

Government Multicultural Policy in Canada in the Period of 1970-2000-s

Ivan Stepanovich Bakhov

Inter-regional Academy of Personnel Management, Frometovskaya str., 2, 03039, Kiev, Ukraine

Abstract: The growth of ethnic and cultural diversity, the occurrence of the associated problems and the growing importance of ethnic diversity has led the states to understanding of the need of multicultural education policy. National approaches to the political solution of the problems of cultural and ethnic diversity are different. Canada is an increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse nation. One of the key policy responses to this diversity has been official multiculturalism, first introduced in the early 1970s. While multiculturalism is 40 years old in Canada, it nevertheless remains a highly controversial and debated issue. This article provides an introduction to multiculturalism in Canada at the federal level. This includes an overview of contemporary diversity in the Canadian population, a look at the history of federal policy towards ethnic groups, an examination of the values and structure of modern Canadian multicultural policy and a summary of key debates on this topic.

Key words: Multicultural policy • Cultural pluralism • Bilingualism and biculturalism • Cultural and linguistic heritage • Cultural diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Canada was the first country in North America that formally adopted a policy of multiculturalism in 1971 [1; 2; 3;]. It was due to the so-called “third force” that greatly strengthened by the 1970s in Canada, i.e. Canadians of non-English and non-French origin, that largely enhanced the Canadian government to officially adopt the policy of multiculturalism. Their commitment to the policy of multiculturalism was essentially a reaction to the concept, formed in the 1960-s after the “Quiet Revolution” in Quebec, which resulted in labeling Canada a bilingual and bicultural nation, where other ethnic groups are assigned a secondary role. Such an approach has led to a protest in the western provinces of Canada. At the same time, there was a certain interest in the politics of multiculturalism among the Anglo-Canadians, who calculated under its cover to maintain its dominant position in various areas of Canadian society as multiculturalism, to some extent, played down the role of French Canadians in the country, overshadowing the idea of bicultural, more profitable French-Canadians in the country. The multicultural policy has served an invitation for all Canadians to recognize cultural pluralism and nudged citizens to participate fully in society life.

In 1963 the Royal Commission on bilingualism and biculturalism adopted the report, in which it was recommended to replace the bicultural policy based on the interests of long-existing English and French groups. This policy was announced in response to existence of several leading forces in the Canadian society.

The government appointed a Royal Commission to study the problem and suggest possible solutions. The commission was to develop recommendations for the development of Canada as a nation on the basis of equality of the two constituent nations, taking into account other ethnic groups. The Royal Commission on bilingualism and biculturalism held hearings in various provinces of Canada. Commission members heard at these meetings matters much more complicated than just the problem of the relationship between English and French Canadians. The speakers-representatives of ethnic minorities- recognized that the old policy of assimilation to ethnic minorities was unfair and doomed to failure. They told the committee members that immigrants and their children, along with other Canadians have experienced; and they sacrificed the lives of their sons and daughters in the military operations of the country and are now reaping the fruits of economic recovery and their own hard work. Perhaps they are not British or French heritage, but they consider themselves citizens of

Canadian society and can not be excluded from public life. Speakers representing different cultural heritage, discussed in the late 60's various models of citizens' participation in public life.

They called for a new model of citizen participation in public life, which would have implied a large ethnic pluralism of the "Canadian family". The speakers proposed a plan (model) of Canadian society, based on the public acceptance of differences and support cultural pluralism. Multiculturalism was the national symbol of Canada and expressed the symbol of national Canadian identity. The influence of British culture was weakened after the Second World War and the growing American presence led to the fear of losing their identity [4].

The objectives of multiculturalism should ideally involve the preservation of ethnic groups and their cultures, while promoting tolerance of diversity and the lack of racial and national prejudices [5]. One of the goals of multiculturalism as was creation of Canada as a single nation and differentiation of Canadians from Americans [6; 3].

Appointed by the federal government Royal Commission recognized the value of cultural pluralism and studied the relationship between English-speaking and French-speaking population of the country. The Commission called on Canadian institutions to reflect the ideas of pluralism in their policies and programs. When the policy was officially announced, it was the policy of multiculturalism within bilingual programs.

Multiculturalism recognizes English and French as the official languages of Canada and the ethnic pluralism was declared as a positive feature of Canadian society, which must be preserved and promoted. Many provinces followed the recommendations of the federal government by introducing the idea of multiculturalism in the main documents. The initial goal of the developed program was preservation of the right to their own culture and ethnicity as a part of Canada's national identity. Accordingly, the goals then shifted to issues of equality, social involvement and national unity [7; 8].

The purpose of multicultural policy of the 1971 was the support of ethnic groups, help in their quest to maintain and share their own cultural and linguistic heritage, to share it with other Canadians. It was assumed that as a result of this would be achieved personal and collective trust among members of society and would develop tolerance for diversity, as well as positive intergroup attitudes [6].

Describing the purpose of multiculturalism, Canadian Prime Minister P. Trudeau said: "We are becoming less similar to other, less amenable to social, cultural and political absorption of others" [9]. The adoption of multiculturalism became a symbol of collective identity and a source of pride for Canadians.

In 1970-s started an active work on the embodiment of multiculturalism in life. The multicultural policy set four main objectives: promotion of ethnic and cultural groups to overcome their barriers to their full participation in all aspects of Canadian society and in preserving and strengthening their identity; to facilitate creative cultural exchange between all Canadian ethno-cultural groups; to help these groups to overcome cultural barriers, provide a creative mood among these groups; to assist immigrants in learning at least one of the official languages of Canada; to promote the linguistic assimilation of immigrants, which should be manifested in the organization of their learning two official languages (English and French). Commenting on the fourth goal, it is possible to emphasize that the implementation of multicultural education was carried out in the framework of bilingual programs.

In support of official multiculturalism, the federal government established a number of new programs, providing public monies for cultural activities, projects and advocacy groups. Following the announcement of the multicultural policy in October of 1971 the Federal Government appointed members of ethnic communities to the newly created Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (CCCM) in 1973 to coordinate the interaction between government agencies and ethnic organizations, to participate in the formulation of recommendations which would address the challenges of implementing that policy [10]. Later the CCCM was renamed the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) [11]. Provincial and city councils began to act in a similar pattern primarily engaged in information and education activities

In the years that followed, the Government of Canada introduced other key initiatives to support its official multiculturalism policy. The state policy of multiculturalism is reflected in the Immigration Act of 1978, which determined that immigration policy should be based on the principles of non-discrimination, facilitation the reunification of families, caring for the refugees.

The "Immigration Act, 1976" as the primary federal legislation regulating immigration to Canada was replaced by the "Immigration and Refugee Protection Act" in 2001 [12].

When the policy was first introduced, it basically met the needs of European immigrants and their descendants in Canada. This policy was introduced through cultural programs and activities and programs of language learning and linguistic heritage. Initially, the policy of multiculturalism was largely cultural and educational in nature, focused on the preservation of cultural heritage, the creation and maintenance of multilingual “ethnic” press, radio and television, assisting schools with instruction in the languages of other ethnic groups and various cultural societies, promotion of folk festivals [13;14].

Next, with the increasing flow of new immigrants there have been some adjustments in the politics of multiculturalism. As a result the policy of multiculturalism has evolved so that it began to include the prohibition of discrimination and prejudice and implied full and equal participation of national minorities in the country life. Justice and equality were emphasized in all aspects of life [15; 16].

Appeal to the ideas of multiculturalism in the 1970s as an important policy supported by multiple levels of government and other social institutions, made it possible the extension of the main requirements to the educational institutions- respect for cultural diversity.

In the 1980-s, institutionalization of the policy of multiculturalism takes place, it gets a clearer legalization. In 1982 was adopted the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which contains a special clause, which postulates the need to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the various ethnic groups. According to this paragraph, Canadian courts must take into account the multi-cultural character of Canadian society at the highest levels of decision-making. The Charter prohibits discrimination by ensuring equal and fair treatment to all citizens, regardless of race, gender and ethnicity. The Charter shall extend not only to Canadian citizens, but to all citizens residing in the territory of Canada. The Constitution of 1982 secured the citizens freedom and right to national and cultural self-expression.

In 1985, was set up a special committee- the House of Commons on multiculturalism. The policy of multiculturalism in education goes beyond the idea of bilingualism. In 1988 the federal government passed the The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, [17] in which multiculturalism is identified as the energy source for the future of Canada. The 1988 Act gave official multiculturalism a stronger legal basis by consolidating existing government policies and practices into legislation: it was the first formal legislative of the

document multicultural policy. It concerns not only the individual, but also group rights of ethnic and cultural communities. The law prohibits racism and discrimination, promotes the preservation of the peculiar features of ethnic groups and makes provision for equal access and full participation of all Canadians in the social, political and economic life of Canadian society. In addition, the Act provided a more detailed policy statement on multiculturalism and established agencies in support of the policy, such as the Canadian Multicultural Advisory Committee.

Later was passed the Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada. The Act of 1988 was a milestone in the national policy. In the Act recognition of cultural diversity has been proclaimed as the basic principle of Canadian society. Officially was proclaimed the policy of preservation and development of minority subcultures (“heritage cultures”), the equality of cultures in the social cultural life. In the 1988 Act multiculturalism was defined as “a source of strength and future of Canada.”

Act of 1988 put forward the following principles and objectives:

- to recognize and disseminate the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all its members to preserve and share their own cultural heritage;
- multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian identity and is an invaluable source for developing Canadian culture;
- to ensure the full and equal participation of all individuals and groups in the evolution and formation of all aspects of Canadian society, to overcome barriers in the equal participation;
- to recognize the existence of the groups that share a common origin and have made a historic contribution to the development of Canadian society and continue to actively participate in it;
- certify that all people have equal treatment and equal protection by the law and require respect for their own cultural heritage;
- To ensure that all social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada pursued a policy of respect for the cultural diversity of Canadian society;
- to promote recognition and assessment of different cultures;

- to maintain and develop the use of other languages (other than English or French) along with the all-increasing status of official languages;
- to disseminate the ideas of multiculturalism throughout Canada [18; 19].

This Act also includes a number of recommendations for the implementation of multicultural policy.

Support for this policy was carried out on the legislative level. Particularly, in 1982 was adopted the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, religion. However, the law did not provide guarantees for preserving and development of their culture and language. The Multiculturalism Act of 1988 introduced provisions in the statute that gave such assurances:

- All Canadians have the right to preserve and share their own cultural heritage; their cultures and languages should be protected and multiplied.
- All government agencies should conduct policy, develop programs and implement practices aimed at ensuring equal rights for all Canadians in getting a job and all kinds of promotion in these institutions. Such a policy should promote understanding and respect for diversity of all members of Canadian society.

By 1994, the annual report on the implementation of the Multiculturalism Act outlined three major areas of government: to eliminate racism and discrimination, to overcome the problems of integration faced by ethnic minorities and disseminate national values. Available government agencies and educational institutions were seen as playing the central role in achieving these goals [19; 20].

In the 1990s the policy of multiculturalism was refocused on *visible minorities* and a wide range of related issues, including: the fight against racial discrimination and racial prejudice, ensuring adequate participation of visible minorities in the social, economic and political life of the country.

In 1997, Secretary of State for Multiculturalism issues X. Fry developed a new program. This program has provided research, education, community activities and development of institutions, whose activities should be directed to:

- the fight against racism and discrimination;
- ensuring the participation of visible minorities in the public decision-making;
- conducting the collection of information on the ethnic, racial and religious diversity of Canadian society and the development of best practices that would enable the government to ensure equal opportunities and to ensure social solidarity.

Each province is developing a multicultural education policy based on the following documents: International Declaration of Human Rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Multicultural Act of Canada.

The policy of multiculturalism is ensured by the legal framework, but in the practice of its application in different provinces, there are significant differences. For example, in Ontario, where annually settles around 40% of all immigrants, along with the federal programs is working a number of provincial programs that help newcomers to find jobs and getting services guaranteed for them. Characteristically, in carrying out their policy of multiculturalism the provincial governments choose different priorities. For example, in Saskatchewan of main importance is considered multiculturalism in education and employment; in Manitoba there is a program of support for ethnic cultures; the Alberta government put emphasis on ensuring equal opportunities.

For example, the goals of multicultural policy in Saskatchewan are defined as follows:

- Regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, economic and social status, every citizen has the right to:
- equal access to education, equal opportunities to achieve academic progress in the atmosphere free of discrimination, racism, prejudice, intolerance;
- get training by programs that recognize differences (cultural, spiritual and physical), motivating for full participation in the cultural life of a diverse society.

Neither assimilation nor segregation is considered educational objectives.

- The essence of multicultural education involves a multidisciplinary approach in the curricula and programs. Multicultural literacy is an important component for all participants in the educational process. Provincial Department of Education provides the necessary support in addressing these issues.

- The content of the curriculum free from stereotypes, idealizing and focusing on exotic traditions can serve the development of intercultural understanding and respect. Cultural similarities and differences are recognized and respected; values of both minorities and the dominant group are considered.

Conclusions. In general, the policy of multiculturalism meets the approval of public opinion in Canada. The concept of “multiculturalism” is on a par with the fundamental principles of freedom and equality.

The impetus towards the multicultural policies was the growth of Anglo-Canadian and French-Canadian communities and concerns of immigrants on the issues of relationship between the two main ethnic and cultural groups. The pressure of various subcultures of Canada has led to a shift from biculturalism to multiculturalism. In addition, the liberalization of immigration policy has created additional conditions for the recognition of the policy of multiculturalism.

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