The Activities of Hellenic-Canadian Secular Organizations in the Context of Canadian Multiculturalism

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RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article tente de mieux cerner le contexte politique et de démentir ainsi quelques unes des *approches critiques* du multiculturalisme. L'auteur examine la façon dont ces approches touchent les activités des organisations séculaires Helleno-Canadiennes (HCSO). Suite à un survol historique du multiculturalisme ainsi qu'un résumé des critiques de la politique multiculturelle, l'article présente des évaluations des critiques les plus fréquentes. L'article questionne la définition traditionnelle du multiculturalisme en tant qu'outil d'analyse de la société canadienne. Il situe les activités des HCSO au sein de la structure multiculturelle et argumente que leurs activités encouragent un multiculturalisme folklorique et non civique. En guise de conclusion, l'article propose une compréhension plus poussée et critique de la culture, de la politique dite ethnique et de la composition sociale des membres des HCSO afin de faciliter la "participation à part entière" des grecs ou des canadiens d'origine grecque au sein des institutions canadiennes.

ABSTRACT

This article attempts to debunk and contextualize politically some of the critical approaches to multiculturalism. It examines if and how they relate to the activities of Helenic-Canadian Secular Organizations (HCSOs). It traces the historical development of multiculturalism and presents a brief summary and evaluations of several of its critiques. It challenges the conception of multiculturalism as a theoretical tool for the analysis of Canadian society. It situates the activities of HCSOs within the multicultural framework and argues that their activities promote folkloric, not civic multiculturalism. Finally, it proposes that a more critical and thorough understanding of culture, "ethnic" politics and the social composition of the membership of HCSOs is required for our "full participation" in Canadian institutions.

In recent years Canada's policy of multiculturalism has come under escalating attacks. Several academic, political and "popular" critiques have been directed not only at the official government policy, but on its ideology as well. To belated skeptics, it appears that multiculturalism creates more problems in Canadian society than it seeks to resolve. Multiculturalism has become, to put it mildly, a controversial issue.

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Supporters of the policy view it as a substantive, unifying policy that fosters diversity and thus has a positive, catalytic influence on our social climate. It is better than the American melting pot. Critics, on the other hand, argue that multiculturalism is an ineffective, divisive, regressive, merely symbolic, or even fraudulent policy (Fleras and Elliott, 1996:348).

In an attempt to 'contextualize politically' some of the critical approaches to multiculturalism, and examine if and how they relate to the activities of Hellenic-Canadian Secular Organizations (HCSOs) this article will:

a) Define multiculturalism and trace its historical development;

b) Present a brief summary and evaluation of several critiques of multiculturalism;

c) Situate the activities of Hellenic-Canadian Secular Organizations within the multicultural framework.

1. Definition, Aims, and Dimensions of Multiculturalism

The definition of the term multiculturalism is as convoluted and chaotic as that of terms such as culture, race and ethnicity. Multiculturalism means different things to different people. This confusion necessitates a simplified start. The term, like most others, is historically specific; it has different meanings in different places and at different times. Here it is understood as an ideology, based on Canadian social reality, that gives rise to sets of economic, political and social practices, which in turn define boundaries and set limits to ethnic and 'racial' group relations in order to either maintain 'social order' or manage social change (Liodakis and Satzewich, in Samuelson and Antony, 1998).

Four analytically distinct but interdependent dimensions of multiculturalism are discernible: a) it is a demographic reality; b) it is part of pluralist ideology; c) it is a set of government policies and accompanying programmes; d) it is a terrain of struggle among groups for access to economic and political resources (Fleras and Elliott, 1994:325).

A. Multiculturalism is a Canadian Demographic Reality.

The Canadian population comprises members from many cultural groups, often mistaken for or equated with ethnic groups.[1] Canadian society, of course, has never been culturally (or ethnically) homogeneous. It might have appeared or been presented as such because of the British and/or French dominance.[2] Until the introduction of the 1971 policy, Canada was *de facto* multicultural, but not *de jure*, because of the state's active promotion of cultural conformity to British and/or French dominant norms (Bolaria and Li, 1988, Li, 1988). Our multicultural demography, however, is not an exclusive characteristic of the Canadian state. Few, if any, countries of the world have ever been or are today culturally (or ethnically) homogeneous.

B. Multiculturalism is an Integral Part of Pluralist Ideology.
Pluralism provides an ideological "point of entry" into Canadian society. It argues that there is not a single group with enough power that dominates others politically, economically or culturally. Power is dispersed among several groups, albeit unevenly. In its cultural interpretation, pluralism includes a definition of what Canada is, as well as normative descriptions about how Canadian society ought to be. Canada is seen as a peaceful society consisting of many cultural groups (not of competing social classes, gender or other groups). It advocates tolerance (not acceptance) and promotion of our cultural diversity. Most importantly, cultural diversity is believed to be an effective mechanism for achieving "peaceful coexistence" in culturally and/or ethnically hetero-geneous societies. For Canada, cultural diversity is considered compatible with the goals of national unity and socio-economic progress (Fleras and Elliott, 1996:321, 326).

A constituent part of pluralist ideology, and a basic principle of multiculturalism, is cultural relativism. Contrary to ethnocentrism, it holds that we should not evaluate other cultures by standards of our own. Instead, we should recognize the right of individuals and groups to self-identification and promotion of their own culture, regardless of cultural distance. In other words, everyone should mind his/her own cultural business.

C. Multiculturalism is a Set of Government Policies and Accompanying Programmes.
It is a somewhat recent activity of the Canadian state and seeks to transform the ideology of multiculturalism into concrete forms of economic, political and social intervention and organization. Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1970), entitled *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, brought to the fore the arguments of some non-British, non-French groups. Several "other ethnic" lobbies (especially the Ukrainian and German) argued successfully that their languages and cultures had made valuable contributions to Canada.[3] Their preservation and promotion, therefore, was consistent with national goals. Two years later, on October 8, 1971, then Liberal Prime Minister P. E. Trudeau officially announced in the House of Commons the introduction of the policy.

The pronounced aims of the multicultural policy were the following: The federal government would support all of Canada's cultures and seek to assist the development of those cultural groups that had demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, as well as a clear need for assistance;

2. The government would assist all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society;

3. The government would promote creative encounters and interchange among Canadian cultural groups in the interests of national unity;

4. The government would continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's two official languages, in order to become full participants in Canadian society (Hawkins, 1989:220).

According to Fleras and Elliott (1996:328-334), three stages of development are distinguishable: the folkloric (1971-1980), the institutional (1981-1990) and the civic (1990-present). Each stage of development has somewhat different aims and uses different corresponding means to achieve its stated goals. Each stage has, then, different associate meanings.

Folkloric multiculturalism's predilection for "song and dance" activities of cultural groups placed emphasis on "celebrating our differences", that is, on the idea that cultural diversity was in the heart of Canadian identity. The years of Anglo-conformity were behind us. God, King and the Empire could no longer be the cultural imperative of all Canadians. All cultures were seen as equal, all contributing to the Canadian mosaic. We had to move away from the "two founding nations" cultural model, and move towards a bilingual but multicultural vision that included "the third force" of non-British and non-French ethno-cultural groups. Culture had become an issue of personal choice; it should not be imposed by the state. Individuals were supposedly protected against any discrimination arising form their cultural "choices", and were strongly encouraged to cultivate and develop them. They were also expected to fully participate in all aspects of Canadian life (Fleras and Elliott, 1996:331).

Durin the 1980s, multiculturalism became institutionalized. In fact by 1988, the conservative government had passed the Multiculturalism Act, another Canadian original. This legal framework raised multiculturalism to the same plane as bilingualism. The Constitution (1982) and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1985) were to be interpreted in a manner consistent with the notion of multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. In addition, multiculturalism was increasingly cast in economic dimensions. The neo-conservative government legitimized the Multiculturalism Act (1988) not only on pluralist ideological grounds, but also in terms of its potential economic advantages. This market-driven approach understood multiculturalism as being very beneficial to our economy. In Richardian terms, Canada's plethora of cultures and languages would lead to increased international

trade and improve its comparative advantage *vis-à-vis* our supposedly unilingual and monocultural competition in the global economy. Shifts in the traditional sources of immigration to Canada from European to "Third World" countries hastened the resurgence of racist sentiments, supposedly stemming from "apparent drastic changes" of Canada's "character". Consequently, explicit concerns over "race" relations appeared in the policy content of multiculturalism. Emphasis was also put on racism and discrimination, not only on "cultural barriers". People's physiognomic characteristics were now added to the list of obstacles to full participation in Canadian society (Kobayashi, 1992).

In the 1990s, a third stage of policy development has arisen. Civic multiculturalism is characterized by "society-building". It is considered as a more serious attempt to foster a common sense of identity and belonging, in order to facilitate the inclusion and participation of all Canadians in national institutions. It is an endeavour to associate the aims of folkloric and institutional multiculturalism with citizenship (Fleras and Elliott, 1996: 334-335). It found a temporary institutional roof in the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, under Canadian Heritage. This phase, however, is also linked with a withdrawal from programmes associated with folkloric multiculturalism.

D. The fourth Dimension of Multiculturalism is Related to the Third.

As do most government policies do, multiculturalism demarcates a field of struggle. It is not located outside the bounds of conflictual forms of social and political action, but rather forms a contested terrain and a process of competition among various groups (e.g., political parties, cultural, ethnic) for access to and control of economic, political and ideological resources.

Overall multiculturalism can be considered as a product of this struggle. Its emergence was a response to political pressure exerted upon the federal government by the "third force". It was not granted; it was "earned". The policy, however, was based upon ulterior motives. The Liberals introduced it in order to capture the increasingly large non-British, non-French vote in Canada (Hawkins, 1989:218). It was also a strategy to diminish the weight of native claims for self-government by reducing native peoples to cultural groups, as well as to undermine some of French Canada's claims to equality in English Canada and/or Quebec's demands for political autonomy (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992). An additional example of struggle is the competition among "other ethnic groups" for self-identification and government funding for some of their activities.

2. Criticisms of Multiculturalism

Few government policy fields have received greater criticism than multiculturalism. Early analyses exposed the policy's intrinsic incapacity to "deliver the goods" and to resolve the issues it set out to address. In realistic terms, an average of $30 million per annum is supposed to assist cultural groups in their quest for self-identification and development; promote cultural interchanges with other groups; establish and maintain official language(s) acquisition programmes; fight racism and discrimination, and remove vaguely-defined cultural barriers to social equality and to full participation in all aspects of Canadian life. But how far could $30 million go? In the following paragraphs, five criticisms will be given and contextualized politically. Space considerations do not allow a more extensive presentation and evaluation.

A. Multiculturalism Helps Reproduce Stereotypes of Ethnic Groups.

Some commentators contend that multiculturalism leads inevitably to the hardening and intensification of ethnic and "racial" stereotypes (Bissoondath, 1994). "Caravans" and "folkfests" do not promote serious cultural exchanges; they are, instead, superficial expressions of devalued culture. They trivialize and commodify culture. Culture, thus, has become folklore. It is "a thing that can be displayed, performed, admired, bought, sold or forgotten" (Bissoondath, 1994:83). Multiculturalism places individuals into preconceived stereotypes. It accentuates what people are, not who they are. The outcome of multiculturalism is a country of cultural hybrids (Bissoondath, 1994:224). We are of so many colours, that we are essentially colourless (Bissoondath, 1994: 73).

There is no evidence to suggest that any serious cultural interchange does indeed take place among ethno-cultural groups. More importantly, Bissoondath's observations are accurate. Whatever exchanges do occur, they may be found in "Caravan" settings and are usually limited to ethnic food, costumes and dance. Superficial, folkloric exchanges cannot and will not solve the problems of racism and discrimination, nor will they achieve any of the proclaimed aims of the policy.

B. Multiculturalism Undermines Social Cohesion and Canadian Unity.

Cultural relativism, claims Bibby (1990), undermines Canadian values and social cohesion. By attempting to promote peaceful coexistence based on cultural relativism, we have in fact ended up promoting the breakdown of group life. Excessive individualism and cultural relativism have lead to the construction of "mosaics within mosaics" (Bibby, 1990:7-8), so that we have no "team spirit", no social spirit. We confuse choice with the best, and we give everything an "A" (Bibby, 1990:98, 176). We have moved away from the collectivism that characterized Canadian life in the 1950s

and now lack a sense of community (Bibby, 1990:15). Truth, which transcends cultures and individuals, does not count anymore. It has been replaced by personal viewpoints (1990:2), masked under the rubric of cultural choices. Furthermore, multiculturalism is vague. It does not offer an ultimate vision of the kind of society it hopes to create (Bissoondath, 1994:42). It has a myopic view of the present that ignores the future (Bissoondath, 1994:44).

Certain federal political parties have presented more extreme versions of the above argument. The Reform Party of Canada, for example, has called for the abolition of the policy of multiculturalism and the Multicultural Department altogether. This Reform policy position is based on the premise that the state has no place in promoting cultural diversity; the latter is a matter of private choice. Instead, it is the obligation of the Federal government to, first, preserve and promote our "national" culture, and second, to encourage ethnic cultures to integrate into it (Reform Party of Canada, in Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:373).

Affected by the relative electoral success of Reform, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, while in power, passed in 1991 a number of similar resolutions that also called for the abandonment of the policy. The Federal government should, instead, "try to foster a common national identity for the people living together in harmony as equal citizens, loyal to the Canadian ideal" (Progressive-Conservative Party of Canada, in Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:374, emphasis mine). The governing PCs were found in the awkward position of having to defend their own policy to their own members. Admitting indirectly that the PC party did not have a strong "ethnic" electoral base, Gerry Weiner, heritage minister at the time, attributed the party resolution to the under-representation of minorities in the body of PC delegates. Interestingly enough, no one mentioned the lack of "ethnic" representation in the body of delegates with respect to other resolutions they passed on the economy, international relations, human rights, education, etc. This is another example of the way political parties conceptualize ethnicity and multiculturalism. "Ethnics", in their eyes, do not or should not have opinions on matters that are not purely "ethnic". Multiculturalism is conceived in this light.

Most of the above critics share the same assumptions and vision for Canadian society. They imply that the policy of multiculturalism is somehow favouring the "third force" at the expense of the "founding nations", and that multiculturalism poses a threat to Canadian national unity. This is an assimilationist and politically regressive position, disguised as "Canadianism". Notice that supporters of these ideas are always silent or persistently vague in explicating what constitutes Canadian culture, Canadian identity, Canadian values, "our national

character", or the Canadian "ideal". It is unclear into what "other ethnic" subcultures or counter cultures are supposed to integrate. Note that most of the time they mean Anglo-tradition but they do not say it outright. It is not explicit in their analyses what constitutes "the truth", or "the best", who defines it, whose community it is, and whose interests it serves. As political economists keep reminding us, the North American Free Trade Agreement and our concomitant economic, political and cultural merger with the USA present far greater threats to Canadian unity and social cohesion than multiculturalism. Changes in "Canadian" culture are more attributable to American influence than to the arrival of new immigrants from the "Third World" or cultural relativism.

Furthermore, cultural pluralism does not mean cultural parity, nor does it necessarily lead to relativism. Multiculturalism does not encourage an "everything goes" mentality; it operates within limits. It "rejects any customs that violate Canadian laws, interfere with the rights of others, offend the moral sensibilities of most Canadians or disturb central institutions or core values" (Fleras and Elliott, 1994: 354). It is reasonable to suggest that all of the above represent dominant, not subordinate cultural norms and mores. It is not surprising, then, that certain cultural practices prevalent in other parts of the world, such as female genital mutilation, presumably part of the cultural heritage of some (culturally subordinate) Canadians, are illegal in Canada precisely because they violate the human rights of young women, and offend dominant notions of equality and human integrity.[4]

C. Multiculturalism Ghettoizes Ethnic Groups.

It is not surprising that the Liberal Party of Canada, which first implemented both a non-discriminatory immigration policy and the policy of multiculturalism, has kept a grip on most of the "ethnic" vote. What is surprising, however, is that even within its ranks, influential critiques of multiculturalism emerged in the early 1990s. Some Liberal Members of Parliament of "ethnic" backgrounds have argued that the policy of multiculturalism promotes the ghettoization of Canada's ethnic communities and treats hyphenated Canadians as second class citizens. Ethnic communities, it appears, are so busy preserving and promoting their own culture that they have no time, resources or incentives in participating in national institutions.

John Nunziata, then Liberal MP, was intensely vocal in opposing multiculturalism.[5] He argued that it no longer served a constructive purpose in Canadian society. Citing the case of Japanese-Canadians who were interned and saw their property confiscated during WW II, Nunziata pointed out that the Department of Multiculturalism handled the complaints and not the Department of Justice. He considered that a justice issue treated as an ethic one was a harmful consequence of the policy.

Subsequently, at the 1992 Liberal Party convention some of these criticisms were incorporated into the campaign platform. Delegates called for a single cultural policy and a single Department of Culture and Communications (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:376). When the party resumed power in 1993, it moved quickly in this direction. There was a shift in favour of society-building, civic multiculturalism that promoted "citizenship", and the Ministry of Canadian Heritage was established. Multiculturalism was once more relegated to a branch of a larger federal department. This movement towards civic multiculturalism, however, has yet to bear fruit. Large segments of ethnic communities are still under-represented in Canadian political institutions and clustered in low-paying jobs (Li, 1988). Multiculturalism has not proved to be a social panacea.

D. Multiculturalism Undermines the Special Claims of Francophones and Native People.

Some critics have suggested that the policy of multiculturalism undermines the legitimacy of Quebec nationalism, by reducing the Quebec factor to an ethnic phenomenon (Bissondath, 1994:40, 62). Quebec nationalists would prefer to do business with English Canada in the bilingual and bicultural setting. Being a "founding nation" makes Quebec distinct. Multiculturalism, the critics argue, separates culture and language. It rejects the "two founding nations" thesis and thus minoritizes Francophones. It is a strategy to "buy" allophone votes in Quebec, and the hostility of the Parti Quebecois towards the federal policy must be understood in this light (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:367-368).

Reacting to the federal policy, Quebec governments launched policies of "cultural convergence" (Parti Quebecois) and of interculturalism (Bourassa's Liberals), which recognized the existence of cultural diversity within Quebec, but it did not reduce Quebec's "national" question to an ethnic phenomenon. It discouraged the persistence of ethnic enclaves and linguistic assimilation of immigrants to the English language (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:368). As various language laws illustrate, however, Quebec policies also separate the culture of immigrants from their own languages. In this respect, they are no different from "assimilationist" Federal government policies.

Many native people and their representative organizations have expressed similar criticisms and have similar reservations about multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, they insist, reduces them to the status of "just another minority", undermining thus their self-government aspirations (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:367). Their rights are special and unique, since they were the first residents of Canada; hence their preferred name, First Nations. They are not merely part of a pluralist society; they are distinct peoples. They favour negotiating their future within a framework that recognizes their special status instead of multiculturalism, which endangers their survival (Fleras and Elliott, 1996:343).

E. Multiculturalism Depoliticizes and Obfuscates Social Inequality.

Multiculturalism, with its early emphasis on "song and dance" activities, did little to challenge the British and/or French dominance in the political, economic and cultural realms (Roberts and Clifton, 1982; Lewycky, 1992). It created the impression of departure from the "two founding nations" interpretation of Canadian society without altering the fundamental bases of specific social inequalities, seemingly predicated upon our cultural and/or ethnic diversity (Bolaria and Li, 1988, Moodley, 1983).

Obviously the policy of multiculturalism understands culture and ethnicity as being synonymous. The nature of the activities and the representation of cultural groups are always described by ethnic adjectives. Of course this is a problematic postulation (Li, 1990:8-11). As mentioned earlier, even within ethnically homogeneous societies there always exist subordinate cultural norms, subcultures and countercultures. Multiculturalism homogenizes, ethnicizes and marginalizes certain populations. It is not surprising that the adjective "ethnic" is usually reserved for non-British, non-French groups. As Merhgi writes, "the tendency to perceive someone as 'ethnic' increases with how different that person is from the social, cultural and racial norms of dominant groups" (Merhgi, in Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992:377)

Multiculturalism not only understands culture(s) as being monolithic and unitary, but is also projects a mono-dimensional image of Canadian society that treats cultural groups as frozen-in-time "entities" or primordial "substances". Cultures, of course, cannot be abstracted from the social, economic and political contexts in which they develop (Harris, 1979:155, Satzewich, in Bolaria and Li, 1994:89). Barriers to full participation in national institutions, should then be attributable not only to ethno-cultural differences, but also to the nature of the Canadian class structure, processes of class formation, patriarchal ideologies and practices.

Multiculturalism is a state strategy for legitimizing the existing social order. By emphasizing linguistic and cultural barriers to social equality, the policy conceals other perhaps more fundamental sources of social inequalities based on people's property rights, position in the labour market, education, gender and age. Canadian society is definitely characterized by a clear ethnically and gender-based class hierarchy and struggle, which is not addressed by multiculturalism (Stasiulis, 1980:34). Shifting competition to the "cultural" realm diffuses the struggle against capitalism and patriarchy.

Using the terminology of political economy, multiculturalism is part of capitalist class hegemony. The state and the hegemonic block have not only the ability to impose their "world view" on subordinate groups, but,

also, the ability to articulate, project, and often impose on people different conceptions of social reality, in ways that neutralize their potential antagonisms (Stasiulis, 1980:34-37). Instead of portraying Canadian society as divided along antagonistic class and gender lines, multiculturalism paints a picture of society as a "community of communities" in which the only, or most important cleavages are cultural and/or linguistic. If we "learn to live with each other", everything will be fine.

Political economists have also argued that multiculturalism involves tactics of *co-optation*: the state, by funding specific activities of ethnic organizations or by appointing community leaders, regulates their actions and keeps them in line (Ng, 1988). What is then the nature of the activities of HCSOs, and how do they fit in the framework of multiculturalism? In the following pages we will explore these issues, keeping in mind the preceding critiques.

3. The Activities of HCSOs in the Context of Multiculturalism.

The final objective of this paper is to situate the activities of HCSOs within the framework of multiculturalism. This section examines which of their activities are consonant with the pronounced aims of multicultura-lism and which are not. It explores the issue in light of the criticisms of multiculturalism presented above while attempting to explain why and how some of these activities a) limit the scope of both material and symbolic services provided to the members of HCSOs, and b) hinder the genuine understanding of some aspects of Hellenic culture that transcend prevalent folkloric interpretations.

Today, the Greek-Canadian community as a whole exhibits:
• high levels of institutional completeness (Chimbos, 1980, Gavaki, 1983);
• high rates of Greek language retention, urbanization, endogamy and residential segregation (Herberg, 1989: 52, 54-55, 108-109, 138);
• below average educational attainment and income levels, and a non-typical class structure (Li, 1988:76, 78, 82, 90, 92, 102, 110, 116).

Greek-Canadians are over-represented in the classes of workers, petty bourgeoisie and employers, but under-represented in the professional and managerial categories (Li, 1988:90, 92).

In terms of political organization, an examination of the structure of Greek community organizations immediately reveals similarities to Breton's federated model (1991). Despite the intra-ethnic organizational division into religious and secular components (Chimbos, 1980, 1986) and the segmentation of HCSOs, the latter exhibit patterns of inter-organizational cooperation and communication. Note that HCSOs refer to civic organizations of Greek-Canadians that are independent of the

Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (GOC). Their leadership is not appointed or approved by the GOC, but is democratically elected directly from their membership. They conduct their affairs according to their own by-laws, without adhering to the Uniform Parish Regulations of the GOC. Organizations of this kind are: a) local associations (LAs) such as the Cretans' Association of Toronto or the Association of Laconians in Toronto; b) broader, more inclusive community organizations (ICOs) like the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto, Inc., and that of Montreal, and c) umbrella organizations (UOs) such as the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario or the Hellenic-Canadian Congress of Canada (HCCC). Associations of professionals like doctors, lawyers or business-people are not included in my definition of HCSOs. The membership of LAs and ICOs consists of individuals, whereas UOs represent other, lower level organizations. Their organizational structure resembles a pyramid, with a large number of LAs on the bottom, and a smaller number of Province- and Canada-wide UOs on the top.

Unfortunately, with the notable exception of Chimbos (1980, 1986) and in french Constantinides (1983, 1993), few studies on HCSOs have been conducted. Needless to say that scientific research in this area remains almost non-existent. The analysis that follows is primarily based on the author's current research on the social composition of the leadership of HCSOs, and the nature of services they offer to their members. All of these organizations are political entities. They are "encapsulated political systems" embedded in the larger Canadian sociopolitical and economic conditions. They have both "external" and domestic affairs and provide material and symbolic services to their members (Breton, 1991:3). The domestic affairs of ethnic community organizations, such as HCSOs, ordinarily include the provision of material services (e.g., accommodating new immigrants and the elderly), as well as symbolic services such as activities that pertain to the maintenance and development of the group's (dominant) cultural norms and values. Examples of such activities are celebrations of historical events and heroes, language instruction, dances and theatrical performances, musical concerts, etc. The external affairs of ethnic community organizations relate to a) matters of government policies on immigration, multiculturalism, public education, human rights, the economy, etc., b) issues of discrimination and prejudice, c) relations with broader societal institutions (e.g., main-stream mass media, unions, the police), and d) relations with the country of origin and its representatives (Breton, 1991:3).

Historically, the provision of both material and symbolic services by HCSOs to their members predates both the policy and the ideology of multiculturalism in Canada. As Chimbos (1980, 1986) has shown, even

during the years of Anglo-conformity, HCSOs provided Greek language instruction, assisted new Greek immigrants to Canada, fought against prejudice and discrimination, struggled to maintain elements of Hellenic culture in Canada, and to transmit them to new generations. Multiculturalism then is not a prerequisite for community action in these areas. Many ethnic communities, including ours, in countries without an official policy of multiculturalism, e.g., Germany, France, South Africa, Argentina, are engaged in similar activities. The extent to which they are successful remains, of course, another (not-well-researched) matter.

The policy and ideology of multiculturalism, however, do offer a definitely better interpretation of Canadian society than that of the "two founding nations" and yields political opportunities for minorities (Kallen, 1995). As Abu-Laban and Stasiulis suggest (1992:381), it allows "for a more inclusionary definition or discourse about membership in the Canadian political community that grows in importance" now that Canada is becoming an even more diverse society. Multiculturalism provides additional ideological legitimacy for the provision of the services mentioned above. Indeed, it often compels various levels of government to assist financially ethnic community organizations like the HCSOs, as indicated by the funding for social programmes and international language instruction, reducing thus the community's need to rely exclusively on its own, often insufficient funds (Rosenberg and Jedwab, 1992:283).

4. Two out of Four ain't Bad. But is it Enough?

Discerning students of multiculturalism question the relationship between the pronounced aims of the policy and the activities of ethno-cultural groups. In the case of HCSOs, one might ask if their activities are compatible with the aims of the policy. Let us say that HCSOs, for reasons of their own and not in the name of national unity, have been actively promoting only two of the four aims of the policy of multiculturalism, namely: a) the government's support for official language(s) acquisition programmes, and b) the maintenance and of Hellenic culture and identity. Furthermore, the manner in which HCSOs have been advancing the above policy objectives contradicts the objectives of the other two, namely a) overcoming "cultural" barriers to full participation in Canadian society, and b) promoting creative encounters and interchange among Canadian cultural groups in the interests of national unity.

During the years of extensive immigration from Greece to Canada (late 1950s-mid 1970s), numerous LAs and ICOs were indeed actively involved and assisting new immigrants in overcoming "cultural shock" and adapting to Canada's environment. Remember that UOs are a recent

phenomenon. The LAs and ICOs were providing English or French language instruction services, arranging employment or training opportunities, and struggling to maintain Hellenic identity and culture (Chimbos, 1986:212). Since the late 1970s-early 1980s, however, the flow of new immigrants from Greece has been steadily dwindling. Statistics Canada reports show that in the 1990s, the numbers have become negligible. In 1991-1992, 517 people from Greece immigrated to Canada, and in 1995-1996 only 287 (Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Matrix 2).

Of course, this reality is reflected in the nature and scope of the activities of HCSOs. Today, very few (if any) HCSOs participate in or offer official language acquisition programmes. The activities of HCSOs and most of the material and symbolic services they provide to their members are geared exclusively towards the maintenance of Hellenic culture and language and their transmission to new generations of Greek-Canadians. My contention is, however, that their efforts are not based upon some vaguely defined "urgency" to contribute to "Canada" or to "Canadian unity", as the policy of multiculturalism prescribes. The primary reasons for the mobilization of HCSOs are related to another "urgency", that of the seemingly unavoidable assimilation of new Greek-Canadians to "Canadian" culture, or fears thereof. These fears are based upon some apparent and some real dangers: the drastically shrinking numbers of new Greek immigrants, the rising rates of exogamy, the steady decline in the number of students attending Greek language programmes, and the alarmingly low participation and representation rates of second and third generation Greek-Canadians in the membership and leadership positions of HCSOs.

A. Type and Scope of the Activities of HCSOs.

There exists an organizational "division of labour" among HCSOs, slthough it is not always clearly defined who does what and why. One could argue that LAs are primarily involved in the maintenance of local and regional aspects of Hellenic culture, achieved through activities that emphasize the particularity and distinctiveness of the customs, traditions and history of a specific area of Greece. For example, the Cretans' Association of Toronto "Cnossos" is active in engaging and immersing Greek-Canadians of Cretan origin in traditional Cretan dances, costumes, customs, food and history. Its annual dances commemorate important regional historical events and holidays specific to Crete, e.g., the Arkadi Holocaust, the Battle of Crete, Venizelos's memorial, not "national" ones e.g., the 1821 Revolution, October 28, 1940. The Association does, however, participate in the respective commemorative activities of ICOs. It does not offer Greek language instruction, although it did for a short period in the late 1970s-early 1980s, or social services. This is the responsibility of ICOs.

ICOs usually cover broader areas of activities that transcend the particularities and distinctiveness of LAs. They offer both material and symbolic services of Greek national, not regional features. The primary objective of ICOs is the maintenance and promotion of Hellenic culture, language and identity, as well as the protection and promotion of the so-called "national interests" of their members, who come from all over Greece, but reside in a big Canadian urban centre. For example, the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Inc., in its day-to-day operations, offers Greek language instruction, lessons of what it considers national (not regional) dances, Greek theatre lessons, social services (to all Greek-Canadians irrespective of regional origin), and religious services (for financial reasons).[6] It honours and celebrates national Greek holidays by organizing parades, holding memorial services, or presenting lectures, and generally, it strives to construct what is frequently called "Greek national consciousness".

UOs have a somewhat different mission. Because their membership consists of other organizations (not of individuals), and their raison d'étre is mainly the political representation of Greek-Canadians to various levels of Canadian and Greek governments, they are not actively involved, on a daily basis, in issues of Greek education, culture, identity maintenance, and the like. They are, of course, attentive to such issues. Their engagement, however, remains at the strategic or policy formation level, not at the actual implementation or service delivery level. The Hellenic-Canadian Congress of Canada (HCCC) represents all Greek-Canadians, from all regions of Greece, residing in all of Canada. It has, for example, a legitimate stake in the quality of Greek education in Canada, but does not have its own language schools. It is vigilant in promoting the interests of Greek-Canadian retirees, but does not offer social services. The HCCC ordinarily confronts issues that relate to relations between the Canadian and Greek states, and Greek national issues such as the problem of Cyprus, Greek-Turkish relations, Canadian-Turkish relations, and the so-called Macedonian issue. But these activities exemplify only partially what Breton has termed the "external affairs" of ethnic communities (Breton, 1991:3). They are restricted to Greek "national" issues and are rarely concerned with wider Canadian society issues. As will be shown below, this is a problematic situation.

B. The Effects of the Activities and Services Provided by HCSOs.

A prefatory glance at the activities of HCSOs might indicate that they are not only typical of the activities of other ethnic communities, but also the correct course of action for achieving their goals. As they relate to the critiques of the policy and the ideology of multiculturalism, however, a more in-depth examination reveals that the folklorism which

characterizes our domestic affairs, coupled with the "ethnicization" of the external affairs of HCSOs, lead inevitably to the ghettoization of the Greek community that creates and reproduces social rather than "cultural" barriers to full participation in Canadian political and social institutions and/or processes.

In their efforts to maintain and promote Hellenic culture and identity, HCSOs make crucial omissions and errors in the way they understand and present Hellenic culture, both to their members and to members of Canadian society at large. HCSOs, in their quest for homogenizing a Greek-Canadian population of diverse regional, educational, class, gender, linguistic, residential and generational characteristics, expose and promote only a folkloric version of Hellenic culture. But as suggested earlier, culture is not synonymous with ethnicity, let alone folklore. Since every culture remains anchored in specific social, economic and political conditions, it varies according to time and place, the nature of the socialization of individuals, their class place, gender.[7]. HCSOs, however, are reproducing the devaluation of that which multiculturalism claims to protect and promote. Most of the activities of HCSOs that are supposedly promoting Hellenic culture have folkloric characteristics with a retrograde perspective; as a result, Hellenic culture is usually presented as primordial, monolithic and quaint.

To use Bissoondath's words, our dances and festivals are full of "superficial expressions of devalued culture". They are simplifying, (self) stereotyping,[8] and thus 'essentializing' Hellenic culture. Although appealing to and fostering national pride, and having the homogenizing effects necessary for forging "national consciousness", such dances or festivals do not and cannot capture or represent appropriately modern aspects of Hellenic culture. Even in Greek language and heritage instruction schools, new generation Greek-Canadians learn and often internalize "half the story", so to speak. As Bissoondath (1994) poignantly remarks, not every Greek is a "jolly Zorba". Hellenic culture is not and should not be merely confined to wine, souvlaki and tsamiko dances. It also encompasses dialogue, debate, disagreement, modern as well as ancient Greek art, cinema, theatre, philosophy, literature and poetry. Unfortunately, the emphasis of HCSOs on folkloric activities reduces culture to a substance or "a thing" that can be displayed, performed, admired or detested, remembered or forgotten (Bissondath, 1994:83); it does not perceive or celebrate it as a dynamic process that can be practiced, developed, experienced or lived.

A second observation pertains to the lack of institutionalized dialogue within our own community about who we are as Greek-Canadians, or who *we* should be. In the process of self-definition, *we*, unavoidably, often create a 'them' (non-Greek-Canadians) versus 'us' (Greek-Canadians)

attitude, hoping that this distinction will solidify our community and will avert its assimilation to the Canadian mainstream. No one seems to realize that the process of self-identification is inexorably relational: *who-we-are* is necessarily defined in relation to others, and to *what- or who-we-are-not*. A better understanding of other cultures promotes an improved understanding of our own. But no serious cultural exchanges with other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada take place. The activities of HCSOs do not promote a better understanding of our own culture in relation to others. They are not even conducive to a better understanding of cultural differences between different historical epochs, within Greece or in other countries where people of Hellenic descent reside.

Regarding the activities of ICOs and UOs, it can be argued that since they represent the vast majority of Greek-Canadians, the onus to manage responsibly the aforementioned "external affairs" of our community is placed squarely upon them. As a group, Greek-Canadians are relatively active in Canadian politics. We consistently show high levels of voter turnout and have moderate numbers of candidates for municipal, provincial and federal elections (associated mostly with the Liberal Party). Recently, Canadians sent three elected representatives of Hellenic descent to the House of Commons . Nonetheless, most of the actions of ICOs and UOs are concentrated in issues specific to so-called Greek-Canadian interests. Unfortunately, ICOs and UOs conceive these interests in purely "ethnic" terms. They are exclusively concerned with "national" problems particular to Greek-Canadians, not with all problems of Canadian society. Issues of the Canadian economy, social justice, the educational system, the on going constitutional debate, gender or native issues are not considered relevant to "ethnic" communities and their organizations. ICOs and UOs may protest against the Canadian government's selling of military airplanes or Candu reactors to Turkey, but not against government spending cuts to education, health care or other social services that affect large segments of the Greek-Canadian population. The latter are not considered Greek "ethnic" problems. No one suggests discarding or abandoning the former activities in favour of the latter. The point is that Greek lobby or interest groups should extend our actions to cover all issues of Canadian society. ICOs and UOs must move beyond the narrow confines of ethnic politics into the broader arena of Canadian politics, part of which they no doubt are.

In addition, ICOs and UOs do not cooperate on a regular basis with the political organizations of other ethnic communities in order to exert greater pressure to Canadian governments on all Canadian issues. With the exception of *ad hoc* alliances with, for example, Jewish- and Italian-Canadian organizations on Constitutional issues in the 1980s and 1990s, and recently with Serbian- and Armenian-Canadian groups on Canadian

foreign policy issues (all of which took place only at the élite leadership level), no grassroots consultation and cooperation takes place. Moreover, we have not learned from the experiences and activities of other ethnic community organizations, like the ones just mentioned. For instance, the Canadian Jewish Congress makes regular submissions to various levels of Canadian government and Royal Commissions of Inquiry on all Canadian issues, including cuts to unemployment insurance or health benefits, proposed changes in the application procedures for immigration to Canada, human rights violations, racism, economic policies, the educational system, and language laws.

A final point concerns the provision of various types of social services by ICOs. Historically, the leadership of HCSOs has tended to overlook the community need for social services and to focus instead upon cultural and educational activities (Stathopoulos, 1971, in Rosenberg and Jedwab, 1992:281-282). The latter are "national consciousness-building" initiatives, whereas the former do not contribute to this process. But even in the provision of social services, HCSOs pay attention to issues of pensions, translation and interpretation, and ignore larger social issues of day care, re-training, community employment programmes, social assistance and the like, that concern larger segments of the Greek-Canadian population. Therefore, although curious, this phenomenon is not accidental. The leadership of HCSOs consists primarily of first-generation, well-educated male professionals or small employers. They are our "ethnic brokers". They are part of the so-called "minority circuit" (Amit-Talai, in Amit-Talai and Knowles, 1996:89-114), and often have their own agendas and interests, which do not always correspond with those of other segments of the community. More importantly for our analysis, their understanding of Canadian society, culture and "cultural" barriers, or ethnicity and the "ethnic interest", is consistent with the basic ideological tenets of folkloric multiculturalism. For the HCSOs leaders, it seems, civic multiculturalism begins with citizenship preparation classes and ends when funding is either cut or runs out.

5. Suggestions on What Is to Be Done.

If these are the problems facing HCSOs, what are the solutions? How could we maintain our culture and language and still fully participate in Canadian institutions? There is no simple answer to such difficult questions. The substantial financial and human resources required for the undertaking of such monumental task are not always available. What is available, often is not fully utilized. I believe, however, that a new, even if modest beginning is possible provided that HCSOs, in the immediate future, do the following:

a) Conceptualize and approach Greek-Canadians, not as a socially unitary or homogeneous group, but as one comprising people of different regional, educational, linguistic, class, gender and generational characteristics, often with different and even opposing needs and interests.

b) Having recognized this diversity, place emphasis on the immediate needs of second and third generation Greek-Canadians and recruit them in their membership and in leadership positions.

c) Transform their activities and fashion the material and symbolic services they provide to their members according to their specific generational, linguistic, educational, cultural, social and political needs.

d) Move away from folkloric multiculturalism incrementally, embrace the progressive elements of civic multiculturalism, expand their cultural activities to include fresh elements of Hellenic culture, and actively promote to the new generation Greek-Canadians and the Canadian public at large modern Greek art, literature and poetry, cinema, theatre, etc.

e) Focus on the social, economic and political barriers preventing large numbers of Greek-Canadians from fully participating in all aspects of Canadian life, and jettison the rhetoric and fib of so-called "cultural" barriers.

f) Seek cultural interchanges and the establishment of broader and long-lasting political alliances with other ethnic communities, and other non-ethnic groups and/or institutions with similar goals and interests.

g) Institutionalize political lobbying at the ICOs and UOs levels, not only on matters pertaining to "Greek-Canadian" issues but also on all conceivable economic, political, social and cultural matters relevant to the lives of all Canadian citizens.

Such small but imperative steps will bear fruits eventually. First, by re-aligning priorities and by focusing on youth, HCSOs can rejuvenate both their membership and leadership. They can no longer afford to be primarily concerned with first generation Greek-Canadians. Instead of setting up a second Hellenic Home for the Aged in Toronto, they could, for instance, invest in libraries, youth and cultural centres, or in better educational programmes and facilities that will bring second and third generation Canadians of Hellenic descent closer to HCSOs.

The promotion of more elements of modern Hellenic culture and the encouragement of local productions by HCSOs can facilitate the development and flourishing of Greek-Canadian culture that could be not simply "tolerated", but also understood and accepted into the Canadian mainstream. By building bridges to other ethnic communities and by forging political alliances with ethnic and non-ethnic political and social organizations, and/or institutions with similar concerns (as we do with the

United Way/Centraide on issues of social services), HCSOs will demonstrate a commitment to the progressive elements of civic multiculturalism, and will simultaneously invalidate and de-legitimate folkloric multiculturalism. Speaking out on all Canadian economic, political and social issues will attest to the HCSOs' engagement and commitment to full participation in the affairs of the country whose passport we carry. Then, perhaps, its governments might take our "ethnic" concerns a bit more seriously.

NOTES

1. The link between culture and ethnicity is, as Li (1990:9) puts it, "tenuous at best". Today there is no a one to one correspondence between people, culture and nation. People of an apparent common origin do not necessarily share a uniform culture. Several subcultures and countercultures are always found within the same social formation.

2. There exists a serious language problem when using ethnic adjectives to describe whole populations. These adjectives have both a geographical and an ethnic connotation. For example, the terms English, French, Greek, etc. are often confusing when used without qualification or out of context. The words English, French, Greek, etc. may refer to people who come from the corresponding geographical areas, but may also refer to English, French and Greek ethnicity. Ethnic adjectives homogenize the population to which they refer. Not all English people, however, have the same culture. I, for example, when referring to the cultural dominance of the English and the French in Canada, recognize that there is not a single, homogeneous, monolithic or static English or French culture imposed upon weaker groups. Unless otherwise indicated, I use these terms to denote geographical origin as well as dominant, not subordinate cultural norms and practices. For instance, what was imposed on native groups in Canada was not the English or French working class counterculture of say collectivism and solidarity, but the dominant cultural views of the market, competition, private property, etc. Working class English and French people were not responsible for the colonization of Canada and the imposition of Anglo- and Franco-conformity (economic, political, cultural) on aboriginal people and other non-charter groups, although I do not deny that some of them might have benefited from it.

3. It is noteworthy that the Commission's mandate did not include an examination of the cultural contribution of native peoples.

4. See Statutes of Canada, Chapter 16, entitled "An Act to Amend the Criminal Code – child prostitution, child sex tourism, criminal harassment and female genital mutilation". This amendment received Royal Assent in April 1997 and came into force on May 26, 1997. The law links female genital mutilation to criminal harassment and regards it as a threat to the life, liberty and security of Canadian women.

5. John Nunziata ran and got elected to the House of Commons as an independent in 1993. Italian-Canadian members of his campaign staff vowed to "end the grip of Liberals on the Italian-Canadian vote".

6. This is a point of conflict and struggle between the HCSOs and the GOC. The Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Inc. owns and operates four Greek

Orthodox Churches, and employs the priests, who are, however, appointed by the GOC of Canada. The Greek Community pays a considerable sum of money (10% of gross receipts) to the GOC annually. Many community leaders have suggested that the Greek Community should "withdraw" from the provision of religious services, but the loss of such income sources would be devastating for the Greek Community.

7. Denis (in Li, 1990:174) cites Peter Archibald's argument that class differences in attitudes and behaviour vary more within ethnic groups than among them (1978:186-228). A similar proposition is applicable to gender group differences.

8. For a brief analysis of stereotypes see Driedger, 1996:267-271.

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