

Canadians' Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Multiculturalism

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Abstract:

Canada is considered one of the most receiving countries of immigrants throughout their delicate history. The magnitude number of immigrants to Canada has been designated as one of the pushing factors towards national reconciliation and adapting multiculturalism policies. Therefore, in order to get understand the sociological perspective explaining the implications of migration phenomena, the study seeking to explore Canadian attitudes towards immigrants and how they perceived multiculturalism in a society has been built on colonialism historical memories, considering the main variables have been stood behind the variance among respondents' attitudes such as: intergroup contact, schooling level and occupational status, personal income.

Keywords: Attitudes, Immigration, Reconciliation, Multiculturalism.

المخلص

تاريخياً تعد كندا واحدة من بين أكبر الدول المستقبلة للمهاجرين في العالم. كما وتعد الأرقام الكبيرة للمهاجرين القادمين إلى كندا من بين أهم العوامل التي دفعت باتجاه تبني سياسات التعددية الثقافية وتقبل الشراكة المجتمعية مع الآخر/ المهاجرين. عليه فإن محاولة بناء تصور سوسولوجي عن ظاهرة الهجرة وأثارها المحتملة على التركيبة المجتمعية والتعرف على اتجاهات المجتمع الكندي حيال المهاجرين، يجب أن يتم أيضاً من خلال توصيف اتجاهات الكنديين حيال التعددية الثقافية بشكل عام لاسيما في ظل الخصوصية الثقافية والتاريخية التي شهدتها المجتمع الكندي ووجود رواسب استعمارية حول ثقافة الأنا والآخر. امبيريقياً، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى محاولة فهم التباين في استجابات المبحوثين حول ظاهرة الهجرة والمهاجرين وحول سياسات التعدد الثقافي حسب متغيرات: التعليم، الوظيفة، الدخل والتواصل مع المهاجرين في محيط المبحوثين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اتجاهات، الهجرة، المصالحة، التعددية الثقافية.

1. Introduction

Immigration is considered one of the most raised issues in Sociology field whether in respect of investigating main causes of the phenomena - push and pull reasons as well as network factors [1] or in terms of exploring its potential impacts - benefits and consequences, on social, cultural and economic fiber in the destination countries [2]. With regard to expected negative implications of immigration in receiving countries on one hand, a sizable body of literatures has paid more attention to reasons beyond increasing or reducing public concerns; like media scrutiny, official and political discourse or economic situation to receiving countries [3]. On the other hand, other studies have been focused on how natives, in the receiving country, perceived fears of magnitude number of immigrants and how such numbers might be socially, culturally and economically influential on their societal composition and, and how such increasing numbers of immigrants throughout Canada history were the pushing factors toward adopting multiculturalism policies, and had stood behind shifting toward national reconciliation -

between whites and aboriginal people - in a country have been built fundamentally and officially on mono or binary concepts / basis whereas French and English people have dominated the country; Canadian official language as an example. Therefore, multifarious attitudes have been generated towards immigrants and they ranged from being sensitive and cautious to being opening and welcomed. As a result, such figures of the growing rates of immigration have produced deep radicalized anxieties about multiculturalism policies in Canada, and questioning whether multiculturalism stifling bilingualism and its adverse effects on the imagined nation of the two "founding races", English and French people [4]. Even though the idea of multiculturalism has been adopted by many countries from all over the world, less public support notably observed. That support, if existed, has been altered to feelings of cautiousness and suspiciousness not only toward immigration and immigrants, but also to the policy of multiculturalism due to the accompanying of some social problems to the phenomenon of immigration like segregation issues, crime increasing, terrorist attacks, and prejudice and discrimination [5]. One research indicated that those who experience inter-group contact in their workplaces, social lives and neighborhoods are more likely to be positively inclined towards multiculturalism and to perceive less threats and fears from immigrants [6]. Herein, the author argues that the variances in public attitudes toward immigrants are attributed not only to intergroup contact between respondents and immigrants, but also to how respondents understand and assimilate the meaning of multiculturalism and its implications in their society.

1.1 Literatures and Derived Theoretical Backgrounds

Many theoretical frameworks can be elicited from the body of literature review on immigration attitudes. First of all, playing more importance of social explanations of the impacts of migration phenomena within societal constructions in the receiving countries in terms of how power structure is organized or shared, and how social inequality in social economic and political rights are distributed among expected beneficiary. Secondly, focusing on how daily interaction between immigrants and natives, and how its implications evoke particular opinions, beliefs, and fears. The last approach is embodied in how individuals and over the course of their lives are subjected to certain process of social normalization through social learning and behavioral formation so that cultural and social values and preferences are rooted deeply within the societal system and the individual identity.

The role of socioeconomic correlations and self-interest has focused on how perceived impacts utilized by individual trajectories, consequences of competition, and rational calculations influence the nature of individuals' attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. According to [7] the study indicated that natives who focus on their own well-being are more likely to hold negative attitudes, so they can protect their positions within the society, compete in labor market, and also dominate the residential spaces as much as they can. Labor market Competition studies have focused on individuals' judgments of the economic situation of their society and how various groups compete economically among each other without focusing on their societal status or ethnicity. Several studies [8,9] suggested that individuals with lower economic power are prone to get anxious about competition in labor market and to hold hostile to new comers of immigrants who they would be treated as powerful competitors as they succeeded in entering almost all different job categories.

Intergroup competition is a main reason of gaining unfavorable attitudes to express against new competitors. Controversial discussion about whether encouraging conditions of being hostile have to be literal or just how some perceive them figuratively [10]. Regardless of both circumstances that lead to forming public opinion, people tend to be exclusionary, prejudicial, and unfavorable when their own economy, culture, or religion are threatened [11]. In [12], the article argued that interaction and intergroup contact between individuals from different cultural backgrounds brings about shared values and opinions among themselves, so they respect and accept each other. At least under one of these four conditions, social integration in diverse society can be resulted; first of all, members have equivalent opportunities to get into different social classes. Secondly, various groups partake in shared objectives, so they keep maintaining their society automatically. Thirdly, having a desire to get together and participate under different circumstances is fundamentally important. Fourthly, officials have to back up groups' integration by watching laws and legislations and conducting endorsements as presented in [13,14]. Individuals and throughout their social lives within their groups, in childhood and adulthood stages, develop in conscious or unconscious ways particular beliefs, opinions, values, and emotions about things and people. Different societal institutions, government and education and family systems, play a role in forming conceptual and value system which individuals' feelings, including their attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies are considered as a part of that system [15]. Another theoretical perspective stated that public opinion formation is due to the process of symbolic interests,

values and personal identification, in the community. Social identity is the core notion in this theory; individuals in particular group favor thinking about themselves and the group belonging to rather than others.

Utilized a theory of cosmopolitan in order to answer the question why educated people from various professional classes adopted liberal thoughts regardless of their desires of keeping and maintaining their social and economic status. Both the educational achievement and occupational position are significant aspects of forming universal worldview, especially in terms of knowledge production and procedures of conducting symbols. Educational and employment institutions have favored and supported multiculturalism and got benefits from globalization, multicultural ideas and the ideology of diversity in their members' mindset. Therefore, individuals within these organizations are prone to gain positive attitudes toward immigrants and immigration irrespective of their social backgrounds [6].

Political discourse also in somehow contributes rhetorically and legally in forming public discourse and media scrutiny in a way that matches overall policies. Therefore, this theoretical framework can be essentially utilized in understanding how developing anti or pro-immigrant attitudes are resulted from general political orientations. Politicians use symbolic nods and stereotypes about terroristic and criminal records associated with certain immigrants and backgrounds to evoke pervious perceived fears among society members which lead them to not being supportive for immigration policies [17].

1.2 Research hypotheses

On aggregate, many studies tried to answer the question investigating essential predictors might help in developing negative or positive ATII. Education is the most obvious variable in determining a person's attitudes. The higher level of education is, the more supportive attitudes are gained. So why is that, educated people tend to hold sympathetic orientations to immigrants and immigration? A tendency of liberalization in the educational system, broader knowledge, an increase of reflexivity, a critical thought, an acceptance of multiculturalism, adopting cosmopolitan and modern social networks are the main systematic attributes of contemporary educational institutions. As a result, the acquisition of education tends to be more explicit among democratic societies, as an illustration in Europe and less in the former communist countries.

H1. Education level would be related to the perception of multiculturalism and its impacts in Canada, and to respondents' feelings and attitudes to immigrants and groups diversity.

H2. Employed participants comparing to unemployed people would show favorable attitudes to multiculturalism policies and would expect positive impact of multiculturalism policy in Canada, also, they would be more welcomed to immigrants to Canada.

H3. Respondents with higher income would not feel challenged when competition increases, therefore, no fears associated with immigrants flows and labor market competition. Also, they would be holding pro-immigrant attitudes.

H4. Respondents who experienced inter group contact in their neighborhoods, families, friends, schools or works would be positively supportive of multiculturalism and thereby immigrants.

H5. The way respondents perceived multiculturalism and its implications, merits and downsides, on Canadian Society would be correlated to their attitudes toward immigrants.

2. Data and methods

2.1 Sample

Multiculturalism Attitudes Survey [Canada], 1991 was used to test the study's argument. The sample for the national survey involved a base sample of 2,500 Canadians adults along with "booster" samples in each of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver in order to include at least 500 respondents in each of the three major urban centers in Canada. The total augmented sample was 3,325. The sample includes 1159 (34.9 percent) unemployed and 2156 (64.8 percent) employed. Participants' level of education, 2449(73.7 percent not holding a university degree, while 867 (26.1 percent) hold a university degree or above. The respondents who earned less than \$49,999, were 1870 (56.2 percent) and more than \$50,000 were 1204 (36.2 percent). The last attribute of the sample is group contact among participants and people who were born and raised outside of Canada from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This contact was in their neighborhoods, 506 (No contact, 15.2 percent) and, 2783 (There was contact,

83.7). In their families was, 1980 (No contact, 59.5 percent) and 1333 (No contact, 40.1 percent). Within friend groups, 828 (No contact, 26.3 percent) and 2488 (There was contact, 73.7). Lastly, in work 796 (No contact, 23.9 percent) and 2235 (There was contact, 67.2).

2.2 Measures

Demographics or the independent variables, which had shown the main attributes of the survey's participants, are chosen in this paper as following: Occupational situation, level of schooling, and income groups (Notice that most of the variables, independents and dependents, in the dataset were categorical and have to be recoded as dichotomies to run chi-square test on them, also have to compute some statements in some variables to identify aggregate patterns within those statements and to derive pro and anti-attitudes or to determine the merits and downsides of multiculturalism policy in Canada, so chi-square could be run in the minimum number of tables). First variable the employment status was measured by seven items where respondents indicated whether they were; employed full and part time, not employed but seeking for employment, a student, at home, retired, or other. This variable was recorded by two items where employed takes (1) and unemployed is (0). Education level was measured by sex items where they reported their education as following; grade school or some high school, completed high school, technical, post-secondary/CEGEP, community college, some university, completed university degree, and post graduate degree. The variable was recorded by two items where (1) is holding a university degree or above and (0) is below a university degree. Lastly the only interval-ratio variable, income was measured by nine items. They started from less than \$10,000 to reach \$80,000+. This also was recoded to be a categorical variable by two items high income, higher than \$49,000, takes (1) vs low income, less than \$49,000 (2).

There is also another main independent variable, which was not included in demographics. That variable is interred group contact between variety of people in their neighborhood, family, friends, and work, was measured by three items for each; none ethnic or cultural groups were found, some, or many. It was recoded to be measured by only two values (1) there were groups contact and (0) none. After this variable recoded, and combined the four loci where respondents experienced contact with others from different ethnic and cultural background by computing them to be only one variable measures group contact. Dependent and nominal variables; The first chosen variable the impacts of multicultural policy in Canada were measured by a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 meant totally disagree and 7 totally agree. This variable recoded to be only two items where (1) is agreed and (0) is disagreed. The second dependent variable being chosen to measure Canadian feelings about immigrants to Canada as well as how comfortable they are with whom gave different ethnic and cultural origins, especially who were born and raised outside of Canada. There were 13 different groups included from different cultural and religious background. With each group there was a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 meant not at all comfortable and 7 meant completely comfortable. The variable recoded each to be dummied variable where comfortable takes (1) and not comfortable takes (0) and did combine these groups to be cultural background groups; European origins, Chinese, and Arabs. Also, religious background was created for comparison; Jews and Moslems. Each combined group was accompanied by two values, comfortable or not.

2.3 Statistical Analysis

Univariate analysis used to identify frequencies, percentiles, and variances among respondents. Also, exploring the differences in their responses by using bivariate statistical tests fit these kinds of variables like Chi-square test to find out the association between the demographic variables of the respondents, occupational status, education level, and income groups and their perceiving of multiculturalism and its implications on Canadian Society as a reflection their attitudes toward immigrants and their explicit as well. Multiple regressions could be used to see different responses and attitudes toward immigrants as a dependent variable based of respondents' perception of multiculturalism and inter-group contact with immigrants as independent variables. Table 1 indicates the impacts of multiculturalism in Canada. Table 2 presents inter-group contact with immigrants. Table 3 shows immigrants' origins and feeling comfortable. Table 4-6 demonstrates chi-square tests.

Table 1 Impacts of Multiculturalism in Canada.

How Canadians perceived the impacts of multiculturalism.		Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent
Destroy of Canadian way of life.	Valid	2706	81.4	81.4	82.0
	disagree		82.0	17.8	
	agree	593	17.8	99.2	
	Total		18.0	.8	
	Missing	3299	99.2	100.0	
	(NS)		100.0		
Enrich Canada's culture.	Valid				22.7
	disagree				
	agree	749	22.5	76.8	
	Total	2554	76.8	99.3	
	Missing	3303	99.3	.7	
	(NS)	22	.7	100.0	
Provide greater equality of opportunity for all groups in Canada.	Valid				26.0
	disagree				
	agree	858	25.8	73.4	
	Total	2439	73.4	99.2	
	Missing	3297	99.2	.8	
	(NS)	28	.8	100.0	
Give some groups more than their fair share.	Valid				59.9
	disagree				
	agree	1963	59.0	39.6	
	Total	1316	39.6	98.6	
	Missing	3279	98.6	1.4	
	(NS)	46	1.4	100.0	
Cause greater conflict between groups of different origins.	Valid				63.7
	disagree				
	agree	2090	62.9	35.8	
	Total	1190	35.8	98.6	
	Missing	3280	98.6	1.4	
	(NS)	45	1.4	100.0	
Ensure that people from various cultural backgrounds will have a sense of belonging to Canada.	Valid				26.8
	disagree				
	agree	881	26.5	72.5	
	Total	2412	72.5	99.0	
	Missing	3293	99.0	1.0	
	(NS)	32	1.0	100.0	
Force Canada to change very quickly.	Valid				74.5
	disagree				
	agree	2434	73.2	25.1	
	Total	834	25.1	98.3	
	Missing	3268	98.3	1.7	
	(NS)	57	1.7	100.0	
Help unite Canada.	Valid				37.2
	disagree				
	agree	1224	36.8	62.2	
	Total	2067	62.2	99.0	
	Missing	3291	99.0	1.0	
	(NS)	34	1.0	100.0	
Promote better foreign trade and international relation with other countries.	Valid				36.9
	disagree				
	agree	1203	36.2	62.0	
	Total	2060	62.0	98.1	
	Missing	3263	98.1	1.9	
	(NS)	62	1.9	100.0	

Table 2 Inter-Group Contact with Immigrants.

Are three people from a different cultural or racial background than you in the following options?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Neighbourhood.	Valid	506	15.2	15.4
	None	2783	83.7	
	There are	3289	98.9	
	Total	36	1.1	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	
Family.	Valid	1980	59.5	59.8
	None	1333	40.1	
	There are	3313	99.6	
	Total	12	.4	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	
Work.	Valid	796	23.9	26.3
	None	2235	67.2	
	There are	3031	91.2	
	Total	294	8.8	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	
Friends.	Valid	828	24.9	26.3
	None	2488	74.8	
	There are	3316	99.7	
	Total	9	.3	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	

Table 3 Immigrants' Origins and Feeling Comfortable.

Feeling comfortable with immigrants from different cultural and religious backgrounds who were born and raised outside of Canada as following:		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Immigrants from European origins.	Valid	925	27.8	28.3
	Not comfortable	2338	70.3	
	Comfortable	3263	98.1	
	Total	62	1.9	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	
Immigrants from Chinese origins.	Valid	571	17.3	17.3
	Not comfortable	2728	82.7	
	Comfortable	3299	100.0	
	Total	26		
	Missing (NS)	3325		
Immigrants from Arabic origins.	Valid	1016	30.6	31.4
	Not comfortable	2219	66.7	
	Comfortable	3235	97.3	
	Total	90	2.7	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	
Muslims immigrants.	Valid	1091	32.8	34.0
	Not comfortable	2119	63.7	
	Comfortable	3210	96.5	
	Total	115	3.5	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	
Jews immigrants.	Valid	464	14.0	14.1
	Not comfortable	2825	85.0	
	Comfortable	3289	98.9	
	Total	36	1.1	
	Missing (NS)	3325	100.0	

Table 4 Chi-Square Tests, Expected Negative Implications of Multiculturalism * Occupational Status, Education, Income, and Group Contact.

Negative implications of multiculturalism.	Occupational status.		Total
	Unemployed	Employed	
Disagree	1078	2034	3112
Agree	72	111	183
Total	1150	2145	3295
Occupational status differences are not statistically significant: Person Chi-Square = 1.683a, not significant at the .05 level.			
Negative implications of multiculturalism.	Education.		Total
	Uni-Degree or Above	Below Uni-Degree	

Disagree	829	2281	3110
Agree	32	154	186
Total	861	2435	3296
Educational level differences are statistically significant: Person Chi-Square =8.124a, significant at the, 05 level.			
Negative implications of multiculturalism.	Income.		Total
	Low	High	
Disagree	1761	1135	2896
Agree	98	60	158
Total	1859	1195	3054
Income group differences are not statistically significant: Person Chi-Square =.093a, not significant at the, 05 level.			
Negative implications of multiculturalism.	Group Contact.		Total
	There is contact	No contact	
Disagree	2161	839	3000
Agree	138	40	178
Total	2299	879	3178
Group contact differences are not statistically significant: Person Chi-Square =2.536a, not significant at the, 05 level.			

Table 5 Chi-Square Tests, Expected Positive Implications of Multiculturalism * Occupational Status, Education, Income, and Group Contact.

Positive Implications of Multiculturalism.	Occupational status.		Total
	Unemployed	Employed	
Disagree	683	1314	1997
Agree	449	818	1267
Total	1132	2132	3264
Occupational status differences are not statistically significant: Person Chi-Square =.523a,not significant at the, 05 level.			
Positive implications of multiculturalism.	Education.		Total
	Uni-Degree or Above	Below Uni-Degree	
Disagree	545	1452	1997
Agree	309	958	1267
Total	854	2410	3264
Educational level differences are not statistically significant: Person Chi-Square= 3.381a,not significant at the, 05 level.			
Positive implications of multiculturalism.	Income.		Total
	Low	High	
Disagree	1085	748	1833
Agree	757	438	1195
Total	1842	1186	3028
Income group differences are statistically significant: Person Chi-Square =5.241a, significant at the, 05 level.			
Positive implications of multiculturalism.	Group Contact.		Total
	There is contact	No contact	
Disagree	506	1427	1933
Agree	368	848	1216
Total	874	2275	3149
Group contact differences are statistically significant: Person Chi-Square= 6.216a, significant at the, 05 level.			

Table 6 Chi-Square Tests, Muslims Immigrants and Comfortableness * Occupational Status, Education, Income, and Group Contact.

Feeling comfortable with Muslims immigrants.	Occupational status.		Total
	Unemployed	Employed	
Not comfortable	395	693	1088
Comfortable	705	1408	2113
Total	1100	2101	3201
Occupational status differences are not statistically significant: Person Chi-Square = 2.753a, not significant at the, 05 level.			
Feeling comfortable with Muslims immigrants.	Education.		Total
	Uni-Degree or Above	Below Uni-Degree	
Not Comfortable	246	841	1087
Comfortable	602	1513	2115
Total	848	2354	3202
Educational level differences are statistically significant: Person Chi-Square = 12.544a, significant at the, 05 level.			
Feeling comfortable with Muslims immigrants.	Income.		Total
	Low	High	
Not comfortable	649	365	1014
Comfortable	1151	810	1961
Total	1800	1175	2975
Income group differences are statistically significant: Person Chi-Square = 7.885a, significant at the, 05 level.			
Feeling comfortable with Muslims immigrants.	Group Contact.		Total
	There is contact	No contact	
Not comfortable	205	850	1055
Comfortable	654	1374	2028
Total	859	2224	3083
Group contact differences are statistically significant: Person Chi-Square = 56.722a, significant at the, 05 level.			

3. Conclusion

In overall and by looking at the descriptive tables it is clearly seen that respondents hold favorable attitudes to multiculturalism even though was some cautiousness about the expected negative implication of multiculturalism. Moreover, inter-group contact between Canadians and immigrants, who were born and raised out of Canada, from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in following loci; neighborhood, family, friends, and work. However, the descriptive analysis as we can see in Table-3 was differentiated regarding whether they were comfortable in particular with the following people, European immigrants, Chinese, Arabs, Muslims, and Jews. Participants remained holding reservation to immigrants from Arabic and Islamic origins which might be the effect of political orientation at that time or due to the media scrutiny. The second part of the analysis was about correlation analysis; Chi-square test was run to see the association between IVs and DVs. Almost half of contingency tables are not statistically significant which obviously contradict the previous studies and literature. As was mentioned previously computing and recoding some statements and variables were measured by the survey and this might be the reason behind the contradiction.

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