

# Good extent to multiculturalism in canada research paper example

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



## Research Paper Proposal

### Introduction

Multiculturalism and diversity is a major pillar of our Canadian Society. We build relationships and formulate a society based on many different beliefs and backgrounds. The pressing topic of this research paper is based on the concept of ‘ multiculturalism’ and how this complex word with different interpretations relates to everyone.

I also go on to confess my view on the topic as I explain the nature and extent to which we should support this holistic approach to society and define the border of understanding and compromise between multicultural groups across the country. This is not in any way undermining the importance of a cross-cultural society with mixed beliefs.

In-fact, one side of my argument states the significance of a multicultural group and how it creates a better understanding of the worldview we form as closed-minded human beings. Multiculturalism connects to the concept of a largely diverse community that we have here in Canada. Another benefit to this concept is that it reconfirms the motto that Canada is the “ land of immigrants” (Canada, 2011). It not only brings us all closer as human beings but also gives an opportunity to better understand each other.

The other side of my argument is one that may be a little bit more controversial and can easily be misinterpreted if proper explanation is not provided. Even though multiculturalism is a great concept, it needs a little more control to a certain degree. Even though we have a diverse community in Canada, we plead guilty to the fact that even as Canadians many of us have divided ourselves into sectors of origin and tend to associate mostly

with that group due to an invisible comfort zone that is created.

While this is accepted, the negative aspect to this is that some of these groups of origin have created pockets in different areas of Canada that dominate a particular population group. A good example of this is the north-east section of our very own Calgary which is mostly populated by the south Asian community (Herald, 2006). These pockets cause a one-sided multicultural group to form and which can give rise to racism against other groups. This whole concept has the similarity of the domino effect which can cause an unstoppable chain reaction to occur. If these pockets give rise to racism, then the whole unity that was there in that multicultural group fades away and disharmonizes the tune of understanding that we have built over the years.

I consider this to be a morally pressing issue because it relates to everyone who is a resident in Canada. At some point or another, we ponder on the concept of diversity in our community and think to ourselves about the current state of multiculturalism and immigration in Canada. Even though we all have different views about the topic, there are only two possible sides to this argument. That is, to integrate as is the Canadian identity, or revert to isolation and limit the possibilities that are presented in Canada as a thriving multicultural society like no other in the world. Canada is recognized for its harmony and simultaneous respect for all groups, regardless of origin, creed, or colour. Nevertheless as Canada becomes more populated we must find new ways to sustain our lifestyle of freedom. The thesis statement guiding this paper is that Canada needs to reinvigorate its multicultural spirit by

minimizing the growth of geographical and cultural silos that have become characteristic of suburban communities across the country.

## **Organization of Paper**

In organizing this paper, I will first start with an historical overview of multiculturalism in Canada. I will identify varying tenets enshrined in the Constitution that aim to safeguard and promote multiculturalism. I will then discuss some of the challenges that have surfaced in relation to this emphasis on accommodation. In this sense I will offer a critical view of some distortions around multiculturalism – particularly a caution of how far cultural accommodations should go. Some international comparisons will be drawn. I will offer a series of recommendations to consider to reinvigorate Canada's multicultural traditions. In concluding the paper I will return to the thesis statement and reiterate my position of multiculturalism through integration, not isolation.

## **Historical Context of Multiculturalism in Canada**

The genesis of multiculturalism in Canada was actually rooted in biculturalism. Confederation was predicated on the satisfactory merger of upper and lower Canada. Upper Canada was designated as the English speaking region and Lower Canada was the French speaking region. Over time Canada relied more and more on immigration to fuel its growing economy and to populate its immense territory.

The actual history of multiculturalism goes back to 1963 and the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (Wright, 2000). This Commission saw diversity as an integral part of Canada based on the

integration of all those who choose to live in Canada (Wright, 2000). It was followed by the federal policy of Canadian Multiculturalism in 1971 (Mock, 1997). The 1971 policy generated opportunities for the creation of programs and services to support ethno-cultural associations and individuals to maintain their identity and to practice their cultures and religions within Canada (Government of Canada, 2014). The 1971 policy was followed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) was written to reflect and protect a heterogeneous, diverse, and multicultural society (Canadian Heritage, 2003). Several tenets, as they relate to multiculturalism are worth noting. Section 27 is a direct reference to multiculturalism. It states, “ This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.” Section 2 is more indirect, but is also important in the context of Canadian multiculturalism. It outlines four fundamental freedoms as follows:

**Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:**

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association.

(Government of Canada, 2014)

As can be gleaned from the document there are parallels with the federal policy of Canadian Multiculturalism. Freedom of religion, and freedom of

association in particular fuel the sentiment that the promotion of ethnic identity is not only safeguarded, but promoted. The mention of God is also prominent in the document – with the preamble, “ Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.” The inclusion of the statement “ the supremacy of God” may partially be attributed to the historical ties Canada has with the Christian faith, and it may also be partially attributed to the notion that there is not a direct separation between Church and State (Cote & Gunn, 2005; Canadian Heritage, 2003). Nevertheless, the Charter acts as a progressive document recognizing that the freedom of and from religion must be upheld by legal means.

In was 17 years after the federal policy of Canadian Multiculturalism in 1971 was implemented that a separate law on the topic was passed. In 1988 the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was signed into law (Dewing, 2013). Two fundamental principles are identified and quoted from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) as follows:

- Multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
- [Multiculturalism] promotes the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assists them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation.

Inherent in the Act is the notion of accommodation. The ideas to “ enhance” and “ share” cultural heritage is an important point to this paper, as will be

outlined in the next section.

This brief history of the development of multicultural policy and law demonstrates how multiculturalism is ingrained in Canadian law and culture. Having introduced a brief understanding of the Canadian Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedom, and Multiculturalism Act it is important to also recognize interpretations and challenges to the documents.

## **Multiculturalism in Practice: Challenges**

Since the Charter holds the notion that everyone has “ freedom of conscience and religion” and that everyone is equal before the law regardless of background or creed, including religion, numerous court cases have arisen challenging the Charter (Canadian Heritage, 2003; Dickinson & Dolmage, 1996). These court cases were the basis of changing public policy from a traditional Christian focused society to one that embraced other faiths and non-faith perspectives. Examples of change that stemmed from various court cases include: opening businesses on Sunday, and providing religious accommodation in schools (Cote & Gunn, 2005; Dickenson & Dolmage, 1996; Ministry of Education, 1989). The movement from a society operating on overt Christian values to one where multiple faith values have been accepted has led to debates about where religion and culture belong in the Canadian public sphere.

In the broader picture these challenges are a reflective of a culture of accommodation in Canada. Unlike the United States which positions itself as a melting pot, Canada is fundamentally different, in that it encourages its residents to “ enhance” and “ promote” their cultural heritage. Yet, in

regards to the challenges issues above, there has been little pushback from the government. The concept of integration, for example, is subsumed under the concept of multiculturalism, which in turns fuels a desire – if not a right – for more and more accommodations.

Immigration is a hallmark of Canada and is one of the most important factors in having created a prosperous and harmonious society. Each year an average of 250, 000 immigrants arrive on Canadian soil. Many come without deep family connections, some are students, and others arrive to be reunited with their families in Canada. Over time, enclaves have been created with open arms, as is the right and interpretation of our Constitutional documents. Increasingly, however, there is a sense of isolationism that is occurring. This is subtle, but spreading. Although there are few intercultural conflicts in Canada among newcomer populations the assumption that a harmonious society is being preserved and protected, is misleading.

In locales like north east Calgary, Brampton or Markham (western and northern suburbs of Toronto, respectively), there are growing pockets of South Asian and East Asian communities that are nearly exclusive of any other ethnicities. I applaud the solidarity of varying ethnic groups to congregate and create a sense of community through centers, places of worship, restaurants and markets. Yet, under the existing circumstances in the areas mentioned above, the multiculturalism in Canada promoted in our Constitution is being distorted. The concept of integration is largely overlooked and has potentially negative consequences in the long-term. Integration is beneficial to both majority and minority populations. It is different than multiculturalism in the sense that it presents a more



harmonious outcome. As Canada grows, with greater reliance on newcomer populations to sustain or augment the birthrate, it is important that all Canadians grow up in a context of recognizing, accepting, and learning from other cultures. In this sense, I advocate for greater attention to integration in the context of multiculturalism, rather than only preservation or enhancement through multiculturalism.

### **A Step Forward: Integration and Multiculturalism.**

I advocate for greater attention to integration in the context of multiculturalism. In this context I propose the following:

- Re-orient school curriculum on citizenship to focus on the importance of integration in combination with the preservation of culture identity
- Test a national campaign that focuses on the merits of integration across cultures. Learning about Canada's multicultural history is central to this advocacy effort.
- Refine our policies and documents that aim to safeguard multiculturalism. Focus on harmony through integration, rather than only preservation of cultural identity.

This paper was oriented around the following thesis statement: Canada needs to reinvigorate its multicultural spirit by minimizing the growth of geographical and cultural silos that have become characteristic of suburban communities across the country.

While it is challenging to limit people's mobility – counter to Section 2 of the Charter – this is the hopeful outcome. Through campaigning, education, and national outlook, it is important to return to what has made Canada a

country that is envied around the world.

Canada's multicultural policies have merit and should be praised for the intent of creating a harmonious and peaceful society. Yet, as Canada's newcomer population has grown, so too has the isolationism among people. As such, I advocate for a renewed sense of multiculturalism that focuses on integration as much as it does on multiculturalism. In this sense, a better sense of otherness can be fostered and what will be ultimately safeguarded in our country is harmony and peace.

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