

Multiculturalism in canada



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Multiculturalism is the acceptance or promotion of multiple racial and ethnic cultures, for practical reasons and/or for the sake of diversity and applied to the demographic make-up of a specific place. Today, most of the twentieth century racial and ethnic minority relations, in Canada, have been shaped by a clash between the liberal idea of equal citizenship and conservative racial thinking. Official policies in Canada have stressed the need to assimilate racial and ethnic minorities into an all-embracing mainstream culture. In 1971, the government of Canada announced its policy of multiculturalism. The policy not only recognized the reality of pluralism in Canada, but also seemed to reverse the earlier attempt to assimilate immigrants. It challenged all Canadians to accept cultural pluralism, while encouraging them to participate fully and equally in Canadian society. They supported that a new model of citizen participation in the larger society be adopted based on pluralism of racial and ethnic groups that were part of the Canadian family. They offered a blueprint for a Canadian identity based on public acceptance of difference and support of cultural pluralism. Therefore, the role of racial and ethnic groups is really important in Canadian multicultural society because this multicultural diversity is a result of centuries of immigration.

National disasters, military action, and political repression have always produced large-scale movements of population as displaced groups seek new homes. Those displaced for military or political reasons have often wanted a right to refuge under a state that will protect them or guarantee their fundamental rights. In the first half of the twentieth century, a large

numbers of refugees fled from Nazi Germany, Palestine, and the Soviet bloc, and in 1951 a legal definition of refugee was established under the Geneva Convention. It is from the second half of the twentieth century, however, that international conflict and tension created ever greater numbers of refugees seeking shelter in a more secure home. This has been driven, in large part, by the ethnic basis of much military and political conflict, which has meant that whole populations have been forced to find a safe home. In addition, the diverse population is now one of the unique features of Canadian society. In the 1991 survey has shown that more than 30% of Canadians were an origin other than British or French. But that percentage is most heavily concentrated in Ontario and western Canada, but rural areas, small towns like Quebec and Atlantic are home to fewer foreign-born people than is the rest of Canada. In rural Quebec, for example, the vast majority of the population was not only born in Canada but so were their parents, grandparents and great grandparents. By contrast, approximately 90% of foreign-born Canadians live in Canada's 15 largest cities. But, here again, the distribution of foreign-born is uneven. Some provinces, like Quebec (outside Montreal), have relatively fewer foreign born. On the other hand, 30% of all Vancouver residents and 38% of all Toronto residents (more than a million people in Toronto alone) were born outside Canada. Therefore, accordingly, to the researches, Toronto and Vancouver may have the most cultural, racial and ethnical minorities in Canada. But they do not stand alone. The cultural mix in other Canadian cities may be different, but pluralism is a fact of Canadian society.

Official policy in Canada focuses the need to assimilate racial minorities into an all-embracing mainstream culture. The implementation of this policy has shown that these liberal assumptions have not gone unchallenged. In fact, from the 1960s, state policies in Canada became more restrictive in relation to immigration, as racial thinking became a more marked feature of official thinking. Some Canadians do not support multiculturalism. For example, in English-speaking areas, some people worried that multiculturalism would divide Canadians rather than unite them. Others in Quebec protested that multiculturalism was designed to undermine Quebec nationalism, but many other Canadians supported the policy, and they saw it as recognition of a pluralism that was a fact of Canadian life. The multiculturalism policy has to relate to visible minorities, so these new communities are less worried about understanding of their values in Canada because they look to the multiculturalism policy as aid in the elimination of discrimination for equal access to jobs, housing and education. In 1981, federal multiculturalism officials established a unit devoted to race relations in Canada. Later this unit expanded to make race relations as a primary focus of the multicultural policy. Today, most provinces and many municipalities have followed this procedure and mainly focus on education, policing, social services and protection of human rights within their areas of jurisdiction. Finally, most federal multicultural programs stress on institutional change, race relations and citizen integration and participation.

Multiculturalism means the diversity of the racial and cultural mix, the need for tolerance and accepting one another as fellow Canadians. By globalization and the ever-increasing movement of people from one country

to another, the challenge of appreciating and accommodating cultural differences has become a universal experience, so the government policy would be sensitive to the needs of both long-time residents and the newly arrived with the greatest success. Canada's future depends on the commitments of all its citizens to a unified Canadian identity. Therefore, multiculturalism in Canada become a significant issue and it has a deep root in the society.

Reference

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[www.hrw.org / refugees](http://www.hrw.org/refugees)

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