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# ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

*A kanadai értékek új koncepciója — A bevándorlási  
politika változásai (2008-2015)*

*New Conceptions of Canadian Values: Changing  
Immigration Policy (2008-2015)*

**Témavezető:**

Dr. Kenyeres János  
habilitált egyetemi docens

**Készítette:**

Csuka Noémi Szandra  
anglisztika alapszak  
amerikanisztika szakirány

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper addresses the issue of the compatibility of the Harper governments' main reforms to the Canadian immigration system between 2008 and 2015 and the recently emerging interpretation of the Canadian multiculturalism policy, which is distinctive of the new realities of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and essentially different from its character of the previous decades. While multiculturalism concentrated on discrimination questions and human right issues in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, today it is focusing on the encouragement of full integration and citizenship acquirement. Through the analysis of the influencing factors of immigration patterns and Canadian public attitude regarding the ultimate immigration programs and the main challenges of contemporary Canadian society, this essay arrives at the conclusion that the Harper administration, even though it concentrates on immigration principally from an economic point of view, fosters Canadians' actual understanding of immigration policy's most prominent objective: fast and efficient integration of newcomers into the unity of the Canadian multicultural community.

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## 1. Introduction

The Canadian nation has always had its share of global migration, especially after it opened its gates for Third World nations in the 1960s (Whitaker 20). To date Canada has become the second country in the world with the highest percentage of foreign-born population after Australia (StatCan, *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity* 7). Consequently, two Canadian metropolises, namely, Toronto and Vancouver, are among the first three cities with the highest amount of immigrant population in the world (The Economist). In 2011 Canadian ethnicities reported more than 200 different origins—out of which 13 has already exceeded one million members, coming from Europe, Asia, and the American continent (StatCan, *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity* 13). This diversity of immigrant groups has contributed to Canada's being the first country to introduce an official policy aimed at recognizing the value of the variety of Canadian population: multiculturalism (CIC, "Canadian Multiculturalism").

Multiculturalism has been the core national standpoint to determine Canadian immigration policy since the 1970s (CIC, "Canadian Multiculturalism"). However, as national immigration patterns were changing during the last decades, immigration policy followed suit, adapting to the new circumstances of an increasingly aware global society. Canadians also had to accommodate new notions regarding the enhanced diversity of communities, together with new principles and practices of multiculturalism—which, naturally, influenced their perception of immigrants and immigration, too. Accordingly, this paper will examine the changing relationship between multiculturalism and immigration from the 1970s to the 2000s and 2010s, highlighting the most recent modifications in Canadian immigration policy that reflect the main changes in the conceptions of Canadian values and public opinion on these two crucial issues of the nation.

## 2. Defining multiculturalism and its policy objectives

First of all, to understand the relation between these two policies, it is essential to define the notion of multiculturalism itself. As the Canadian Department of Citizenship and Immigration states, multiculturalism “ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging” (“Canadian Multiculturalism”). Meanwhile, Canadians themselves can acquire “a feeling of security and self-confidence” through it, which ideally contributes to mutual respect, acceptance, and tolerance between Canadian-born and immigrant members of society (CIC, “Canadian Multiculturalism”). Similarly, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* underlines the importance of shared understanding between these two major groups and fosters the principle of “equality amid diversity” (qtd. in Corey 7).

This ideal can be interpreted in many ways; still, for most Canadians it implies the notions of cultural coexistence and common recognition of social and ethnic differences (CRRF, *Report on Canadian Values* 14). As a 2008 Environics poll shows (*The Canada's World Poll* 31), when Canadians are asked about their country's most positive contribution to the world, multiculturalism and the intake of immigrants rank third—after peacekeeping activities and foreign aid. Meanwhile, they also believe that they can be considered as a positive role model from this specific point of view (Environics, *The Canada's World Poll* 36). Moreover, 72% of Canadians think that they can positively influence the issue of religious and ethnic hatred around the globe (Environics, *The Canada's World Poll* 35). Nonetheless, multiculturalism as an official policy involves much more elements than what the ordinary citizen identifies.

Multicultural policy has social, economic, legal, and cultural implications (Corey 12), and these are all the basic areas where it connects with immigration. According to Jeffrey G. Reitz (*Pro-immigration Canada* 7), multiculturalism makes immigration attractive in many

ways: first, it promotes the idea that immigrants can contribute to Canada not only culturally but also economically; second, it fosters immigrants' sense of belonging both to their ethnic minority cultures and to the Canadian community; third, it assists immigrants in their integration, thus making it possible for the following generations to share Canadian values and attitudes; and fourth, it advertizes all kinds of diversity as a cause for national pride.

Therefore, multiculturalism encourages immigration so that it follows the principles of equal opportunities, liberal democracy, constitutional legality, universal respect for diversity and human rights, gender equality, and social, political, economic, and cultural inclusion.

However, during its ever-changing implementation process, Canadian multiculturalism policy embraced many implications and priorities.

According to William Kymlicka, multiculturalism policy originally focused on ethnic minorities' "self-organization, representation and participation" (CRRF, *Report on Canadian Values* 17). The research branch of Policy Horizons Canada, a federal organization that gives strategic advice on policies and their future implications for the Canadian government, also verifies the fact that multiculturalism in its initial stage, that is during the 1970s, considered the cultural traits of ethnic differences to be most in need of attention in order to combat racial prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination (PHC, "Multicultural Diversity")—a fact that another professional study, *The Age of Migration* also explains (Castles et al. 3).

However—as Policy Horizons Canada's same paper reports—the 1980s' focus shifted from culturally sensitive issues to a bigger emphasis on equity-promoting regulations and social and economic accommodation of masses of new immigrants. These objectives for enhanced equality were "enshrined" in the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Castles et al. 3)—a milestone piece of multiculturalist legislation that recognized multiculturalism itself for the first time as a valuable component of Canadian identity (Corey 11). Further significant decisions of the decade included the 1986 *Employment Equity Act* and



the 1988 *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (CIC, “Policy and legislation”)—both intending to eliminate social distinction between White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Canadians and other ethnicities (Corey 11, 19).

Then, the 1990s’ main concern stood for the perceived exclusion of immigrants from Canadian society and citizenship—an answer for which were many initiatives to help newcomers participate in local and national communities (PHC, “Multicultural Diversity”). As a result, the core policy action of the decade consisted of institutional reforms to remove typical barriers blocking immigrants from full involvement in sociopolitical and economic matters (Castles et al. 3). The multicultural policy was adjusted to the modified aims during the decade, leading to the adoption of a new Multiculturalism Program in 1997 (CIC, “Policy and legislation”). While the original goals included the preservation and sharing of cultures among ethnicities to advance tolerance, the 1990s’ main objective was to use this tolerance by affirmative action and institutional integration of all minorities (Dewing 5).

Finally, the makers and executives of multiculturalism have experienced an increase in the need to promote total integration of immigrants with a shared identity acquired through naturalization and the recognition of one’s role in society as a fellow Canadian (PHC, “Multicultural Diversity”). Therefore, in the early 2000s many initiatives pointed at the global “challenge of respecting cultural differences while fostering shared citizenship, conferring rights while demanding responsibilities, and encouraging integration but not assimilation” (PHC, “Multicultural Diversity”). Consequently, Jeffrey G. Reitz defines the 2000s’ multiculturalism as a policy which “recognizes and supports minority cultures, but also underscores the goal of social integration” (“Getting Past “Yes” or “No”).

Additionally, many policy researchers have established a fifth and ultimate stage in the development of multiculturalism, that is, the recently emerging era of “post-multiculturalism” and “hyper-diversity,” where citizenship and its rights and responsibilities no longer follow

traditional concepts of belonging to one's nationality and ethnic origin (Corey 4, 26).

However, these notions still lack research or a fundamental background to be considered relevant in today's Canadian society, where one can still observe the process of shaping an inclusive citizenship based on liberal democratic values and human rights—an alternative for disrespectful and undemocratic, ethnic relationships (Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism* 8).

As the descriptive history above shows, multiculturalism has evolved in its relation to immigrants and immigration concerning the way it addresses the main priorities of the nation and its people, since—as Policy Horizons Canada indicates (“Multicultural Diversity”)—“the changing dynamics of inter-ethnic relations” determines the need for the adaptation of new policy measures. For that reason, the Government of Canada actually approaches multiculturalism in a way that it supports immigrants' swift adoption of common values and democratic principles, also ensuring that citizens have profound knowledge of their role in contemporary Canadian society (CIC, *2012-2013 Annual Report* 7). Citizenship and Immigration Canada has set these priorities in the 2000s and 2010s—not only for multiculturalism but for immigration policy, too—because the changed circumstances of immigration into Canada have contributed to the development of a highly diverse and increasingly multiethnic population.

### **3. Changing influences on Canadian immigration**

Ever since the points-based admission system and multiculturalism policy were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, the main patterns of immigration have changed to include more and more ethnic minorities. While before the 1960s and 1970s the principal source countries of Canadian immigrants were European in essence, the following decades saw an upsurge of newcomers from Asia, Africa, Latin America—especially the Caribbean—and the Pacific Basin, too (Castles et al. 2). The proportion of “visible minorities” quadrupled from before the 1970s into the first decade of the multiculturalism

policy and rose by more than 10% in the 1980s, too (StatCan, *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity* 15). In 2013 eight non-European states were among the top ten source countries of permanent residents accepted into Canada: China, India, the Philippines, Pakistan, the U. S., Iran, the Republic of Korea, and the United Arab Emirates (CIC, *Annual Report 2014* 16).

Consequently, the proportion of the foreign-born population gradually increased among Canadians—with Asians constituting 41% of all immigrants in 2006 already—and ethnicities of European origins fell back to 37% in 2006 (Soroka and Robertson 33). In 2011 visible minorities added up 82.4% of that specific year's immigrants (StatCan, *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity* 15). Nevertheless, not only the ethnic component of immigration has changed but also the number and categories of the people allowed into Canada.

Looking into the numbers of newcomers arriving in Canada, a comparative graph experiences a periodically rising and falling tendency; meanwhile, it moves slowly upward to reach higher minimum and maximum figures (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 4). As opposed to the sharp decreases in the amount of new immigrants during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the graph shows a stable tendency to be above the 200,000 immigrants-per-year limit from the beginning of the 2000s (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 4). Between 2001 and 2011 Canada received more than two million new immigrants, according to Statistics Canada's numbers (*Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity* 6). Therefore, the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century experienced a constant but intensifying willingness to attract more and more immigrants into the country. This objective, however, has been influenced not only by the changed reality of immigration patterns but by the newest priorities of economy and politics.

According to Jeffrey G. Reitz (*Pro-immigration Canada* 5), “the economic benefit of immigration to Canada has been a major argument in favour of sustaining high immigration levels,” since immigrants contribute not only to the deepening employment needs of Canada but also to the improvement of public services through their taxes. In order to make the most

out of newcomers, the Canadian government has been concentrating on the selection of highly educated and skilled people (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 5), since their economic outcome on the long run has proved to be more advantageous than that of the less skilled immigrants, accepted before the introduction of the points system (Ferrer et al. 9). On the other hand, immigration preference has changed during the 2000s, when a necessity for the harmonization of short-term and long-term labor requirements emerged (Ferrer et al. 22).

#### **4. Main reforms to the immigration system from an economic perspective**

The first set of recent reforms of the immigration system was introduced in 2008. As the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2009* by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration states, “recent amendments to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* [IRPA] have expedited the processing of select skilled worker applications so that Canada can more quickly respond to employers’ labour needs” (8). Accordingly, the *2008 Budget Implementation Act* enabled immigration offices to ignore certain types of applications and also permitted ministerial intervention to prioritize processing of those candidates who meet the temporary requirements of the Government of Canada (CIC, *Annual Report 2009* 11). Among the actual governmental objectives are the following: the strengthening of immigrants’ economic integration and success, the quick satisfaction of suddenly emerging labor shortages, and the redistribution of economic immigrants throughout those regions of the country which are the most in need of incoming workers (Ferrer et al. 2). However, further aims have been set to suit the complexity of the primarily economy-based immigration.

The *2008 Budget Implementation Act* was accompanied by the introduction of another initiative, the *2008 Action Plan for Faster Immigration* that intended to reduce the federal skilled workers’ backlog, but—as opposed to the other program—it concentrated mainly on long-term results (CIC, *Annual Report 2009* 12). It was considered fundamental for the quick processing of needed applicants, since it diminished the public concern over the possible loss

of the most potential immigrants, discouraged from waiting for Canadian response (Ferrer et al. 17). The program's success has already been measured; the pre-2008 backlog was reduced by more than 50% until 2012, when the government decided to expand it further by the *Jobs, Growth and Long-Term Prosperity Act* (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 6-7).

An additional governmental target was implemented through the modification of various categories of the Economic Class—one of the three main groups, together with the Family Class and the Refugee/Humanitarian Class, into which all immigrants are sorted in view of their basis for application (Ahmad)—in 2008, since the Government of Canada has experienced an increasing need for the extension of provincial authorities' involvement in the selection of immigrants (CIC, *Annual Report 2009* 9). According to Ana M. Ferrer et al. (14), Canadian provinces and territories which have been sidelined from previous immigration destinations—namely, the three census metropolitan areas, Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal, where 63.4% of all foreign-born Canadian population was living in 2011 (StatCan, *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity* 10)—do not only need immigrants to fill labor shortages but to boost local population growth, too.

The early 21<sup>st</sup> century with its amplified international movement of temporary workers and students has also prompted Citizenship and Immigration Canada to launch a new program in 2008, the Canadian Experience Class, destined to facilitate temporary residents' becoming immigrants based on their experience within the Canadian context (CIC, *Annual Report 2009* 8). The emphasis was on attracting potential immigrants who “have already demonstrated their ability to integrate into the Canadian labour market” (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 6). This initiative also followed the government's plan to increase the number of younger immigrants, since their integration is facilitated by their skills acquired through local education and they also have a higher rate of economic success, in general (Ferrer et al. 9).

These programs listed above have emerged as the main reform points of the Government of Canada regarding immigration in 2008. Their main objectives depended on the new economic realities of the country. Nonetheless, their implementation has either not been finished up to this date or they have already been modified to meet the expectations of the constantly changing Canadian economy. Consequently, a second—and, to date, the latest—set of immigration policy reforms were developed in 2012 and implemented in 2013, and many other smaller adjustments were made during the in-between years, too.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (*Annual Report 2013 5*), “the Government of Canada continued to pursue its vision for a faster, more responsive immigration system” in 2012 and 2013. Long-term aims were enshrined in *Budget 2012*, stating that immigration policy’s most needed contribution to Canada was achieved through its promotion of sustainable economic growth (CIC, *Annual Report 2013 5*). According to Ana M. Ferrer et al. (10), sustainability is to be accomplished in view of the careful selection of immigrants, their successful integration into the economic and social life of Canada, and by raising the share of economic newcomers, as opposed to the Family Class or refugees, since economic outcomes are much worse for these last two groups (9).

In accordance with these plans, the government decided to modernize the selection criteria for the Federal Skilled Worker Program in 2012 (CIC, *Annual Report 2013 5*). The new 2013 guidelines give more weight to “human capital characteristics” within the points system (Ferrer et al. 4), including factors of age, Canadian experience, official language knowledge, and certified foreign education (CIC, *Annual Report 2013 5*). Most of these standards have already proved to be connected to economic success of newcomers. For instance, introducing language requirements has benefitted the integration process of recent immigrants and helped reduce the earning gap between foreign-born and Canadian-born population, too (Ferrer et al. 10).

In 2013 a further project was launched, namely the Federal Skilled Trades Program, which addresses the main concerns of emerging labor shortages in determined regions and industries (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 6). This program also lays down language skills and previous work experience among the basic application criteria—like many other initiatives do (MacDonald)—following the newly approved governmental objectives and methods to deal with the 2010s' economic concerns (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 6).

The Canadian Experience Class was reported to have emerged as “Canada’s fastest-growing immigration program” in the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2013* (CIC 6). Therefore, it has been further improved in its flexibility regarding the most urgent needs of temporary workers and international student graduates of 2012 and 2013 (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 6). Additionally, a smaller initiative has been implemented through the Start-Up Visa Program of 2013, which intends to attract entrepreneurs and pioneering researchers into Canada for a permanent term, too (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 6).

Finally, in accordance with the actual governmental aims, the ultimate economic reform has come into force in January 1, 2015, with the objectives of improving and speeding up application processing for immigrants “with the best indicators for success in Canada’s labour market” (CIC, *Annual Report 2014* 5). As the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2014* highlights (CIC 5), the new Express Entry system is the most pertinent method to carry out the economic plan for immigrant market success—a “flexible, targeted immigration” model. This program has been prioritized since 2013 so that it can deliver “as diverse a skill set as possible” into the Canadian labor market (CIC, *Annual Report 2014* 6).

All in all, immigration policies in the 2000s have changed partially due to the modified and evolving economic realities of Canada. However, one cannot only suppose that Canadian politicians follow their own goals and the necessities of the economy without adhering to the values and opinion of the people on both multiculturalism and immigration.

The Harper administration's manner of approaching the economic side of immigration policy is, in turn, also compliant with the goal of all governmental actions reflecting the multicultural framework of policy making.

Phil Ryan, author of the book *Multicultiphobia*, thinks that politicians can escape their responsibilities toward the people even within the multicultural framework of immigration, since "Canadians are no more attentive than citizens elsewhere." Basically, he assumes that the actual Canadian government is averse to Canadian public opinion and to the majority view on the ideal ways of immigration policy making. However, many pieces of evidence show that the main reforms of the Harper government in the 2000s not only incorporate but adapt to the main line of Canadian thinking on multiculturalism's relation to immigrants.

Many say that the only objective of the Conservative leadership is to make Canadian economy flourish (MacDonald, Maraval, Robertson). Historically, this has been the topmost driving force behind almost all immigration policies (Ferrer et al. 3). Starting from the 1990s, the majority of immigrants has been selected due to their economic potential—that is, through the Economic Class from 2002 (Ferrer et al. 4). This pro-economy tendency—regarding the growing share of economic newcomers—got into the policy preferences of the Harper government, too (Ferrer et al. 6). On the other hand, the actual Conservative standpoint does not exclude the views of those Canadians who are not its traditional supporters.

As many public surveys suggest, Canadians who consider themselves followers of the Conservative party have, in general, lower levels of support for high numbers of any newcomer types (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 20). As opposed to this tendency, Canada under the Harper administration has reached and maintained historically strong support for mass immigration (Environics, *Focus Canada 2012* 44)—with a significant emphasis on its positive economic impact both by the official authorities and by the Canadian community (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 19, Soroka and Robertson 29).



Today economy remains one of the most outstanding public issues for Canadian society (Environics, *Focus Canada 2012* 10), and its importance for the population—no matter what political party they sympathize with—has been on the rise. In 2006 only 5% of Canadians identified the economy as a key challenge facing the country (Environics, *Focus Canada 2006* 31); whereas, in the early 2010s the importance of this issue has increased by approximately 25 percentage points after a balanced upsurge and decline due to the 2008 economic crisis (Environics, *Focus Canada 2011* 8, Environics, *Focus Canada 2012* 10). Therefore, when the Harper administration decided to introduce reforms into the immigration system primarily after 2008, it seriously took into consideration the preferences of all Canadian people not only from an economic point of view but also concerning other key issues.

### **5. Immigration reforms addressing multicultural concerns**

Many recent changes in attitudes and public opinion have been influenced by the numerous incidents and emerging trends that Canadian society has seen or is experiencing even today. To reflect this alteration, the Conservative government set up modified standards and launched new programs aimed at the minimization of emerging concerns. Therefore, three main areas of public concern have been addressed directly through the immigration policy reforms: first, concerns about immigrants' not adopting Canadian values and thus lagging behind in their integration process; secondly, general uneasiness about the abusing of the immigration system and of the good faith of Canadians; and thirdly, fear of deficiencies in the Canadian security system—especially in connection with Muslims.

According to Michael Dewing (8), one aspect in the general criticism of multiculturalism policy is that it does not encourage enough the sharing of common values and symbols and thus does not promote Canadian unity. As Valerie Knowles states (203), many fear that multicultural policies divide rather than unite the people of Canada. For

example, almost one third of Canadians believe that “too much diversity can weaken a society” due to the lack of universally accepted principles in the community (qtd. in Soroka and Robertson 5). Meanwhile, the majority of Canadians also think that immigrants should be encouraged to conform to Canadian culture and identity (Soroka and Robertson 9). In comparison with other developed countries, Canada belongs to the more “assimilation-oriented” ones with 58% of its population confirming the view that adopting shared values is essential for their society (Soroka and Robertson 36).

Similarly, public opinion poll results suggest that there is concern regarding the divisiveness of Canadian society, mainly caused by the unwillingness of various ethnicities to accommodate shared values (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 8). Throughout the *Focus Canada* surveys from 2010 to 2012 (Environics), there is a constant belief among Canadians that immigrants do not want to adopt national values. In 2008 60% of Canadians agreed with this idea (Environics, *Focus Canada 2010* 30); in 2010 the number of the notion’s supporters grew by 6% and held steady in 2011 (Environics, *Focus Canada 2011* 26). In 2010 another 76% stated that immigrants “should blend into Canadian society,” which also shows a growing tendency (Environics, *Focus Canada 2010* 31). Meanwhile, Canadian people’s certainty concerning the mere act of sharing the same values in society, across all provinces and generations has declined during the 2000s (Environics, *Focus Canada 2012* 21). Consequently, Canadians prefer that immigrants fully adopt local principles and thus become able to fully integrate into mainstream society. However, as Jeffrey G. Reitz states (*Pro-immigration Canada* 15), the general tendency to require that newcomers blend in and the belief that they are not doing so are “associated with *less* enthusiasm for immigration.”

Therefore, the Canadian government has done a good job ensuring that the public remains supportive of high levels of incoming people by introducing reforms that address these concerns. Such reforms are, for instance, the ones introducing language requirements

and preferences for local experience into the Federal Skilled Workers program and the Federal Skilled Trades program. Other examples are the creation of the Canadian Experience Class or the launching of the Express Entry. All of these initiatives are destined to select the most probable applicants to adhere to Canadian principles. Another reform belonging to this category is the 2008 amendment to the *Citizenship Act*, destined to limit the possibility for naturalization of those residents who do not have a multiple generations' line of Canadian descent (CIC, *Annual Report 2009* 24). All in all, many governmental actions over the recent years have contributed to the stable support of immigration among Canadians by easing their concern over newcomers' perceived reluctance to adopt mainstream social values.

Another area of public alarm has been the belief that more and more immigrants are abusing of the Canadian system of immigration and refugee protection. According to the survey results of *Focus Canada 2010* (Environics 30), 59% of Canadians believe that “many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees,” while 12% is either not sure or not answering. In the *Focus Canada 2011* results the percentage of those who agree with this statement shows a minor decrease of 5 points and that of those not being able or willing to answer a negligible increase by 1 percentage point (Environics 25).

Consistent with this notion, terms, such as “immigration queue jumpers” (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 6), have emerged during the last few years, implying that some would-be applicants are wishing to get more attention than what they would deserve in the standard, legal system of economic immigrants (Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism* 21). Since Canadians are highly supportive of the equal treatment principle—with almost 100% of the population believing that Canada should be a place where men and women are treated equally (Environics, *The Common Good* 3)—and of “individual equality” (Soroka and Robertson iv), they consider the exploitation of their humanitarian traditions as a practice of inequality and loss of institutional fairness (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 9). Perceiving these harms in the

system can diminish Canadians' high level of support for immigration (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 15).

For this reason, the Harper government's recent reforms also included measures to counter the negative effects of this public anxiety. For example, in 2012 and 2013 two amendments were introduced to the IRPA: the *Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act* and the *Balanced Refugee Reform Act* (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 9). Both pieces of legislation intend to facilitate the separation of valid and invalid claimants of the in-Canada asylum system by determining a standard list of those countries that usually do not produce refugees, namely the "designated country of origin [DCO] provision" (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 9). Following this new standard for refugee identification, the number of refugee claimants has drastically decreased—by 87% for DCOs and by 50% for non-DCOs—not only reducing a backlog of administration but also accelerating the process of sheltering those most in need (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 9). As a result, the Conservative government has made important steps toward the restoration of their fair and equally selective immigrant system, which is one of the factors influencing Canadians' support for multicultural immigration.

Last but not least, Canadians—like all other Western nations in the 2000s—have become increasingly troubled by the emergence of both internal and external security threats (Kymlicka, *The Current State of Multiculturalism* 24). While the majority of the population is increasingly confident of the national and local law enforcement authorities to be able to protect them from all kind of threats (Angus Reid 5), almost two thirds of Canadians judge home-grown terrorism—in a context of immigrants, mostly—as a serious security issue of the country today, as opposed to the remaining one third who think it is "overblown" by the media and politicians (Angus Reid 3). This issue is in close connection with the fear that many immigrants hold radical ideals and practice non-liberal and undemocratic traditions,

which neither Canadian law nor Canadian society is prepared for or willing to accommodate (CRRF, *Report on Canadian Values* 15).

Many say that enhanced security against designated groups of immigrants and minority residents is counter-productive, since those typically being in the main focus of national security will feel alienated from mainstream society and become truly radicalized (Kymlicka, *The Current State of Multiculturalism* 24). One group of such public attention has been the Muslim community since the global media coverage of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Even though several public opinion polls conducted right after 2001 suggest that the 9/11 events had no considerable negative effects on the Canadian population's perception of religious groups, ethnic minorities, and immigrants, in general (Marcoux), there is a growing distrustful public awareness of Muslims in Canada (PHC, "A Survey of Recent Research").

Canadians, in most cases, associate Islam and Muslim identity with a usual unwillingness to adopt Canadian values and thus to integrate into the culture. Approximately 55% of the Canadian population thinks that Muslims do not share the same values as the rest of society (CRRF, *Muslims and non-Muslims* 2). Out of those who believe that the recent revival of Islamist identity in Canada has had negative consequences, 30% announce that violence is the main issue to be attributed to this tendency (Environics, *Focus Canada 2006* 98). Meanwhile, researchers studying five big religions found no evidence of one being more inclined to violent activities than the others (PHC, "A Survey of Recent Research"). Consequently, the wide-spread belief that Muslims are more likely to be security problems than other ethnicities is simply flawed and generated, in part, by negative media portrayal.

On the other hand, another security issue exists that has been dealt with by the Harper administration: human smuggling. There is a considerable minority of Canadians who think that human smuggling—especially that of possible terrorists—has been showing a growing tendency in the 2000s and 2010s (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 6). This concern is also in

connection with the recent incidents of illegal immigrants arriving to Canadian coasts (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 6). According to William Kymlicka (*Multiculturalism* 22), when “citizens fear that they lack control over their borders, and hence lack control over who is admitted,” their support for immigration and for multiculturalism suffers the consequences of their anxiety and sense of high risk.

To avoid the generalization of various security concerns, Citizenship and Immigration Canada introduced a number of reforms in the 2000s. First, it established a system of biometric data collection within the Temporary Resident Program in 2008 in order to “reduce identity fraud and enhance the safety and security of Canadians” (CIC, *Annual Report 2009* 11). Second, in 2012 the Canadian government signed a bilateral agreement with the United States to cooperate on security border control between the two nations—to impede possible illegal immigrants and others who could pose a threat from entering into Canada—and to share amplified information on all visa-holders and immigrants (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 8). Third, the 2012 reform to the refugee system also addressed the issue of human smuggling by discouraging refugee claimants from turning to illegal means to get into Canada if they have not been accepted due to the renewed refugee selection criteria (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 9). Fourth, with the amendment of the 2002 IRPA by the 2013 *Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act*, Canada has also improved its institutional strategy to block the entering of possible criminals and remove them from Canadian society (CIC, *Annual Report 2013* 10). In fact, the perceived efficiency of the immigration system’s security aspect has met positive assessment by the Canadian public, according to the *Focus Canada 2010* survey (Enviroics 30).

On the whole, the Harper government has revised many aspects of the Canadian immigration system not only in view of the economic benefits of the country but concerning the public’s concerns and priorities, too. As William Kymlicka highlights (*Multiculturalism*

24), the basic requirements for the strong public support for multiculturalism—which is the basis for the strong support for immigration—is the elimination and prevention of those conditions where immigrants are seen as “illegitimate, illiberal, and burdensome.” With respect to preventive actions, the Harper administration has achieved a significant rate of success already. Its respect for and consideration of the public approach is exactly why the actual Canadian government receives high rates of general approval (Environics, *The Common Good* 8, *Focus Canada 2011* 18) and why the topic of immigration policy reforms does not constitute a crucial part of today’s public debates (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 4, 10).

## **6. Actual and future challenges for multicultural immigration**

Canadians continue to observe and debate on many challenges within the system of immigration and multicultural integration—several of which has also been partly addressed by the Canadian government’s recent reforms. These outstanding problems are about the poor economic outcomes of newcomers, their radicalization due to perceived distrust and discrimination, and society’s perceived intolerance and lingering racism toward the archetypal enemies of the media.

The issue of “immigrant skill underutilization” has been an essential part of the Canadian public agenda since the 1990s (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 6)—a major cause for the pessimistic approach toward the implementation of the multiculturalism policy, too. Even though the majority of the Canadian population thinks that visible minorities face less barriers to economically succeed today (Environics, *Focus Canada 2010* 32), the worsening of immigrant unemployment and earnings outcomes is still considered a serious problem in society (Ferrer et al. 8, Kunz et al. 3). Recent newcomers tend to get unskilled jobs 2.5 times more than their Canadian-born counterparts (Ferrer et al. 8), making them victims of covert racism at an institutionalized level (Kunz et al. 4). Some call this the “taxi-driver syndrome,”

where highly skilled immigrants remain underemployed due to the Canadian labor market's inability to recognize their foreign educational credentials (Reitz, "Taxi-Driver Syndrome"). To address this problem, the Government of Canada has introduced the 2010 *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* ("Pan-Canadian Framework"). Still, the Canadian economy is facing the challenge of a supply-demand "skills mismatch" and underemployment of many incoming professionals—and it will continue to do so, according to general projections of future labor demand (Miner 2).

On the other hand, the remaining issues of public concern are in close connection with each other. While 35% of Canadians think that there are radicalized people within their community and another 37% says there are not sure if this is true for their community (Angus Reid 2), 46% also agrees on the belief that racism is on the rise in their country (CRRF, *A Four Country Survey* 15). According to the *Focus Canada 2006* survey (Environics 77), perceived discrimination against visible minority groups is the most related to Muslims—who are continuously portrayed negatively in the national media (Reitz, *Pro-immigration Canada* 8, CRRF, *Muslims and non-Muslims* 1, Umar et al.). The media's influence on people's perception can be measured by the ways through which the majority obtains information on world issues. That is, since Canadians use mainly television, newspaper, the Internet, and the radio to access international news—while only 2% seeks information from educational institutions—their insight is vastly based on the image that the media prefers to present (Environics, *The Canada's World Poll* 19).

Even though there are several initiatives to combat the negative tendency of Muslim representation, many Canadians are still uncertain about the possible methods of integrating Muslims into the Canadian context even within the multicultural framework (Kunz). Accordingly, regarding interreligious and interethnic relations within society, the majority of Canadians are most concerned about possible tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim,



Muslim and Jew, and Immigrant and non-Immigrant groups (CRRF, “Information Handout”). Similarly, public concern about the emergence of anti-Muslim attitudes is the highest ranking in Canada (CRRF, “Information Handout”).

Nevertheless, other ethnicities and religious groups have also been victims of negative attention, discrimination, and “hate crimes” (CIC, *2009-2010 Annual Report* 8, 20, Soroka and Robertson 41). National statistics show that there has been an increase in the number of hate crimes from 2007 to 2008 by 35 percentage points, with more than half of all incidents being directed against people of visible racial or ethnic backgrounds (CIC, *2009-2010 Annual Report* 20). Addressing these challenges by governmental action is exactly the original driving force behind the introduction of the multiculturalism policy (Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism* 24); still, there are many “evolving patterns of radicalization” that need to be dealt with in the future (Kymlicka, *The Current State of Multiculturalism* 20).

However, other negative claims which are typical in the European context of criticism of the multicultural immigration system—for example, those of immigrants’ taking jobs away, unwanted aliens of illiberal practices entering, or the forming of ethnic enclaves and “ghettoization” (Kymlicka, *The Current State of Multiculturalism* 12)—cannot be found within the Canadian sphere, neither regarding negative majority public opinion, nor on the Canadian public agenda, since these are the issues that are mainly resolved by the government’s regulation of immigration.

For instance, only two in ten Canadians believe that newcomers take locals’ jobs away, while almost 50% agree that immigrants take those jobs which locals do not want (Soroka and Robertson 29). However, the number of those who think that immigrants take Canadians’ jobs away has experienced a slight increase from 2008 to 2010, and continued to hold the same levels in 2011, too (EnviroNics, *Focus Canada 2011* 25). In accordance with this tendency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada decided to promote the hiring of local

workforce before the recruiting of immigrants within the Temporary Foreign Workers program to assure that concerned minority of its focus on “putting Canadians first” (*Annual Report 2014* 7). Nonetheless, the idea that immigrants are “stealing” jobs from locals can be considered a complete myth for the Canadian context (Knowles 201).

In summary, it can be said that the Harper government does a good job in its determining immigration policy, since it relies not only on the instant economic needs of the nation but on the attitudes, priorities, and main concerns of the public, also respecting the policy objectives of Canadian multiculturalism.

As for the future of the relationship between multiculturalism, immigration policy, and the average Canadian’s attitude toward these, it seems that further changes and policy shifts can be expected due to the ongoing patterns of social, cultural, and religious changes. Concerning the probable future ethnic composition of Canada, projections state that in 2031 the proportion of visible minorities in the population will increase to approximately 30%, with the Asian and Arab share almost doubling (StatCan, *Projections* 1). Accordingly, non-Christian religious groups will also more than double, with half of them being affiliated with Islam (StatCan, *Projections* 1)—which will continue to cause Canadian anxiety over the religious aspect of multicultural integration (PHC, “A Survey of Recent Research”) or even perpetuate “inter-religious violence” within society (Thomas). As a result of both growing ethnic and religious diversity, the past tendency of growing in-family diversity by the increase in the number of mixed unions in Canada is also likely to continue (StatCan, *Mixed unions* 4). Consequently, the importance of successful immigration and multicultural policies will rise in the future, following the already existing priorities: “access to settlement assistance, housing, language training, recognition of immigrant skills, [and] education and business opportunities” (Reitz, “Getting Past “Yes” or “No””).

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the latest changes in immigration policy by the Harper administration can be seen as faithful representatives of the recently emerged perception of those Canadian values and multiculturalist policies that have gained majority attention and support among the broader Canadian public. Many consider these reforms as the actual national governments' marginalization of multicultural ideals; however, what multiculturalism means to the Canadian population and how it is realized within various policies are the key factors proving this notion false.

Immigrant selection limitations and renewed accession requirements are totally compatible with the Canadian multiculturalist ideal, since Canada's multicultural approach is about the recently reached public agreement on the nation's aims with immigration. The new model of multiculturalism and multicultural policies highlight the importance of "civic integration" and thus promote such reforms within the immigration system that require knowledge of the country's languages, culture, common values, and also the practice of these principles through adequate employment and community involvement (Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism* 16, Corey 26-27)—which is, ultimately, the Canadian nation's central goal with its newcomers, who constitute the basis of future citizenship.

Accordingly, the biggest aspect that has changed in the 2000s, as opposed to the earlier decades of multiculturalism policy, has been the refutation of the concept that "the goals and objectives of immigration policy ... have never been clearly articulated and have at no time been the object of anything approaching a consensus among the influential elements and interested parties of the Canadian community" (Whitaker 3). Canada has just recognized its unity with regard to immigration and multiculturalism, and that is exactly within its latest policies of and public attitudes about these two main areas of Canadian identity.

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