants coming from countries with extensive educational opportunities, particularly in the English language (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002). As such, there are still ways in which the system excludes people on the basis of gender, race, and class.

In contrast, women are more likely to immigrate as (dependent) family members of applicants who come in under the point system or through other streams such as caregivers. Until 2014, the Live-In Caregiver Program was an active component of the Temporary Foreign Worker Programme. Live-In Caregivers were not judged on the point system, reflecting a longstanding bias that caring labour is not really skilled. Moreover, Live-In Caregivers were not automatically granted permanent residence, and thus their citizenship status has been precarious. Researchers have found that, in being denied citizenship and attached to an employer’s home, domestic workers have been particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse (Stasiulis and Bakan 2005: 52). While new rules removing requirements for residing in the employer’s home have been put in place, there is still much work to be done on the question of the working conditions and experiences of caregivers, a category most likely to comprise women from the developing world.

There has also been a growing body of work on temporary foreign workers more generally, whose numbers began to grow dramatically in the mid-2000s,
and in some years to surpass that of immigrants chosen as permanent residents who are viewed with an eye for long-term settlement (and who are also eligible for formal citizenship). In the past fifteen years, there has been proliferation of programmes to facilitate temporary entry, often of men, in manual and service jobs. These programmes have led to a plethora of rules and practices governing issues relating to social and settlement services and employment for often-women spouses (Rajkumar et al. 2012). In these ways, the state regulates inequality not only between citizens and non-citizens who reside in Canada but amongst non-citizens who reside in Canada. That the importation of foreign workers is controversial and contested may be seen in the fact that at the height of the last oil boom in Alberta, the Alberta Federation of Labour adopted the slogan “good enough to work, good enough to stay” as a way to draw attention to the idea that a typically racialised and vulnerable segment of the Canadian workforce should not be denied citizenship.

Although it is not new, the association of immigrants (and minorities) with threat has been ramped up since the events of September 11, 2001. In this context, would-be immigrants and citizens who are, or are perceived to be, Muslim and/or Arab have been subject to the security gaze of the state, that is they have been securitised. They have relatedly faced unique challenges in relation to forms of anti-Muslim racism (sometimes called Islamophobia). Anti-Muslim racism draws on longstanding “Orientalist” stereotypes which infuse both scholarship and popular culture in the West by presenting Arabs and/or Muslims as exotic Others who are backwards, irrational, and deserving of unequal treatment because of their inherent inferiority (Said 1979: 1–28). Anti-Muslim racism was in evidence in January 2017 when Alexandre Bissonnette purposefully killed six worshipers and injured nineteen others in a mass shooting at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Ste. Foy, Québec. Today, in the post-9/11 climate, Orientalism and anti-Muslim racism interfaces in complicated ways with discourses regarding LGBTQ2 rights and recent advances in sexual citizenship in Western countries (Sabsay 2012), as well as with security and fighting terrorism, with Muslim men (or those deemed to be Muslim) typically constructed as a threat. The latter was apparent in the lead-up to the 2015 federal election. In the particular case of Canada, the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*, Bill C-24, was passed into law in June 2014, and its provisions took effect in June 2015. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, this Harper-era legislation contained provisions which expanded the grounds upon which Canadian citizenship can be revoked from dual citizens to include treason, spying, and terrorism, and the provisions also made it harder for newcomers to acquire Canadian citizenship (e.g., by lengthening requirements for time spent in Canada prior to obtaining citizenship). Rather than being framed as diminishing citizenship and the citizenship prospects for newcomers and dual citizens however, the legislation was presented as strengthening it. Specifically, it was justified by then-Immigration Minister Chris Alexander as necessary to “protect and strengthen the great value of
Canadian citizenship and to remind individuals that citizenship is not a right, it’s a privilege” (cited in Black 2014).

The passage of Bill C-24 also occurred in a context when the Conservative government of Stephen Harper seemed to avoid talking about, or seriously responding to, growing numbers of Syrian refugees, whose plight had grown dramatically in the wake of the Arab Spring and civil war in Syria. Notably, and reflecting on the human-rights revolution, Canada is a signatory to the legal principles and obligations flowing from the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, as well as having a history of working in response to refugees and with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This sluggish response to Syrian refugees therefore stood out, and also combined with 2009 changes the Harper Conservatives made to the citizenship guide given to newcomers to study for the test for Canadian citizenship, which had the effect of making it more likely for people to fail the citizenship test (Abu-Laban 2017). This guide was also widely criticised for failing to include references to LGBTQ2 rights, as initially contained in a draft, as well as for incorporating elements of anti-Muslim racism by drawing on gendered stereotypes. In particular, the guide introduced the language of “barbarism” and posited violence against women as the sole practice of cultural “Others” by implicitly drawing on stereotypes about Muslims (see also Razack (2008: 3–22) featuring the construction of the barbaric Muslim man and oppressed Muslim woman). This is contained in the following statement: “In Canada, men and women are equal under the law. Canada’s openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, ‘honour killings,’ female genital mutilation or other gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada’s criminal laws.” (Canada 2012: 10). The Harper changes to that guide, including this statement, are still in effect, although in its first mandate (2015–2019) the Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised changes. It remains to be seen whether changes will emerge with the new Liberal minority government led by Justin Trudeau elected in 2019.

In one area of refugee determination, namely around gender-based persecution, Canada has taken the lead. In 1993, it became the first country in the world to introduce gender-based persecution into refugee assessment. This ultimately works to expressly widen the United Nations definition as contained in the refugee convention which specifies persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in particular social group. The expansion of the refugee category to include gender-based persecution has given rise to new possibilities for protecting vulnerable groups and individuals on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the face of the real threat of state-sanctioned violence, imprisonment, and murder in many parts of the world today (see Mendos 2019 for a global overview). In 2017, for example, Canada brought in some fifty-seven Chechen youth, most identifying as gay men, who were at risk of violence, imprisonment, and death at the hands of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov (Ibbitson 2018). There are important
groups supporting the rights of LGBTQ2 individuals to escape state-based persecution, such as the Toronto-based Rainbow Railroad formed in 2006. The existence of such groups reflects more broadly on the symbolic successes of the LGBTQ2 movement in Canada, particularly since the acceptance of same-sex marriage in 2005. Yet, media accounts concerning Chechens make it clear that there are gendered barriers impacting the mobility of women (Gessen 2018), and those LGBTQ2 Chechens who become refugees face settlement challenges. The Chechens who arrived in Canada in 2017 spent their first year on a paltry $730 a month in government assistance and experienced challenges gaining acceptance in Canada (Ibbitson 2018). Recent in-depth research on one particular group of refugees accepted to Canada, namely gay Iranian refugees, suggests the integration road is complicated precisely by experiences of poverty, isolation, racism, and, notably, homophobia in Canada (Karimi 2018). This highlights the need for policymakers concerned with inclusionary outcomes to be attuned to intersectional analyses and diversity in designing policies, because there is great variability amongst refugees.

As well, it is also clear that Muslims are at particular risk for being stereotyped as not only sexist but also homophobic. The appropriation of LGBTQ2 rights into anti-Muslim nationalist frames (“we are not like them; we are progressive, and they are homophobic”) is referred to by gender theorist Jasbir Puar (2007) as homonationalism. Homonationalism has been reflected in many different contexts. At a national level, Canada employed “queer friendly” policies in the 2010 Winter Olympics while concealing its colonial policies towards Indigenous peoples (Dhoot 2015: 62). It is also seen in contemporary discourses of European far-right parties which fan anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments through an emphasis on positioning Islam as incompatible with the rights of sexual minorities. Given this, an intersectional lens is useful for showing how exclusion, or forms of exclusionary ideas, may potentially operate in even progressive policies, such as those supporting refugees fleeing persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. While immigration and the extension of citizenship to newcomers has evolved over time as a result of state and societal forces, it is important to always consider how the lines of inclusion and exclusion may be informed by complex power relations relating to race, gender, and sexuality. This also holds when considering the border closures Canada and other countries employed to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The same need for attending to complex power relations can be said of multiculturalism, a policy we turn to next.

**Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, and Inclusion into Canadian Citizenship**

“Diversity management strategies,” like federal multiculturalism and interculturalism in Québec, have been fundamental in shaping formal and substantive citizenship. In adopting an intersectional lens to examine how multiculturalism and interculturalism shape inclusion into the polity, the power relations of race, gender, and sexuality reveal that the impact of the formal entrenchment of
legal multiculturalism is not a linear process of greater inclusion and progress (Nath 2016: 146).

Canada was the first country to introduce a policy of multiculturalism, in 1971. In 1982, this commitment to multiculturalism was constitutionally entrenched in the Charter, and the policy was enacted into law six years later in the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

Critiques of multiculturalism emerge across the political spectrum, often reflecting the policy’s perceived and actual impact on gender, sexuality, and race. From the conservative end is the longstanding anxiety that “too much” diversity threatens Canadian unity. More recently, this has been expressed by MP Maxime Bernier, leader of the People’s Party of Canada, who claims that the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau is pushing an agenda of “radical” or “extreme multiculturalism” and following a “cult of diversity” that will “divide us into little tribes” that “want to live apart in their ghetto” (Lum 2018).

Bernier’s strong aversion to multiculturalism rests on the contention that multiculturalism causes social unrest, threatening the supposedly unique Western values of gender equality and LGBTQ2 rights (Abu-Laban Forthcoming).

Others have described multiculturalism as serving a legitimating function, where the focus on culture and diversity masks historical and ongoing racism, inequity, and alienation (Thobani 2007: 184). Policy discussions on multiculturalism have often characterised the marginalisation that racialised women experience as rooted in their ethnocultural community, as opposed to within systemic structures of power like racism and heterosexism (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002: 118). This Orientalist and homonationalist framing, where racialised women are positioned as the “bearers and transmitters of culture,” and multiculturalism, feminism, and women’s rights are characterised as incompatible, is evident in comments like Bernier’s (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002: 119–120). Accompanying this is the critique that multiculturalism positions the state and whiteness as benevolent saviours, therein legitimising the settler-colonial state’s determination of who should be “tolerated” or “saved,” and on what terms (Bakali 2015: 417–418). The notion that racialised and immigrant populations should be grateful for the state’s generosity belies the fact that the state depends on immigrants for growth and prosperity (Mookerjea 2009: 188). In these and other ways, state-sponsored multiculturalism encourages a narrow negotiation and understanding of racialised, gendered, and heteronormative identities (Thobani 2007: 184).

While the formal legal entrenchment of multiculturalism is notable, government support for official multiculturalism has varied, seemingly peaking in the period of mega-constitutional change of the 1980s and 1990s, and declining when the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was absorbed into the Department of Heritage in 1993 (Abu-Laban and Nath 2007: 76). The emphasis of the policy has also shifted, starting with a focus on tolerance and pluralism, shifting briefly to equity in the 1980s and then to neoliberal ideals and an emphasis on “productive diversity” (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002: 117). This would extend through to the immigration priorities and
neoconservative citizenship discourses and practices under Stephen Harper’s Conservative governments in the 2006–2015 period (Dobrowolsky 2017: 197). These shifts represent a progressive privatisation, where multiculturalism has been mapped onto the homonormative gendered private and domestic spheres, both of which position racialised women as the repositories of culture that produce the “wrong” (read: dangerous) kind of value (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002: 119). The Harper government’s prioritisation of economic immigrants over refugees and other classes, the dramatic increase in temporary foreign workers, a climate of distrust in which immigrants and refugees were characterised as security threats or as taking advantage of the system, and policies shrouded with xenophobia, misogyny, and anti-Muslim racism, including a proposal for a “barbaric practices” tip line are particularly stark illustrations of this configuration of “value” and “danger” (Dobrowolsky 2017: 202).

Beyond multiculturalism, other approaches to inclusion and ethnocultural diversity in Canada have been shaped by region and language, particularly in the francophone province of Québec. Here the policy of multiculturalism is seen by successive Québec governments as a federal government imposition and incursion to disrupt Québec’s unique legal and constitutional status. Alongside the Official Languages Act (1969), the official policy of multiculturalism was meant to “counter tensions … resulting from changes in immigration policy, Indigenous Peoples’ critical responses to the Federal government’s attempts to abolish the Indian Act and the growth of French language nationalism and sovereignty movements in the 1960s and 1970s” (Bakali 2015: 417). In response, Québec adopted its own policy of interculturalism that pivots on three principles: (1) French is the common language of public life; (2) Québec is a democracy in which Québécois are expected to participate; and (3) Québec is grounded in pluralism and inter-community exchange (Bouchard and Taylor 2008: 117). This has included the idea of a moral contract between “newcomers” (read: racialised immigrants) and Québec (read: White, pure laine, francophone) society, in which Québec’s common public culture (e.g., the Quiet Revolution, laïcité, gender equality) is centred (Nath 2016: 94).

While important to note these distinctions, both interculturalism and multiculturalism are public policies that “manage diversity” by encouraging the expression of “safe” forms of diversity as they attempt to construct national subjects. The argument that interculturalism is more assimilationist in its attempt to safeguard “traditional” Québécois culture carries the risk of erasing and evading how power relations relating to race, gender, and sexuality interact to shape the citizenship experiences of racialised immigrants both inside and outside of Québec, a point to be developed later. The state’s historical and ongoing attempts to regulate Muslim women through multicultural and intercultural policies is one site through which the complexities of these contextual power relations are revealed, and where formal inclusion emerges as a contested gendered, racialised, and heteronormative practice.
A Policy Fixation on Muslim Women

While the regulation of the religious attire of Muslim women and girls is arguably not intrinsic to policies of multiculturalism or interculturalism, there is now an extended history in Canada where the state’s fixation on religious attire has negatively impacted the public presence, participation, and “integration” of Muslim women and girls.

Tracing back the lineage of this regulation yields a strikingly long list of controversies in Canada. Particularly in the decade that Stephen Harper was prime minister, the frequent attempts to control and legislate the religious attire of Muslim women occurred while the government was implementing a sweeping raft of legislation and policies that negatively impacted Muslim minorities, amongst others. One example is the Harper government’s decision to defund the Canadian Arab Federation’s language training for immigrants. In 2015, the same government passed into law the Islamophobic *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*. In addition to amending immigration legislation to create new polygamy-specific inadmissibility provisions, the act formally criminalised forced marriage and polygamy in ways that could facilitate deportation. Reinforcing the aforementioned *Citizenship Guide*, the act was couched as an expression of “Canada’s openness and generosity” which was laid out in contradistinction to “barbaric cultural practices,” including “violence in the name of so-called ‘honour’” (as cited in Nath 2017: 259).

Relatedly, in 2007, in response to the chief electoral officer’s announcement that voters wearing a niqab could cast ballots in the federal election, then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper expressed his “profound disagreement,” later stating in the run-up to the 2015 federal election that if re-elected he would consider banning the veil from the federal public service and that Justin Trudeau was “totally disconnected from the values of Quebeckers” in saying “yes” to the niqab (MacCharles and Spurr 2015). Clearly, in the federal multicultural context, the formal citizenship rights of Muslim women have proven up for debate.

Precarious inclusion into the polity manifests in distinctive ways in Quebec, where the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) government passed legislation in June 2019 that formally bans some public-sector workers (e.g., police officers, teachers, lawyers, judges, and others) from wearing religious items like hijabs, kippas, turbans, and crucifixes. Notably, the precarious inclusion resulting from Bill 21 intersects with political calculus, evident most recently in the 2019 federal election wherein the leaders of the New Democratic Party, the Conservative Party, and the Liberal Party condemned the legislation but stopped short of committing to a legal challenge should they form government. Bill 21 has polled favourably in Quebec, a fact not lost on the Bloc Quebecois who championed the legislation as moderate, cautioned the other parties against interference, and emerged as a big winner in the election, gaining twenty-two seats since 2015.
Bill 21 reinforces earlier legislation (Bill 62) passed by the Liberal government in 2017 by effectively targeting Muslim women through the prohibition of face-obscuring veils in the receipt and delivery of services in an even broader range of roles and sectors (e.g., police officers, court officials, teachers, childcare workers, physicians, midwives, Members of the National Assembly, public transit authorities, etc.). This staggering legislation, which invokes the Canadian Charter’s “notwithstanding clause,” also authorises ministers with the undetermined “powers to verify compliance.” Preceding the passage of Bill 21, Québec’s minister for the status of women, Isabelle Charest, decried the hijab as “a form of oppression toward women” (Presse Canadienne 2019), just days after her own party leader and premier Francois Legault (CAQ) controversially ruled out the idea of having a national day against Islamophobia in Québec, stating, “I don’t think there is Islamophobia in Québec” (Authier 2019). The call for a national day against Islamophobia in Québec came two years after the January 2017 Québec City mosque shooting. Less than one week after the shooting, the National Assembly would observe a minute of silence for the victims and then continue, under the leadership of the Liberal Québec government, to debate a ban on the religious attire of Muslim women.

The context for these statements and events is important, revealing a long history that spans the three main Québec parties (Liberal, Parti Québécois, and CAQ) that have been elected to form the government since the 1970s. In 2010 and 2013, the Liberal and then Parti Québécois governments attempted to pass legislation that would essentially serve as a blueprint for the current legislation. Some civil society organisations would also bring forward similar initiatives effectively targeting Muslim women, for example, the Québec Council on the Status of Woman/Conseil du statut de la femme in 2007, and the leaders of Le Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec (Nath 2016: 105). Beyond Bill 21, the varying attempts at a ban would curtail Muslim women’s capacity to access services and programmes (e.g., language classes for new immigrants, community sports), as well as their formal rights, including voting and access to public and private schools, healthcare, and post-secondary education. These rights are guaranteed to Canadian citizens through the Canada Health Act and the Québec and Canadian charters of rights.

We can see here how context and jurisdiction matters. While the Québec debates have been framed as indicative of a commitment to state secularism, the Québec nation, and a social commitment to gender equality, outside of Québec and particularly under the policies of the Harper government, Muslim women and girls have been targeted as part of a wider array of federal government policies relating to anti-terrorism, security, and citizenship acquisition that have been justified in the name of democracy and national security. Moreover, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in July 2020, Quebec would become the first province to mandate mandatory mask-wearing in indoor public spaces, with many jurisdictions soon to follow. While enforcement has been patchy, the expectation that residents don masks in service of public health (or the public good) sits in extraordinary tension with the
ongoing support for Bill 21, particularly on the question of identification, security, and what constitutes the transparent and good public citizen. This disjuncture signals how imperative intersectional analyses are to unpack the shifting forms of regulation in and through discourses of citizenship, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.

**Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, and the “Problem Citizen”**

To make sense of these histories, it is helpful to look beyond multiculturalism and interculturalism as policies to consider them as mechanisms of security that regulate difference and “[secure] meanings about the nation and belonging” (Dhamoon 2010: 256–267).

In the present case, the state’s regulation of Muslim women and girls (formal citizenship) and the polity’s reactions to this regulation (substantive citizenship) reveal how Muslim women and girls are positioned not only as a “problem to be solved” *through* multiculturalism and interculturalism, but also as a “problem to be solved” *because of* multiculturalism and interculturalism. For example, the Canadian legislative framework, which includes the Charter, is seen as a catalyst for Canadian and Québécois anxiety over Muslim women in the conflicts both between federal multicultural policy and Québec intercultural policy and between individual and group-based rights (Nath 2017: 261–262). Not all group-based rights are, of course, created equal, as we see in the extended debates over whether the centrally located crucifix in the National Assembly constituted a religious symbol or a symbol of cultural heritage. The crucifix was ultimately removed in July 2019, following the decision to remove the crucifix in Montreal’s city hall earlier that year.

In the Québec intercultural context, religion is affixed to Muslim women and girls who depart from the perceived secular norm. In the broader multicultural context outside of Québec, culture is affixed to Muslim women and girls who depart from a perceived culture-less norm. In both cases, the output is two categories of women and citizens—those who are mired in the “wrong” kind of “pre-modern” community, culture, religion, and “civilisation,” and those who are not (Razack 2008: 157). This calculus renders the formal and substantive citizenship of Muslim women and girls up for debate.

The perceived “problem” of Muslim women and girls in the context of liberal multiculturalism and interculturalism manifests variably as a question of risk and insecurity. In one permutation, Muslim women are endangered by Islam, fundamentalism, and Muslim men, or “patriarchal excess” (Razack 2008: 173). In policy, this characterises the government as “saviour,” a position that has been harnessed to authorise a range of international and domestic state interventions. In the government backgrounder to the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, the act is described as demonstrating that “Canada will not tolerate any type of violence against women and girls, including spousal abuse, violence in the name of so-called ‘honour,’ or other, mostly gender-based violence” (Canada 2015).
This “intolerance” to “violence against women and girls” sits uneasily given the reality of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, whose numbers may reach into the thousands. Heteronormative approaches that pin gender-based violence to culture also constrain broader policy given that gender-based violence crosses religious, cultural, and racialised lines. Moreover, the definition of harm is unclear, given that the act itself threatened to create harmful situations for women and children (e.g., the criminalisation of victims, the deportation of children, the separation of families, etc.) (Gaucher 2016: 532).

In another permutation, Muslim women are seen to pose a threat to Western women, and gender and sex equality, the latter being presented as a unique marker of the West. Within Québec, a dominant narrative is that the secularisation that accompanied the Quiet Revolution is inextricably tied to gender and sex equality, something Bilge (2012) captures by exploring the neologism of “sexularism.” This teleological understanding of the secularisation process connects to the homonationalist and Orientalist discourses described earlier. The point here is that Muslim women and girls are positioned as problematic Others who pose a risk to those women who have been ushered into “modernity.” Therefore, it is Western women and Western liberal democracies that “must be protected against religious others who coerce their women into submissive practices such as the hijab” (Bilge 2012: 311).

The veil is also treated as a multidimensional risk, sometimes a sign of submission, but also one of provocation, aggression, a refusal to integrate, and even “intolerance towards the host society” (Nath 2017: 275). Naturally, the policy rationale for bans is similarly multidimensional. In advocating for a ban on the wearing of the niqab while taking the oath of citizenship, then-Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Jason Kenney, rationalised the policy as a question of values, not practicality: “It is a matter of deep principle that goes to the heart of our identity and our values of openness and equality. The citizenship oath is a quintessentially public act. It is a public declaration that you are joining the Canadian family and it must be taken freely and openly” (Kenney 2011). In a gesture of radical erasure, Kenney continues: “If Canada is to be true to our history and to our highest ideals, we cannot tolerate two classes of citizens. We cannot have two classes of citizenship ceremonies.” Beyond this, the eviction of Muslim women and girls from public space is also justified through appeals to gender equality that are linked to the cultural integrity or homogeneity of the nation, the value of religious neutrality, and the maintenance of order in public, and sometimes even private space (Razack 2018: 173).

This poses a quandary given that liberal multiculturalism and interculturalism are underscored by the commitment to inclusion, integration, and participation. What do we make of these commitments when the lineage of these debates suggests that it is the very presence of Muslim women that is threatening (Nath 2017: 274)? If these bans mean that the formal and substantive citizenship of Muslim women and girls is up for debate, an intersectional analysis shows that multicultural and/or intercultural contexts are marked by a deep
complexity and contestation that belies the premise that formal inclusion is resolutely good. When a banned Muslim woman or girl is “denied the right to public space even as she is formally a citizen,” important questions are raised about the varying harms of both inclusion and exclusion (Razack 2018: 173).

**Conclusion**

In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described Canadians as taking “diversity for granted: In so many ways, it’s the air we breathe” (Trudeau 2015). In naturalising diversity, the prime minister would go on to stress the importance of immigration to Canada, and the values of openness, acceptance, progressiveness, and inclusiveness. Accompanying these values is a broader discourse where, within the two policy areas examined here—immigration and multiculturalism—the de facto presumption is that we should want to be included (e.g., as citizens and members of the polity) and that once formally included, we experience our citizenship in positive ways. Put differently, within the policy areas of immigration and multiculturalism, inclusion is held up as a primary good for those wanting to belong. Our intersectional analysis of immigration, multiculturalism, and interculturalism argues that the experience of citizenship, “diversity,” inclusion, and exclusion is more contested. In considering both formal and substantive citizenship, our analysis disrupts a simple binary where inclusion is “good” and exclusion is “bad.” Rather, in adopting an intersectional lens to consider the impact of policies in these two areas, a more complicated picture emerges. Formal citizenship, as it pertains to how the state formally recognises its citizens, is not necessarily linked to substantive citizenship (e.g., relationships of solidarity amongst citizens). Moreover, formal citizenship has not neatly coincided with greater inclusion or an inclusiveness free of costs. The banning of religious coverings of Muslim women and girls expresses “the refusal to be in proximity, the refusal to be made awake to the Other’s difference” (Razack 2018: 185). Put differently, when we look at policies of multiculturalism within the context of settler-colonialism, heteropatriarchy, race/ethnicity, and sexualities, the line between exclusion and inclusion is blurred, and the impact of inclusion is as well. The policy implication here is that if we adopt an intersectional lens to understand and consider policy impact, we can unmap how our policies pertaining to citizenship can cause and reinforce systemic harm.

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