

Canada's approach to multiculturalism compare to that of other nations research p...

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Early Canadian Multicultural Policy towards Ethnic Minorities: A Historical Background

It is significant to see that early Canadian multicultural policies towards ethnic minorities must be interpreted in two different outlooks. Firstly, there was a Government official policy towards the French Canadians. Throughout the British colonial era, British authorities generally enforced multicultural policies that were both prejudiced and assimilative with the aim to bring this ethnic group into the British control. Since Confederation, nevertheless, French Canadians were able to gain significant political and legal independence rights. This consisted of some political freedom through the acknowledgment of Quebec as a province, representation in political bodies, and legal language rights.

In contrast, there were provincial and federal policies concerning aboriginal people and the new immigrants to the country. Early Canadian multicultural policy towards these racial minorities engaged a blend of disregard, bias, and acculturation. Throughout the early nineteenth century, the Canadian government strongly persuaded the new immigrants from Europe and Asia to emigrate to the Canadian west. Nevertheless, when these ethnic groups reached, they were mostly disregarded by the Canadian governments, with the anticipation that they would be accepted into the typical Canadian society.

Other Canadian policies towards minority ethnic groups were also highly biased. Canada's law favored the white immigrants from Europe and the USA. Throughout the World War II, thousands of Japanese-born Canadians were imprisoned in various camps, and were later expelled on the grounds

they posed a risk to the national security of Canada. As well, in the early twentieth century, new immigrants experienced legal problems for their equal involvement in sociopolitical institutions in the country. In British Columbia, for instance, the government labor laws banned the employment of Asians.

Acculturation policies were also followed in an attempt to build a more uniform Canadian society, especially in the framework of aboriginal people. All over the Canadian history, the governments tried to “civilize” local people by banning conventional practices and enforcing the European ones. One of the most acute cases of these assimilative policies was the school system, in which the aboriginal children were forced to be educated in government- funded schools.

It is significant to understand that the multicultural policies in Canada were not primarily aimed for non-European settlers. It was at first required and planned for white ethnic groups. Moreover, it was required in very particular conditions, for instance, as a response to the rise of Québécois nationalism, and the associated political reformations espoused to hold it. As regards, rising Québécois nationalism in the 1960s that gave rise to a separatist interest group in Quebec, the Canadian government executed various reforms that were intended to enhance the importance of the French language, to help the federal government accepting bilingualism, and to raise the francophone representation in the Canadian civil service. Notably, the Canadian re-emphasized the parity of English and French as the “founding countries”.

Canada's approach to multiculturalism vis-à-vis other nations: An

Introduction

Canada, similar to other western countries, applies an acculturation method for migrants from various parts of the world. The immigrants in the country were motivated to assimilate into the pre-existing Canadian society, with the prospects that eventually the immigrants would become identical to local-born Canadians in their conversation, costumes, hobbies, and the lifestyles. Any ethnic group that was observed as unqualified of this kind of acculturation were prevented from migrating to Canada, or becoming her citizens.

Ever since the 1960s, though, there has been a surge in this approach. However, there were two distinct changes: firstly, the approval of race-neutral entrance standards, as migrants to Canada are mostly from non-European societies; and secondly, the espousal of a more 'multicultural' notion of integration in the Canadian society, that is expected that a lot of immigrants will apparently demonstrate their cultural characteristics, and which recognizes a requirement for public associations to hold these ethnic characteristics.

These two primary changes are generally termed as a major experimentation, distinctive in Canada, and has been extremely popular. Its success is proven by the public approval for immigration, and the virtual absence of criticism against the immigrants; the high naturalization percentage of migrants; and the eminence of Toronto as the most varied multicultural city all over the world as well as clean and prosperous city. Canadians then question why other countries of the world do not follow the same course of acculturation of immigrants in the Canadian society. There is

mystery over the incapability of other western countries to come to terms regarding multiculturalism.

Other Western countries have also espoused multiculturalism policies, in a more indirect manner, like the UK and the Holland. Nevertheless, it is obvious that multiculturalism has deeply entrenched in these countries similar to in Canada. In each case, there is not only much discussion of a public criticism against multiculturalism in the society, however, also of government recoil from multiculturalism concept and a return to acculturation (Brubaker, 2001). Indeed, it is true for Australia (Castles, 2004) Holland (Entzinger, 2003) and for UK (Back, 2002; Joppke, 2003).

A number of Canadians are mystified by this situation in these countries, and thus consider explanations of this differential migrant multiculturalism. The general explanation, implicitly and explicitly, implies Canada's historical customs of liberalism and acceptance, the existence of political leadership who are keen to support multiculturalism, and political development among the people who discard the endeavours of aboriginal who criticize immigrants for all the country's maladies. The other aspect, evidently, is the consequence that resistance to multiculturalism in the western countries in particular Europe, is due to intolerant conventions, negligent politicians who play the race card, and ill-educated voters who are prey to these appeals. Briefly, it is an account of Canadian traits and the European pathology, though the mainstream Canadians are too courteous to put it so openly. Yet, this cannot be a satisfactory explanation. It shrouds as much as it shows about the Canadian practice, and disregards major characteristics of the Canadian framework that radically reduce the risk to Canadians of

embracing multiculturalism policies.

In Canada, by contrast, there is not a single leading immigrant group, and no large immigrant groups from territorially neighbouring states. Consequently, no immigrant group has the capacity to dispute the primary presumption that migrants should incorporate into the political and social institutions of the Canadian society. Hence, the fundamental risk that is present in the immigrant multiculturalism in several countries simply does not exist in Canada.

Canada's approach to multiculturalism compare to other nations: An Analysis

Since the adoption of multiculturalism in the Canadian society, the supporters and opponents of multiculturalism have discussed its impact on the socioeconomic and political assimilation of migrants and for ethnic minorities and their children. Supporters claim that multiculturalism helps in the acculturation of migrants and minorities eliminate obstacles to their role in the Canadian society and making them feel more receptive in the Canadian social order, that cause a stronger sense of attachment in Canada. Opponents on the other hand, claim that multiculturalism supports creation of ethnic communities on political and social grounds, promoting the members to look inwardly, and increasing the disparities amongst the groups rather than their common rights or character as Canadian citizens.

The debate over multiculturalism has been intense whose basic expressions have hardly been changed for more than four decades. One cause for the constant rise of this debate is that, so far, there had been little solid substantiation to evaluate these dueling views on the effects of

multiculturalism in the Canadian society. Nevertheless, in the couple of years, significant new data have been present. This data can be divided into two broad categories:

- Data that the procedure of immigrant and minority integration is better in Canada than in other countries of the world; and
- Data that the multicultural policies play an affirmative part in this process.

For the first factor, “ integration” is considered as a broad expression, covering many diverse aspects. In sum, there is rising substantiation that immigrants to Canada and ethnic minorities progress better than most of other Western countries.

As regards multiculturalism and political integration, in contrast to other Western countries, the immigrants in Canada are more probable to become her citizens (Bloemraad, 2006).

In contrast to other European and western countries, these immigrants are more probable to take part in the political process in the Canada (Howe, 2007). For instance, there exist more foreign-born people voted in Parliament in Canada than in any western country, in terms of parity with their population (Adams, 2007: 70-74).

Whilst the fraction of foreign-born Canadian members parliamentarians are lesser than the fraction of foreign-born people in the general population, this stage of “ demographic parity” is greater than in the USA or Australia or any other European country.

As well, it is worth noted that the foreign-born parliamentarians in Canada are not only, or even generally, voted in ethnic enclave ridings comprising of their own co-ethnics. Obviously, there are some problems with the

participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in the Canadian society.

However, in contrast to other countries, Canada is more probable to dynamically hire minority people and in Canadian multicultural society.

There are no data to proof that the voters in Canada discriminate against such people (Black & Erickson, 2006). This shows the reciprocal character of integration in the political set up of Canada and in its democratic process.

The immigrants' children have better learning results in Canada than in any other Western countries. In fact, the second-generation immigrants in Canada do better than the children of non-immigrant parents (OECD, 2006).

Furthermore, this is not only as a result of the better socioeconomic background of migrants in Canada. In contrast, the immigrant children from poorer socioeconomic environments also do healthier in Canada than in other countries of the world.

There is, however, a nearly total nonexistence of immigrant or religious minority communities in Canada. Presently, in the Canadian history, immigrants prefer to reside in neighborhoods where co-ethnics already live. However, these territories of residential colonies do not show the economic need, impaired mobility or social segregation that reminds of ghettos in the USA or Europe. Ethnic neighborhoods in Canada are a way in to integration (Walks & Bourne, 2006).

In contrast to other western countries, Canada has been less impacted by the worldwide rise in anti-Muslim sentiments and by the consequent polarization of ethnic relationships. A survey carried out in 2006, showed about 80% of the Canadians is of the view that Muslims make an affirmative contribution to the Canadian economy (Focus Canada, 2006). Worldwide

studies show that Muslims in Canada are less likely to consider that their co-citizens are unfriendly to them.

Briefly, there is rising data from various studies that Canada does better than other countries on a wide variety of steps for the immigrants and minority acculturation. This does not imply that there are no major problems experiencing immigrants and minorities in Canada. However, there is an increasing appreciation of Canada's relative advantage amongst various scholars and global policy networks. What is more uncertain is whether multiculturalism contributes significantly to this relative success. The opponents of multiculturalism at times claim that Canada's record of acculturation is shown by other features, for instance, the fact that Canadian migrants are generally more highly skillful than immigrants from other countries, and the reality that there is a rather open labor market. Consequently, the immigrants carry high levels of human resources, and can employ easily that HR in the labor market in contrast to other western countries. Thus, the existence of the multiculturalism in Canadian policy does not contribute to the successful assimilation of immigrants and minorities in Canada, and may actually obstruct it.

Nevertheless, new studies have proved that Canadian multiculturalism policies play within the wider context of immigrant and minority assimilation. This analysis on the impacts of multiculturalism has worked at two big levels, namely individual identity and the institutional design.

As regards, the individual level, the study points out that multiculturalism offer prospects for the high level of mutual recognition amongst local-born citizens and immigrants in Canada.

In many countries, native-born people with a strong feeling of national character are inclined to be more skeptical about immigrants, who are considered as a risk to their cherished goals. However, the fact that the Canadian governments have officially claimed itself as a multicultural country implies that the immigrants are an essential aspect of the country. Therefore, the multiculturalism provides a connection for local-born people from national character in harmony with immigrants and minorities.

Moreover, on the other hand, multiculturalism offers a link, by which the migrants and minorities come to identify themselves in Canada. Owing to different outlooks, there is convergence on identification with a multicultural idea of Canadian nationhood. The researches show that without multiculturalism, these connections are more complex to create, and national character is more probable to cause bigotry and chauvinism (Esses et al. 2006).

A global study of acculturation and assimilation has also proved the positive role that multiculturalism helps in establishing healthy development of individual assimilation into the Canadian society (Berry et al. 2006). A lot of studies have proved that the migrants do, perform, regarding the psychological welfare and sociocultural results, when they are capable to integrate their ethnic self with a new national character. The analysts generally term this “ integration course” as against two “ assimilation course” or a “ separation course”.

The supporters of multiculturalism have long claimed that multiculturalism policies can support and facilitate this type of integration- in fact, this is termed as the “ multiculturalism hypothesis” (Berry et al, 1977). The

members of cultural minorities will be more probable to relate to a new national character if they think their ethnic character is widely appreciated. At the institutional level, there is also new data on the role that multiculturalism plays in generating more comprehensive and fair public institutes. For instance, the OECD study noted Canada's comparative advantage in training migrant students stressed that a critical aspect in this accomplishment was the existence of specific policies to deal with the issues of multicultural diversity in the schools (OECD, 2006). These multicultural policies show why the children of immigrants perform better in Canada, even when one consider the skills, education and earnings of their parents. Likewise, the multiculturalism has proved to play a vital role in making Canada's political procedure more detailed. A study performed by Irene Bloemraad, compared the political assimilation of immigrants in the USA and Canada (Bloemraad, 2006). The writer studies the Vietnamese migrants, who offer a remarkable " natural experiment" in the impacts of multiculturalism policies. There are almost no significant disparities in the demographic features of the immigrants who finally settled in Canada rather than the USA. Yet, the migrants in Canada have a much stronger sense of identification and dynamism in the Canadian society.

Conclusion

Noting the growing trend for analysts to understand the Canadian situation considering the European trends, the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) analyzed various aspects of the multiculturalism issue concluded that There is little evidence of the deep social segregation feared in parts of

Europe Canada is not “sleepwalking into segregation.” There is no rationalization for a reversal in the Canadian multiculturalism policies in contrast to in some European countries (Banting et al, 2007).

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