

Do you celebrate diversity (and mass immigration) or are you an unreconstructed knuckle-dragging bigot?

Conservative Member of Parliament Maxime Bernier boldly stepped into a sacred cow patty on August 12th. In a series of six tweets, he questioned Canada's ever-increasing diversity that he says will "divide us into little tribes" and bring "distrust, social conflict and potentially violence." He wasn't against diversity per se, but thought that promoting it ad infinitum would erode Canada's "core identity" and "destroy what makes it a great country." "Having people live among us who reject basic Western values such as freedom, equality, tolerance and openness doesn't make us strong," he tweeted, in direct contradiction to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's mantra that it is diversity itself that makes us strong.

Bernier's tweets about Trudeau's "extreme multiculturalism" predictably unleashed a barrage of criticism. Conservative MP Michelle Rempel, a vocal critic of Trudeau's response – or lack thereof – to the continuing influx of "irregular" border crossers, tried to sit on both sides of the fence. She said it was equally easy to say that "diversity is our strength" as it is "to infer Canada's pluralism has failed, if neither claim is backed up by data or policy."

It is indeed fortunate for Trudeau that he doesn't have to back up his oft-repeated slogan, "Diversity is our strength." Because while there is no sociology study (that I know of) to back up his mantra, there are plenty to refute it. Most famously, and much to his own chagrin, American sociologist Robert Putnam (*E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the 21st Century*; 2007) found that inhabitants of diverse communities were more likely to withdraw from their community, to volunteer less, to give less to char-

ity and work less on community projects, to vote less, and to spend more time in front of the TV. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam did not find that cities became more vibrant with more immigration, but that "the vibrancy of American civil society has notably declined over the past decade."

Drawing on 2006 census data, Australian Ernest Healy's 2007 study, *Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion in Melbourne*, supports Putnam's depressing conclusions. Focussing on volunteer work as a key indicator of social capital, Healy found that migrants from non-English speaking countries were less likely to volunteer than those from English-speaking countries and native-born Australians.

But this is Canada and we're different, right? Maybe not quite as much as we constantly flatter ourselves. As reported by Douglas Todd in the August 12, 2017, Vancouver Sun, an internal government report called *Evidence-based Levels and Mix: Absorptive Capacity*, obtained through an access to information request by Vancouver lawyer Richard Kurland, shows that Canada's "absorptive capacity" is being stretched to the limit by immigrants to Canada, many of whom are neither doing well economically nor integrating successfully. "Declining outcomes of recent immigrants have shown that integration is not automatic," says the report. The burgeoning number of "ethnic enclaves" (now at 260) reflects the preference of many immigrants to stick to their own kind and sometimes not even learn one of Canada's official languages. The report indicates that immigration officials are often in a fog about the effects of large-scale immigration to Canada. It says that there is "no comprehensive stock-taking on how Canadian

institutions and cities are adapting” to immigrants and other foreign nationals.

All of which would lead a reasonable leader to re-assess both Canada’s immigration policy and its promotion of multiculturalism. Indeed any reasonable person might ask, if diversity is our strength, why is it that with increasing diversity has come more crime and shootings in Canada’s cities, that we need ever more outreach and de-radicalization programs, that front-line employees such as social workers and police can never seem to get enough diversity training, and that the “climate of hate and fear” has allegedly risen so sharply that in March, 2017, the Liberal government passed Motion M-103 to fight “Systemic racism and religious discrimination” and in support of which it promised in June to disburse \$23 million over two years to multicultural programs? The aforementioned reasonable person might conclude that diversity is not so much “our strength” but “our agenda” and costs us a lot of money to boot. The question that arises is “*Cui bono?*”.

That same question could be asked with regard to the October, 2017, announcement by Trudeau’s

“Having people live among us who reject basic Western values such as freedom, equality, tolerance and openness doesn’t make us strong,” Bernier tweeted.

immigration minister Ahmed Hussen that Canada would increase its already high intake of immigrants to over 300,000 annually. There is no economic (and certainly no environmental!) justification for such an increase. My conclusion is that the beneficiaries are our industry captains and other merchants of growth who benefit from development, more mortgages and cheaper labour, and our politicians seeking to secure the ethnic vote. “Diversity is our strength” is a slogan intended to encourage working Canadians to buy into policies whose costs they share but whose benefits they don’t reap.

One can hope that Maxime Bernier’s tweets will start up a much-needed conversation in Canada. “Immigration,” “multiculturalism,” and “diversity” should not be sacred cows but topics that Canadians can freely discuss – pro and con – without being marginalized and demonized. Since stirring the pot with his tweets, Bernier held a press conference to announce that he was quitting the Conservative party in order to start a new political movement. Things could get interesting.

—Madeline Weld

Letters

The Humanist magazine, under whatever name, continues, in my opinion, to be the best Humanist endeavour that I know of. Congratulations!

I have just read Dan Mayo’s humorous musings on Canada’s status as a Monarchy; a light touch with dangerous intent.

As I read, strange visions crossed my mind..... Congo (Democratic Republic of), Rwanda,

Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Israel, China, Bulgaria (now inviting its King back).

Bananas.... Mexico, Jamaica. Republicans..... Trump. UGH! Look around the world: give me a Parliamentary Monarchy any day, for all its faults. Long live Elizabeth, Charles, William, George... Count your blessings, Daniel Mayo.

With all good wishes,
Angela Beale