

September 20, 2013

REITZ LECTURE ATTRACTS CAPACITY CROWD



(Note: presentation slides and full-paper of the lecture are available below)

Jeffrey Reitz's lecture "**The Sociology of Multiculturalism: Philosophical Debate vs. Empirical Data**" was held on Sep 19, 2013 in Room 108N at the Munk School of Global Affairs. The event was the first in the **2013-2014 Harney Lecture Series** and attracted a capacity crowd.

Ayelet Shachar, Professor of Law at the University of Toronto and holder of the Canada Research Chair in Citizenship and Multiculturalism, introduced the speaker and moderated the Q&A session.

Jeffrey Reitz is the R.F. Harney Professor of Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. During 2012-2014 he is a Marie Curie International Fellow affiliated with l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris. His most recent research examines the experience of Muslim immigration in France, Quebec and Canada, including social, economic and political dimensions.



ABSTRACT:

Understanding multiculturalism in Canada includes three sociologically interesting aspects: (1) multicultural policies and their impact on the successful integration of minorities in society, (2) multicultural theory and the empirical validity of its underlying assumptions about human behaviour, and (3) popular multiculturalism as a feature of national identity, and the broader impact on the politics of immigration in Canada. Key empirical issues posed by each aspect are identified and assessed. (1) The impacts of distinctively “multicultural” policies appear to be very small. (2) Evidence on the behavioral theory of multiculturalism is mixed. (3) Popular support for “multiculturalism” as a feature of Canadian national identity is strong, and appears to serve as a key political resource underpinning immigration policy as a national development tool

In other words, popular support for multiculturalism in Canada represents ‘political capital’ allowing policy makers a considerable degree of freedom in developing and adapting immigration policies. Some hypotheses are put forward in this regard. The full implications depend greatly on what Canadians in general think multiculturalism means. Evidence suggests that the meaning of multiculturalism is not the same for the average Canadian as it is for political theorists or philosophers. Implications of Canadian multiculturalism experience for future policy in Canada and in other immigration countries are examined in light of these conclusions.

RELATED MATERIAL:

SLIDES from the presentation

“**Multiculturalism Policies and Popular Multiculturalism**”, the paper on which the lecture was based. (This paper was prepared as a chapter in a forthcoming volume entitled *The Multiculturalism Question: Debating Identity in 21st Century Canada* edited by Jack Jedwab, Queen’s Policy Studies Series of McGill-Queen’s University Press.)

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