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Migration, Mobilities, and Changing Political Landscapes

Reconciliation in Multicultural Canada: Rethinking Nation Building Through Indigenous and Racialized Immigrant Relations

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Reconciliation and multiculturalism remain separate policy frameworks in Canada, despite their shared significance in shaping contemporary nation-building. Federal discourse continues to compartmentalize these concepts: Indigenous peoples are positioned within reconciliation narratives centered on historical injustices, while racialized immigrants are framed as contributors to Canada's multicultural identity and economic prosperity. This structural separation, rooted in settler colonial histories, limits the potential for intercultural solidarity and meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and racialized immigrant communities. Through an analysis of historical government documents, including assimilation policies, exclusionary immigration laws, and recent Speeches from the Throne, this paper examines how nation-state narratives reinforce the distinct positioning of Indigenous and racialized immigrant communities. My findings reveal three key insights: first, that both Indigenous peoples and racialized immigrants have faced systemic marginalization within Canada's nation-building project; second, that contemporary political rhetoric continues to reinforce this separation, limiting opportunities for racialized immigrants to engage with reconciliation; and third, that integrating Indigenous perspectives into Canada's multiculturalism framework is critical to fostering an inclusive, transformative approach to reconciliation. By tracing historical exclusions and their enduring impact on today's policies and political imaginaries, this research underscores how these frameworks remain structurally separate. It highlights the need to reimagine Canadian nationbuilding through a place-based, intercultural approach that brings reconciliation and multiculturalism into meaningful dialogue.