

Introduction  
considered to be  
invested in its  
diversity



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## **Introduction**

Canada as a nation has incorporated people from various backgrounds and ethnic diversities. In addition, the Canadian government has played its role in motivating and fortifying the coexistence of the different cultures present in Canada. Multiculturalism is suggested to have started in England and French nations; however, in Canada, the multiculturalism policy has incorporated the various diversities of Canadians by upholding social integration in terms of active participation in social, cultural, political, and economic activities. In the modern time, these activities are facilitated by the modern technology through the internet (Sugimoto & University of Toronto 1).

In Canada, multiculturalism concept pervades in the day-to-day life despite its meaning varying significantly in relation to its context. In the 1987 report which was referred to as Multiculturalism: Building the Canadian Mosaic, multiculturalism was defined as “ recognition of diverse cultures of a plural society based on three principles: we all have an ethnic origin (equality); all our cultures deserve respect (dignity) and cultural pluralism needs support (community)”. In 1989, a government pamphlet published to educate the public on Multiculturalism act defined multiculturalism in a simpler manner by describing it as the daily working and living undertaken by Canadians in their day-to-day life (Sugimoto & University of Toronto 5).

## **History of multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism in Canada was not an official policy until in 1971, it has however been identified as a historical and social fact since the Canadian

West settlement. The Canadian government had vigorously started promoting large-scale immigration during the nineteenth century second half. The sole aim of the immigration was to undertake development of the unsettled land and in particular in the Canadian West. As the Ontarian and French-Canadian migrants moved towards the west, some European groups also followed suit among which the Icelanders were part of. The groups were convinced to stay in Canada with the promise of attaining large tracts of land for their settlement as well as the promise of their culture and language been preserved (Neijmann 357).

It took the First World War to initiate Canada into an era of strongly increased nationalism and self-awareness. High expectations surrounded the emerging Canadian nation that would include the best of Europe's past. Publications in 1938 were used to enlighten the Canadian population on their cultures and customs (Neijmann 358). The revolutionary ethnic revival of the 1960s slowly took roots following a widespread of equality calls by the social movements. In Canada wave of Quebecois nationalism had begun sweeping the country and was led by Charles de Gaulle.

This wave promoted an increase of awareness of Canadians of different backgrounds. These Canadians felt that it was their right to have their cultural preservations to be officially recognized. It was this time that Canada's unity was considered to be invested in its diversity and its cultural reality was in fact a mosaic. The report that was published in 1969 on The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups by the royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was used by the Canadian government to announce a policy of multiculturalism in 1971. From that year on, numerous <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-considered-to-be-invested-in-its-diversity/>

boards have been established as well as provision of funds by the government in order to promote multiculturalism.

In spite of generating a debate, it is now desirable and possible to have pride in one's heritage of culture, immigrant background and above all take pride in voicing this pride in the public domain (Neijmann 358). The identification of forms and social cohesion of immigrants and minority communities that are racialized is normally a response that is complex in nature attributed to numerous factors. This therefore indicates that the state mediates them as well as its cultural practices.

The mediation is undertaken by reality of exclusion and discrimination. The two mediations are indicated in the first and second faces of multiculturalism in Canada. The policy on multiculturalism has helped the state to undertake substantial steps in determining the nature of state and minority coexistence in a liberalized tradition that enhances equality and promotes communities' social cohesion (Nelson & Nelson 416).

## **Multiculturalism in modern Canada**

In the modern Canada, social networks and connections are at the core of the integration system of Canadian community.

The urban areas are comprised of mixed ethnic groups; this makes it increasing difficult to create stocks of social capital as compared to rural areas that are less diverse. According to Dickerson et al, diverse community individuals in one way or the other reveal less trust in others as well as possess less willingness to integrate with their society. This therefore means that urban residents have a high possibility of isolating themselves from the <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-considered-to-be-invested-in-its-diversity/>

rest of the community especially in societies whose diversity is high. The issue of integration of diverse cultures and immigrants is not a simple subject to address.

In Canada, multiculturalism policies have assisted cultural groups in overcoming the difficulties that prevent them from integrating fully into the community. Assistance has been established in ensuring one of the two official languages is learnt thereby making it the corner stone of the policy. Canada has one of the highest levels of per capita immigration in the world. The 2006 census indicated that for every five Canadians that are born one is normally a foreign born. The fact that 95 percent of the immigrants normally settle in urban areas means that national unity and integration are the dominant issues in the political domain (Dickerson et al 55 & 56). According to Good, StatsCan predicted that by 2017 with the ongoing trend of immigration, the percentage of visible minority Canadians will have grown to 19 to 23 percent up from the 16.2 percent recorded during the 2006 census. The statsCan report also noted that immigration was the critical factor that will reflect the rise in population of Canada's visible minority.

From a policy dimension, the impact of multiculturalism will strongly depend on its ability to undertake ethno cultural diversity that is brought about by immigrant cultural practices. Although extensive research is still needed to comprehend the existing relationship between immigrant integration and public policies, the research on multiculturalism that has already been undertaken clearly indicates that success has been achieved so far in immigrant and ethnic integration (Good 9). According to Wilson and

Dissanayake, the practice and discourse of multiculturalism has been an <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-considered-to-be-invested-in-its-diversity/>

integral operation of administrative normalization. This is because various types of traditions are indicated as necessarily contradictory which means that there is need for regulation.

The state extends its power by identifying these traditions as norms that need to be embraced and managed. In the last two decades update forms of production and deregulation have resulted to countless movement of people, commodities and as well as capital across different nation's borders (Wilson & Dissanayake 219).

## **Conclusion**

In Canada, the Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government undertook the multiculturalism policy in 1971. This was attributed by the report of Royal commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which was portrayed by a cross section of the people as putting much of its efforts on English-French issues that had little significance to other elements that have an impact in the Canadian population. In 1982, multiculturalism was also given recognition in section 27 of "Canada's Charter of rights and freedom"; the Charter was to be interpreted as in a way that will be "consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians" (Dewing and Leman Para.

17). The conservative government of Brian Mulroney passed the multiculturalism act in the year 1988 and later on established a department of multiculturalism. The functions of this multiculturalism department were later transferred to Department of Canadian heritage. In the modern time, multiculturalism is a different entity of program in the department of

Canadian Heritage. One of its major functions is to extend grants to ethnic societies associations for their numerous types of public discussions, cultural performances, French and English training and above all integration into the Canadian community.

The main objective declared by Multiculturalism in line with their Canadian Heritage is to prevent nourishment of different identities but rather to assist immigrants develop their lives in Canada by ensuring their own cultural heritage is part and parcel of the mainstream of the social Canadian Community. The various usage of multiculturalism, has led to uncertainty among the Canadian citizens on what the concept really means.

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