

The Sociology of British Columbia

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The history of sociological research on British Columbia is not much older than *BC Studies*. The first sociology course was offered at the University of British Columbia in 1918 and the first sociologist was appointed in 1929, but the discipline did not develop until the late 1960s (Guppy 1991, iv-v). This pattern was not unique to B.C. Until 1961 McGill University possessed the only independent Sociology Department in Canada (Brym 1989, 15).

When the expansion of sociology began, there were few Canadians trained as sociologists and little research that used Canadian data, with notable exceptions such as S. D. Clark and John Porter.¹ Sociologists were imported *en masse*, largely from the United States but in some cases, for example at Simon Fraser University under the direction of Tom Bottomore, also from Britain.² Initially students were taught with American or British texts that did not always reflect the conditions of life in Canada, but as more Canadian and Canadian-trained sociologists began to graduate in the 1970s, interest developed in trying to understand the dynamics of Canadian society. At the same time, interest grew in Marxist theory as an alternative to the more conservative traditions inherited from Durkheim and prevalent in American sociology. As a result, political economy became the dominant, though not exclusive, paradigm in the new sociology of Canadian society, influenced by Marxist theory, radical Weberianism, and the staples tradition of historian Harold Innis (Brym 1989, 19-24; Marchak 1985, 676-78). The new "Canadian sociology" focused initially on national questions linked to dependent economic development and foreign ownership, but scholars from peripheral regions, especially Atlantic Can-

¹ This discussion does not include the development of francophone sociology within Quebec, where sociological theory and research has always been grounded in Quebec history and culture (Moore 1992, 367; Rocher 1992, 65-70).

² Canadian-trained Ph.D.s are still a minority in British Columbia's three major universities. Perusal of 1992/93 faculty lists shows that the latter constitute only 20 per cent of full-time sociology faculty at Simon Fraser University, 23 per cent at the University of British Columbia, and 43 per cent at the University of Victoria.

ada, soon placed regional differences on the research agenda (Marchak 1985, 678-79). At the same time, some sociologists began to turn their attention to the Pacific province as a site of research.

The following discussion identifies three areas of research that have been central to the development of the sociology of B.C. over the last twenty-five years: 1) work, class, and politics in a resource economy, 2) gender relations, and 3) ethnic communities and radicalization.³ Not coincidentally, such research has often involved inter-disciplinary exchanges in which *BC Studies* has sometimes served as an important forum.

Work, Class, and Politics in a Resource Economy

A central set of issues that sociologists have addressed is the nature of economic organization in the province, the class structure that it generates, and the latter's relationship to expressions of political power. Research on economic organization in B.C. has explored both sides of the capital-labour equation, with some studies exploring patterns of ownership and the role of state policies in developing key economic sectors, and others exploring the nature of work for those employed in various occupations in the province.

A central feature of the British Columbia economy is the dominance of resource-based industries, especially forestry, and the lack of secondary manufacturing. Some sociologists have attempted to explain the social consequences of a boom and bust resource economy and the implications of recent changes in resource industries. Patricia Marchak, for example, has studied the political economy of B.C. forestry for over a decade (1979, 1983, 1988a, 1991). In *Green Gold* (1983) Marchak explores how the structure of the forestry industry in B.C., shaped by short-sighted state regulations and increasing capital concentration in the industry, has created a diminishing resource base that is not sustainable in the long run. This has major consequences as technological change and forest depletion eliminate thousands of jobs and threaten the existence of hundreds of small communities. Recently Marchak (1991) has argued that global restructuring of the forestry industry, especially in Asia and Latin America, now makes the prospect of reforestation in B.C. uneconomical in the world market. The implication of Marchak's research is that, in the absence of innovative strategies of diversification, British Columbia will not continue to enjoy a high standard of living for much longer.

³ The following discussion focuses on these central themes and does not attempt to provide an exhaustive inventory of sociological research on B.C.; nor, for reasons of length, does it include unpublished community-based research or graduate theses.

Other research has addressed the role of the state and economic organization in the fishing industry. As a team led by Patricia Marchak, Neil Guppy and John McMullan⁴ points out, state regulation, capital concentration, and competing economic interests are tied to depletion in that industry as well. In *Uncommon Property* (1987), Marchak et al. reject the argument that fish stocks are depleted because their status as “common property” makes them subject to too many competing interests. Instead, they argue, the federal state controls the right to fish, and inconsistent and contradictory fisheries policies must be seen as central to the crisis in the fishery. In recent years state regulation has accelerated the depletion of fish stocks by encouraging overcapitalization and overcapacity, ironically while trying to promote conservation, and turned to intrusive forms of surveillance of fishers while precipitating the decline of fishing communities along the west coast (Hayward 1981; Marchak 1987a; 1987c, 1988b; McMullan 1984, 1987; Pinkerton 1987; Warriner 1987, 1988).

Changes in the organization of forestry and fishing affect the entire province as high-wage unionized jobs become scarcer, particularly in small communities with little economic diversity. However, the organization of other resource industries has received scant attention from sociologists. With the exception of Christensen’s (1982) work on changing economic pressures threatening tree-fruit production in the Okanagan, and some attention to the ethnic composition of farm workers and the dynamics of racism (Dutton and Cornish 1988; Wong 1989), researchers have paid little attention to agriculture and even less attention to mining.⁵

Other sociologists have focused on the conditions that men and women experience in the workplace and the ways in which they cope with or resist employment practices. For example, Martin Meissner’s (1970, 1971) study of the forestry community of Port Alberni addresses how relations of paid work in the pulp mills affect workers’ activities off the job. Meissner argues that workers in the pulp mills are most often mere “instruments of production” with little chance to develop social skills in the workplace. These relations on the job make it difficult to leave work at the mill gates and shape the choice of leisure activities and community involvement. However, even in work-settings that allow little autonomy or control over the tasks or pace of work, workers continue to exert a degree of creativity in their interaction with each other. Meissner and Philpott (1975; Meiss-

⁴ Other members of the research team are Stephen Garrod, Brian Hayward, Alicja Muszynski, Evelyn Pinkerton, and Keith Warriner.

⁵ I was unable to discover any research on mining in B.C. published by sociologists, but relevant sources may have been overlooked.

ner 1976) studied communication among sawmill workers and discovered a complex form of sign language that allowed communication between co-workers even in situations of high levels of mechanization, task differentiation, noise, and the spatial separation of workers.

Alicja Muszynski and Neil Guppy have considered the ways in which the structure of the fishery shapes the lives of people who work in that industry. Muszynski (1984, 1986, 1987, 1988) outlines the historical development of an industrial cannery labour force as ethnic and gender divisions were built into the division of labour in the processing plants, and later structured union cleavages. Guppy (1986, 1987a, 1987b) shows that ethnic and gender divisions are still central to the labour process at sea and on shore and remain points of tension, while family connections often provide links across other differences. Fishers are divided on the basis of class (vessel owners and crew),⁶ ethnicity, gear-type, specific fishery, region of the coast, and affiliation in various unions, associations and co-operatives, but all are heavily indebted to financial institutions and dependent on unpredictable seasonal catches (Marchak et al. 1987).

Other researchers have studied the history of workers in specific occupations as they organize and struggle for a better existence. Conley (1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1991) has looked at relations of production and class action among salmon fishers, carpenters, and other workers in Vancouver in the early part of this century, challenging some of the conventional explanations for working class militancy in the province. Creese (1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c) has examined the effect of ethnic/racial and gender divisions on the development of unions and worker solidarity in Vancouver while exploring the labour militancy of Asian men and white women. And Wotherspoon (1993) explores the struggle between the state and teachers in the nineteenth century as teaching came under increasing government regulation. Along with historians working on similar questions, these historical sociologists have helped to retrieve a more complex and contradictory history of class formation and working class political organization in the province.

As the occupational and class structure has undergone change in all "advanced capitalist societies," research has turned to explaining the implications of change in the organization of capitalism and class relations. Since World War II we have seen a dramatic reduction in (largely male)

⁶ Use of traditional class categories to discuss fishers is in fact problematic, and has led to disagreement about whether owner-operators are really workers, independent commodity-producers, or in some more ambiguous position (Clement 1986; Guppy 1986; Marchak et al. 1987).

blue collar jobs in resource industries and a corresponding increase in white collar or non-manual employment in managerial, professional, technical, clerical and service occupations, as well as a drastic increase in the labour force participation of women (Warburton and Coburn, 1983). The separation of ownership and management, the expansion of state services and public sector employment, and the “feminization” of the labour force are identified as central changes in the B.C. economy. Observation of these changes in Canada and elsewhere has led to debates over the nature of the contemporary class structure, especially the place of managers and professionals, how to classify women workers who had long been subsumed under a (male-headed) family definition, and questions about unionization and class consciousness among public sector workers. These debates shaped new research agendas in B.C., resulting in studies of the development of class relations and politics among public sector and predominantly female occupations such as teachers (Warburton 1986; Wotherspoon 1993) and nurses (Carroll and Warburton 1989; Warburton and Carroll 1989), who had often not been considered “real” workers in the past.

Sociologists have long been concerned with provincial politics and its relationship to the organization of economic power and class relations. In the context of a broader debate on class and politics in the early 1970s,⁷ Rennie Warburton (1971), Daniel Koenig (et al. 1974; and Proverbs 1976) and Patricia Marchak (1975) conducted research on the relationship between class position and voting patterns in the province, with conflicting results. Koenig (et al. 1976, 1977a, 1977b) and Proverbs (and Koenig 1977) also undertook a comprehensive study of political attitudes toward welfare, work, and social services for children and the elderly, attempting to dispel the myths about social assistance and poverty that underlie public antipathy to the welfare state, and recommended reforms to the NDP government then in power. Whether “political culture” (Warburton 1971), “marginal populations” (Koenig et al. 1974), a combination of class, regional and institutional cleavages (Marchak 1975) or class alone (Koenig and Proverbs 1976) could predict voting patterns, or support for the welfare state, all these scholars sought to understand political preferences in B.C. in the context of the broader structure of advantage and disadvantage in the province.

In later research informed by more developed theories of the state, Malcomson (1988) applied a political economy perspective to explore the historical role of the state in shaping B.C. society, emphasizing class conflict

⁷ For example, see *BC Studies* 12 (Winter 1971-72) for an exchange between Mark Sproule-Jones, Martin Robin, and Edwin Black.

and the dominance of a corporate agenda in political decision-making. The Social Credit government's 1983 "restraint" programme has been approached from a similar theoretical standpoint. The "restraint" agenda has been explained in terms of grafting a "New Right" ideology onto an economic recession in an effort to fundamentally restructure the social fabric by attacking the rights of labour, the poor, women, and others who made gains under the post-war compromise of the welfare state (Carroll 1984; Carroll, Doyle, and Schacter 1984; Carroll and Ratner 1989; Lord 1984; Marchak 1984; Malcomson 1984). The Solidarity Coalition that emerged to oppose the "restraint" legislation brought labour and social groups together in a dramatic attempt to thwart the government's agenda, but the terms of popular political discourse continued to shift to the right of the political spectrum as restructuring proceeded throughout the 1980s (Carroll and Ratner 1989).

Other social movements have become the subject of study as the political terrain has shifted in recent decades with the prominence of political organization among environmentalists, peace activists, women, the First Nations, and other groups in B.C. Recent research includes Hessing's (1990) study of the South Okanagan Environmental Coalition's attempt to ban the use of herbicide 2,4-D on Okanagan Lake, and Muller's (1990) study of organizing and development planning in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Kitsilano. As "new" social movements reshape the terrain of politics in the province and elsewhere, and as such issues have "de-centred" the emphasis on class for many analysts, the study of social movements other than labour is likely to be of increasing concern in the 1990s. At the same time, the social effects of global economic restructuring and the centrality of work in people's lives, as well as the personal and public crisis when there is none to be found, will also keep economic trends and class inequalities on the research agenda of many scholars.

Gender Relations

In whatever sphere we examine, gender makes a difference in how we experience the social world. Since the second wave of the feminist movement began in the late 1960s sociologists have played a central role in exploring the dynamics of gender relations and gender inequality in B.C. Two of the earliest collections on women in Canada had their origin among sociologists at the University of British Columbia; Marylee Stephenson's *Women in Canada* (first edition 1973) and Patricia Marchak's *The Working Sexes* (1976) brought together often tentative new research

exploring aspects of gender relations across the country. Since then, scholars from many disciplines have turned their attention to the study of gender relations in B.C.

Many sociologists writing on B.C. have focused on the social organization of work, so it is not surprising that the gendered nature of work has become an important subject of research. Of particular importance is Martin Meissner's research on domestic labour (1975, 1977, 1991) which re-defines domestic labour — such as child-care, cleaning, cooking, marketing, and managing family relations — as work, although it has been devalued and is not defined as real (paid) work in our society. Once unpaid domestic labour is recognized as work, the unequal division of labour between women and men becomes apparent. According to Meissner (1975: 431), women perform the “regular, necessary and most time-consuming work in the household every day” while men perform more limited and discretionary tasks. This has not changed as married women entered the labour force in greater numbers. Instead, women add paid work on top of their domestic responsibilities and carry an increasing proportion of the burden of work. In contrast, since the Second World War, men have decreased their paid working hours, barely increased their domestic work at all, and now enjoy more leisure time. As Meissner (1991: 182) writes, “the leisure society [is] to be carried on the backs of women.”

Social scientists have rejected biological notions of innate feminine abilities to mother and keep house, and instead sought to explain the unequal division of labour in terms of the structure of control over economic resources and unequal power relations between men, women, and children in the dominant family-household form in the province. While understanding such power differences as outcomes of social structures in our society, Marylee Stephenson's (1977) research, which examines how Vancouver-area “housewives” involved in the women's movement renegotiated their own role expectations and domestic responsibilities, also reminds us that we are not without the ability to change our circumstances.

Economic change is central to any attempt to create more equal relations between women and men. Research on the paid labour market continues to show that the labour force is segregated by sex, although a small number of women have recently made inroads into male occupations. There has been a dramatic increase in married women's labour force participation, but the vast majority of women are found in a few occupations that provide some form of personal service, particularly clerical work, sales and service, and the “caring” professions. Women also earn much lower wages than

men, approximately two-thirds of incomes in comparable jobs, yet increasing numbers are sole providers for their families. Many of these broad economic trends, which are not distinctive to B.C., have remained similar from the early part of this century (Creese 1988c) through the 1980s (Marchak 1977; Warburton and Cohen 1983) and continue to result in the "feminization" of poverty.

As Jane Gaskell's (1991a, 1992a) research on clerical work and training has demonstrated, women are not poorly paid because they are unskilled: they do jobs which are considered unskilled because women perform the work. Gaskell (1992a) argues that women have not had the same power as men to insist that their skills be recognized. The current struggle over principles of pay equity in B.C., whether at the bargaining table or lobbying for provincial legislation, is an attempt to redefine gender-biased notions of skill and the value of women's work (Gaskell 1991b).

As social scientists have sought to explain the persistence of gender inequality in the labour market, most have turned to some theory of "patriarchy"⁸ linking together the subordinate roles of women in the family-household, the labour market, the political sphere, and civil society as each reinforces the other. As Melody Hessing's (1991, 1993) research on clerical workers in a Vancouver community college shows, domestic responsibilities structure women's time on and off the job, blurring the boundaries between home and workplace as women manage the conflicting demands of a double day by adapting and integrating the demands of each. In contrast, men's paid work is structured less by the domestic tasks they must perform daily than by the relative absence of such responsibilities, allowing male career and mobility patterns predicated on a "primary commitment" to the workplace. This gendered pattern is conceptualized as the norm, even though it can only exist if someone else does the bulk of the marketing, cooking, cleaning, laundering, and child-rearing, a pattern that few women experience (Creese and Strong-Boag 1994).

Since work patterns in B.C. are gendered, sociologists have also asked how class consciousness might be gendered. Carroll and Warburton's study of political consciousness among registered nurses in Victoria addresses the often contradictory development of class and gender consciousness among working women as nurses remain committed more to "professional service" than to solidarity with other workers, and divided over the acceptance of feminist goals (Carroll and Warburton 1989; War-

⁸ Although there are many debates about the nature of "patriarchy," it is used here to refer to a system of social relationships, including both ideologies and structural differences in power, that privileges men while disadvantaging women.

burton and Carroll 1989). Gender and class consciousness are intertwined for men as well. Several researchers have studied the reproduction of male gender privilege within the labour movement (Campbell 1980; Creese 1988c; Marchak 1973; Muszynski 1984, 1987), and conditions under which union politics become “feminized” and advocate measures to achieve greater gender equality (Creese 1993).

One of the most important ways that gender relations are learned, reproduced, and sometimes transformed from one generation to the next is through the ideas and expectations embedded in school curriculum and culture. Gaskell’s study of Vancouver high school students (1988, 1992a, 1992b) examines how gendered expectations about occupations, careers, and domestic roles are cultivated through students’ observations about the adult world around them and by educational streaming and the skills taught in business and other occupational courses. These factors all shape students’ educational and career “choices” as young women search for options that will allow them to combine careers and families and young men expect to be free from heavy domestic responsibilities. These rational “choices” then help to perpetuate unequal gender roles for women in our society. Linda Eyre’s (1991) research further demonstrates how gender politics is played out in the classroom. Studying a co-educational home economics/technical programme in a B.C. high school, she examines how a small group of boys dominates teacher-student interaction with banter and ridicule that reinforces a particular kind of masculinity through misogynist and homophobic content. And as McLaren and Gaskell (1993; Gaskell et al. 1993) have found, both overt and subtle messages continue to keep most B.C. girls from pursuing studies in mathematics and science while inhibiting later pursuits at university. The masculine character of the curriculum, teaching staff, and boys’ control in the classroom prevents girls from enrolling in senior high school math and science courses, and undermines the confidence and performance of many girls who do take these courses.

Male privilege has long been shored up by ideas about men’s and women’s proper spheres, usually cast in terms of narrow definitions of masculinity and femininity, with various kinds of sanctions for those who transgress, ranging from ridicule to violence (Jacobson and Hyde 1991).⁹ Female subordination has also been reinforced by state legislation in B.C., including discriminatory minimum wage legislation (Bannerman et al.

⁹ As the phenomenon of gay-bashing illustrates, such sanctions are practised not only against women who transgress accepted gender norms, but also against men who violate narrowly defined notions of masculinity.

1984; Creese 1991), prohibitions against midwifery (Burtch, 1986), and the criminalization of birth control and abortion (McLaren and McLaren 1984, 1986). Research on recent "restraint" legislation attacking human rights provisions and social assistance programmes that disproportionately affect women and children also demonstrates how formally gender-neutral public policies can have gender specific consequences (Lord 1984). Just as the state and legal system is not a neutral arbiter between capital and labour, neither has it stood outside patriarchal relations in B.C. (Brockman and Chunn 1993).

Sociologists have also made important contributions to our understanding of the ways in which gender, class, and race/ethnicity interact to shape women's lives. Roxana Ng, drawing on her research in Vancouver and Toronto, examines the social construction of ethnicity and "immigrant women" (1981, 1982, 1986), while Cassin and Griffith (1981) explore the relationship between ethnicity and class drawn from field research of Portuguese- and Indo-Canadian communities in B.C. All three worked under sociologist Dorothy Smith when she was at UBC and later at OISE in Toronto, and have extended Smith's problematizing of the everyday gendered world¹⁰ to racialized constructions. This research points out that ethnic and immigrant categories and identities are constructed in interaction with the dominant society, rather than in some way culturally innate, and that ethnic identities and experiences are different for women and men.

Other sociologists have studied women from particular ethnic communities and analyzed the special disadvantages such women often face. Anderson and Lynam studied the experiences of Indo- and Greek-Canadian women in Vancouver, exploring the difficulties facing non-English speaking immigrant women in the labour force (Anderson and Lynam 1987), and when confronting issues of health and health care (Anderson 1992). Shibata (1980) compared the experiences of Japanese-Canadian women who arrived before and after World War II that shattered their community on the west coast. And Indra (1981) has explored ethnic stereotypes of Indo-Canadians in Vancouver newspapers, explaining the invisibility of women's representation as a result of men's ability to control the press, and thus the social definition of reality.

Ellen Gee's (1990, 1991, 1992) research on the life course and timing of events in women's lives in B.C. outlines some of the changes correspond-

¹⁰ Dorothy Smith is perhaps the best known Canadian sociologist and feminist theorist today. For an introduction to Smith's work see *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

ing with age, marital status, maternity, and education, reminding us that women's lives also differ on all these indices and many more. As researchers become more sensitive to the "politics of diversity" that has reshaped the women's movement in recent years, attention to the connections between gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability will likely continue to shift research agendas in the future.

Ethnic Communities and Racialization

Concern with social inequality has also led sociologists to study dimensions of ethnic and racial differentiation in the province. The history of colonialism and immigration in B.C. has made racism a formative feature of the society and produced a diverse population unequally dispersed along the main axes of power and privilege. Researchers have studied the formation of ethnic communities in B.C., processes of racialization as group boundaries are created and reproduced, and everyday experiences of discrimination.

Sociologists have paid the most attention to the various Asian communities that have migrated to B.C. over the last century.¹¹ For example, Peter Li (1979, 1987, 1988) and Graham Johnson (1979, 1983, 1991) have written extensively about the experiences of Chinese-Canadians, addressing the effects of discrimination as well as cultural change from one generation to the next. Victor Ujimoto (1988) has studied the Japanese-Canadian community and internment during World War II. Tissa Fernando (1979), Norman Buchignani (1977, 1980) and Doreen Indra (Buchignani and Indra 1981) have studied community organization and politics among South Asians. This research, in conjunction with the work of Ng (1981, 1982, 1986), Cassin and Griffith (1981), Anderson and Lynam (1987; Anderson 1992), Shibata (1980) and Indra (1981) discussed above, explores the dynamics of adjustment, resistance, and generational change as women and men of various ethnic backgrounds have coped with and transformed the world around them.

Social scientists recognize that racial differentiation is "socially constructed" rather than biologically innate, so many researchers have studied the processes of "racialization" whereby cultural or phenotypical characteristics take on social significance to define the "other."¹² As Roxana Ng

¹¹ Focus on Asian communities is historical and demographic, not because other minorities have been treated with greater tolerance or acceptance than in the rest of the country. Unlike elsewhere in Canada, sociologists have seldom been involved in the study of the First Nations in B.C.

¹² For a detailed discussion of the concept of racialization as the process of attributing

(1981, 1982, 1986) points out, notions like "race" and "immigrant" are continually constructed as groups interact in the context of differential power and resources in a process that is also inherently gendered (see also Warburton 1992). Economic relations demarcate major divisions of power in every society. This being so, sociologists have often tried to explain the relationship between the dynamics of racism and the development of economic structures in the province.

Rennie Warburton (1980), Peter Li (1977, 1988) and Singh Bolaria (Bolaria and Li 1988), for example, have argued that racial stratification and discrimination are directly attributed to the division of labour under capitalism, and particularly the need for cheap labour, as migrants from various parts of the world were incorporated into an ethnically segregated labour market in B.C. Satzewich (1989) argues further that racism is not one homogenous ideology or set of practices in B.C.; different racisms coincide with class differences that relate to people's "lived experiences." Similarly, Dutton and Cornish (1988) explain alliances that have formed between Indo-Canadian farm workers and the B.C. labour movement, and cleavages between farm workers and growers from the same ethnic community, as a result of class interests. Muszynski (1986, 1987, 1988) explores how First Nations and Chinese immigrants were drawn into wage labour in the canneries, how it was possible to survive on wages well below subsistence levels, and how slow development of anti-racist policies among unionized workers was. Creese (1987, 1988a, 1988b) examines the role of state policies and definitions of citizenship rights, and changing political ideologies in the labour movement, in shaping racial cleavages and solidarity among different groups of workers in the province.

This research shares the view that boundaries between and discrimination against particular groups, in this case Chinese-, Japanese-, Indo-Canadians and First Nations in B.C., are a product of social organization and power differences rather than cultural differences per se. As social organization and power relations change, so too does the terrain of racism. As Wong and Netting (1992) show, the "Asianization" of business immigration has shifted the discourse of racism in Vancouver. In sharp contrast to earlier condemnation of the role of Chinese immigrants as cheap labour, resentment is now directed toward immigrants from Hong Kong precisely because they no longer come in at the bottom of the economic hierarchy, as immigrants are still expected to do.

significance to cultural or phenotypical attributes and thereby characterizing different "races," which in practice vary considerably both historically and cross-culturally, see Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989).

Research by Martha Foschi and Shari Buchan (1990) explores the dynamics of racism in day-to-day interactions. In experiments measuring task competence using same sex partners portrayed as either white or Indo-Canadian, men were less willing to take direction from partners they believed to be of Indo-Canadian background, while female subjects showed no such differentiation, probably due to gender differences in socialization. As Foschi and Buchan note, this has implications for how discrimination may operate in the workplace, as perceptions of competence are tied to status differences within ethnic/racial and gender hierarchies.

The most common popular explanations for ethnic and racial conflict focus on the "strangeness" of newcomers in comparison to the majority population and insufficient contact between groups, leading to demands for greater assimilation. However, sociological research does not bear out such assumptions. For example, research on the experience of Indo-Canadians in South Vancouver found that half of those surveyed experienced "ethnically hostile incidents" in the previous two years, ranging from name-calling to discrimination at work (Robson and Breems 1985). Those most likely to report such incidents were from low socio-economic groups living in residential areas with high concentrations of Indo-Canadians. Similarly, members of the dominant society who held the most negative attitudes toward Indo-Canadians also came from low socio-economic groups living in areas with high concentrations of Indo-Canadian residents (Robson and Breems 1985). Clearly, contact does not necessarily diminish racial discrimination. Nor does adoption of majority customs and lifestyles, or assimilation, foster acceptance. The public display of ethnicity, such as traditional dress and frequent use of Hindi or Punjabi outside the home, did not result in higher levels of discrimination (Nodwell and Guppy 1992). In fact some evidence points in the opposite direction, suggesting that those most assimilated were often more likely to report experiencing discrimination (Robson and Breems 1985).

Such research on discrimination also suggests that there is no basis for the belief that multiculturalism contributes to ethnic and racial tensions by promoting diverse cultural identities rather than a unified national identity (Nodwell and Guppy 1992). In fact, as Tissa Fernando (1991) has argued, multicultural policy has acted as a symbol of a "more liberal and encompassing" society as minority rights have gained political credence. Critics of multiculturalism who demand a return to anglo- and franco-conformity, such as the Reform Party of Canada, represent a threat to non-discriminatory immigration policies and an attempt to reverse the movement toward greater racial equality in B.C. and Canada (Fernando

1991). For multiculturalism to advance equality, however, it must be more concerned with opportunity and life chances than with cultural diversity and lifestyles. As research on the problems facing immigrants and refugees shows, for example, the inadequate provision of language training to adults and children, insufficient access to counselling, failure to recognize foreign educational credentials, and insecure funding of settlement organizations all suggest that in B.C. the promise of multiculturalism remains much greater than the reality (Fernando 1985, 1986).

As immigration patterns in B.C. continue to produce an increasingly diverse population, especially in the major cities, issues of equality, multiculturalism, and racism will remain in the forefront of sociological research. When demographic patterns combine with the dislocation currently accompanying economic restructuring, we can probably expect racial tensions to escalate as the prospects decline for the children of middle- and working-class families while some of the new wealthy are "visible" minorities. Patterns of power and privilege are no longer so clearly demarcated by ethnic and racial distinctions as was the case in this province a century ago, but, as much of the current discourse over immigration and multiculturalism reveals, the legacy of "white settler" colonialism continues to provide some citizens with a greater sense of entitlement to define who is a rightful resident or "real citizen" of B.C. and Canada. As the preceding discussion of sociological research on B.C. has shown, such perceptions of entitlement emerge out of the complex matrix of class, gender, and ethnic and racial relations of power and privilege in British Columbia which, while undergoing ongoing change, continue to shape the lives of individuals and the organization of major social institutions in the province.

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