

Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada,

by Will Kymlicka

Will Kymlicka's latest contribution, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada*, builds upon his earlier, pathbreaking work. This new book will disappoint those seeking new intellectual departures. However, as the author notes at the outset, his motive is more 'practical' than 'theoretical.'

The work marks a new stage in Kymlicka's engagement with Canadian public policy in three separate, but related ways. First of all, the book's style and compactness are explicitly designed for a non-specialist audience. Second, it displays a marked attempt to distance itself from more radical, oppositionalist writing on multiculturalism. In this way, Kymlicka is positioning himself as a voice of the centre-left, seeking to engage with a skeptical English-Canadian public that is increasingly hostile to the claims of multiculturalism. Accordingly, the book seeks to converse with two high-profile, articulate critics of Canada's multiculturalism policy, Neil Bissoondath and Richard Gwyn, both of whom recently excoriated multiculturalism as a divisive ideology.

Kymlicka agrees that their sentiments, which reflect those of the majority of native-born Canadians, are not entirely unfounded. For example, Kymlicka accepts the charge that Canada's political and cultural elites have used the stick of white guilt to suppress debate on the multiculturalism issue and have failed to reassure anglophone Canadians as to where the limits of the policy lie. (pp 66-8) Yet Kymlicka rejects most of the criticism of the multiculturalism policy as empirically untenable. As evidence, he cites the fact that multiculturalism's record at promoting the integration of ethnic groups

is impressive – better than in countries which have failed to adopt the policy and better than used to be the case before the adoption of the Canadian policy in 1971.

The volume is divided into two parts, corresponding to the author's familiar distinction between immigrant and national minorities. Kymlicka defends multiculturalism as appropriate for immigrant groups, while multinational federalism is endorsed for national groups. In light of the populist/elitist and regional/federal tensions within anglophone Canada, however, one may ask whether Kymlicka's assessment of that nation's pan-Canadian attachment rings true. If not, the path to Canadian unity may lie more in the direction of cultivating a nascent English-Canadian national identity than in refining multi-nationalist federal strategies – whose soundness has already been demonstrated by the likes of Laforest and McRoberts. Notwithstanding such criticism, Kymlicka's conclusions are sensible and his style accessible, hence this book is recommended for specialist and non-specialist alike.

Eric Kaufmann,
Lecturer, Department of Politics,
University of Southampton

Finding Our way

- figure of centre-left. Liberal nationalist and multiculturalist
- response to Bissoondath and Gwyn, not to mention other figures in backlash.
- low purchase of multicult outside left academic circles
- treatise is a kind of 'Third Way', but draws on established progressive patterns
- parochialism of discussion, Canada boosting
- weak version of multiculturalism <Addams/Dewey, as opposed to Kallen>. Tied up with the assimilation-consociation balance run by multiculturalism in the west
- question of thinness of national identity in Gwyn

Good writer

Likely to run afoul of both orthodox multicult and antis. A centrist searching for a middle ground.

MC project without major support, viewed as anti-establishment

- much justification of status quo <what of secularism and alternative culture holidays?>

- stretches the actual intent of multiculturalism, especially communitarian multiculters among the ethnics who want to maintain their culture. <ie p51 and lingo instruction motivation>

- does multiculturalism state its aims as integrative and transitional? Or is this assimilation by stealth? <same as Stan Fish

- erroneous attribution of social harmony to multiculturalism policy (p58)

- clearly there are different interpretations of multiculturalism, else why not rename it, if it is incendiary (p59)

- multicult aims defined as fairer terms (pp58-9)

- what does 'expressing ethnic identity' mean? (p65)

- endorses a statement of limits to multicult and need for national identity based on institutions and language

- endorses explicit limits in Act, and debate (68-9)

talks of following US model of affirmative action vis a vis blacks, of treating them as a separate case (p81)

- underplays the ethnic imperative to separate (pp84-6)

- critiques consociationalism, but endorses some attempts at representation (p111)

- <question of who are the people arises with regard to group political representation> (116)

- argues that there are core values to opponents and proponents (122)

- wants debate on real issues in an informed way (123)

No extensive footnoting (as with US section) - p138

<majority of ethnic Ques voted for it, younger are more pro-separation, many attempts at concession have been made>- 180

<neglect of anti-federal sentiment directed at both Ottawa and Quebec> in discussing federalist ting of eng canadian identiy>

no mention of western and WASP agitation within English Canada>

<neglect of British-Canadian ethno-nationalism, past and present, and linguistic ocncerns like anti-bilingualism. Neglect of populist backlash against feds>

<correct solution is to address assymetry at the level of multiculturalism/federalism by stressing english canadian communitarianism and toning down oppositional rhetoric of minorities. Overarching values will be central, but secondary in identity terms.>

Ducks question of reverse-discrimination effects on whites.

Refuses to talk about Anglo-Canadian ethnic rights

No talk of asymmetricality of multicult

Ducks question of oppositional nature of multicult discourse

*Ignores real ethnic issue for many, if not all groups. - most ethnic groups are descent-based and thick, and want to keep it that way. Not moving from race to culture. Driven by communal motives (not equality), like quantum rule. Issue is genetic community and identity, not integration. Historically the case as well