

# **Support for and problems associated with multiculturalism – views of undergraduate students**

Paul Gingrich

Department of Sociology and Social Studies

University of Regina

Regina, Saskatchewan

paul.gingrich@uregina.ca

**Paper presented at the Seventh National Metropolis Conference**

**Montreal, March 27, 2004**

**Summary.** Views about multiculturalism among seven hundred undergraduate students at the University of Regina are presented in this paper. Connections of views on social and political issues with indexes of support for multiculturalism and problems associated with multiculturalism are highlighted. Regression models indicate that views about multiculturalism tend to be aligned with political and social views in a way that might be expected; views on problems associated with multiculturalism tend to be associated with how students view job availability and consider immigrants to integrate. The paper concludes with research and policy recommendations.

## **Acknowledgements and thanks to:**

- Seven hundred plus anonymous University of Regina students who provided information about themselves.
- University of Regina instructors who provided access to classes and student assistants who assisted with administration and analysis of the survey.
- Multiculturalism Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada for financial support for this project.
- Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, the Faculty of Arts, and the Department of Sociology and Social Studies, University of Regina.

## **Outline**

- A Introduction and summary
- B Methododology
- C Support for multiculturalism
- D Problems of multiculturalism
- E Relationship of views on multiculturalism with social and political views
- F Research and policy recommendations

## A. Introduction and summary

In Canada, multiculturalism has been a contested term – riddled with confusion over meaning and application. It has been attacked by both established individuals and groups and by newcomers and it has been a political football. At the same time, the Canadian multicultural approach has become a model for other countries (see title of conference for paper by Gingrich and Fries, 2002) and has served as a guiding principle for integration in Canada for at least a generation. My view is that part of the problem is that the term is overloaded with meanings, with too many diverse expectations about what it means and can accomplish.

One reason for the multiple meanings of multiculturalism is that the concept can refer to population structure, cultural diversity, institutional policy or program, societal practice, ideology, value, ideal, symbol, educational approach, management style, business strategy, or sociological or political concept or theory. Multiculturalism may be praised as a practice or ideal or it may be viewed as misguided and a source of confusion and problem for society. Different nation-states, cultural or ethnic groups, academics and members of the public take different approaches to multiculturalism. Parekh distinguishes multicultural society as “the fact of cultural diversity” from multiculturalism as “a normative response to that fact” (Parekh, p. 6). In the Canadian case, where multiculturalism has an official basis, policy and program have not always been clearly identified and have been subject to change (Li, p. 148; Isajiw, pp. 247-8). In terms of current research and policy direction, the themes of social justice, civic participation, and identity (SSHRC, 2003), plus emphasis on aboriginal people and anti-racism (Canadian Heritage, 2004) appear to receive greater emphasis than the five themes of diversity, harmony, equality, overcoming barriers, and resource, that emerge from the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (Gingrich and Fries, 1996).

In order to bring some data to bear on these issues, in several earlier papers (Gingrich, Gingrich and Fries), I explored the way a set of University of Regina undergraduate students understood multiculturalism. I find students had a good understanding of the multicultural principles of diversity, equality, harmony, and resource, and generally supported these principles and policies. While they identified shortcomings with multiculturalism, they were supportive of government assistance for developing skills and knowledge of newcomers. But they were less supportive of affirmative action type programs or programs specifically aimed at eliminating barriers or improving prospects for members of racial or ethnic minorities. Some of these concerns appear to be related to worries these students have about jobs and immigrant integration.

Students often identified multiculturalism as a way of being together and interacting, with multiculturalism as a process that results in a societal product. The image of multiculturalism they presented is one of diverse people and cultures not only being together, but working together and being involved in society in ways that may result in a different society – using descriptions such as combine, integrate, create, whole, and. This is not the usual image of multiculturalism. More commonly, it is presented in a static way, with different cultures and people having reasonably tolerant relations with

each other, but not creating something new. Many students appear to adopt a more dynamic approach to multiculturalism, where these social relations lead, in an interactive way, to a new form of society. After all, if people from diverse backgrounds live together and communicate with each other, there will undoubtedly be interaction that changes each people and culture, thus producing a new set of social relationships and system of life. I think Parekh makes a similar point when he says that in a multicultural society “communities are open and interactive and cannot be frozen, and ... public institutions and policies should recognize and cherish their evolving identities and nurture a community of communities” (Parekh, 340-341).

In this paper, I approach this issue from a different perspective, examining the connections of these undergraduate views with social and political views. I found few studies of the connections of views about multiculturalism with views on these other issues. While the Angus Reid survey (Angus Reid, 1991), the primary survey of Canadian attitudes to multiculturalism, contains some information about this, there are no questions on political party preference or other attitudes that might be considered more closely related to political views. In that sense, this is an exploratory study, examining connections of social and political views with support for multiculturalism and with views about problems related to multiculturalism.

What I conclude from the analysis here is that support for multiculturalism is related to what might be termed “progressive” political views – e.g. support for universal health care, concerns about corporate dominance – and to some social views – e.g. support for gay and lesbian marriage. But the differences among political groups are not as great as some have claimed – there is broad support for multiculturalism among supporters of all political parties. I also conclude that concerns about multiculturalism are not just the opposite of support for multiculturalism – rather, there are different dimensions to political and social views that emerge from an examination of problems of multiculturalism. In particular, concerns about immigrant integration and jobs appear to dominate views about the problematic aspects of multiculturalism – issues that are not highly related to support for multiculturalism. In terms of policy thrust, this creates a dual recommendation: (i) continued efforts to develop and improve the multicultural approach in Canada, and (ii) policies aimed at widening the multicultural approach to improve preparation for and accessibility to jobs and assist immigrant integration with Canadian society.

## **B. Methodology**

Data for this paper come from the Survey of Student Attitudes and Experiences (SSAE), conducted in the Fall 1998 semester at the University of Regina. This survey was part of a class I instructed – Social Studies 306, Applied Methods: Quantitative Approaches – in the Department of Sociology and Social Studies. The Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, funded the research project “Understandings of Multiculturalism Among Students in a Multicultural Prairie City,” providing financial support for conducting and analyzing the survey and presenting the results.

SSAE was an omnibus survey dealing with student issues, social and political views, academic and personal background, student finances, and job activity. Answers to many of the questions were on a five-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire was developed jointly by students in Social Studies 306 and me, with the questions on immigration and multiculturalism designed to meet the research plan for the Canadian Heritage project. The questionnaire was administered in a cross-section of undergraduate classes at the University of Regina in October and November of 1998. Students in these classes completed the survey in approximately fifteen minutes of class time. In total, there were seven hundred and twenty-six usable completed questionnaires. Students from the class coded the survey questionnaires and graduate students were employed to enter the data into an SPSS data set. For most of the data analysis, including the open-ended questions, I used SPSS, Release 11.

**Table 1A. Ethnic representativeness of SSAE sample**

Ethnic origin	SSAE Fall 1998 Sample (n=715)		Per Cent of Regina Population in 1996 (Census of Canada)
	Number	Per Cent of Sample	
Aboriginal origin	62	8.7%	7.5%
Visible minority origin	45	6.3%	5.7%
Other (multi-European)	608	85.0%	86.8%
Total	715	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 1B. Ancestral diversity of SSAE sample**

Number of ancestries mentioned	Ethnic status			Total
	Visible minority	Aboriginal	Multi- European	
One	74%	37%	32%	36%
Two	20%	31%	41%	38%
More than two	6%	32%	27%	26%
Number of respondents	51	62	552	665
Mean	1.4	2.1	2.1	2.0
Standard deviation	0.8	1.1	1.0	1.0

The survey was not a random sample of students but was reasonably representative of University of Regina undergraduates. It over-represented females by 2.5 percentage points but in terms of other characteristics of undergraduates, about which there is comparative information, the sample was reasonably representative. The University of Regina does not have data concerning the ethnic background of students,

but the distributions of Table 1A show the sample is representative of the ethnic distribution of the population of Regina. The majority of the population of Regina is of European background, with less than ten per cent of the population being of aboriginal or visible minority origin. As demonstrated in Table 1B, the sample is multicultural in terms of ethnic diversity and multiple ancestry – just over one-third of six hundred and sixty-five respondents who reported ethnic origin gave a single origin while sixty-four per cent of respondents reported more than one ancestry, with a mean of two ethnic origins as ancestries. Given the variety of ancestries of the sample, especially of those of European origin, in the rest of this paper I use the term multi-European to refer to the latter.

Being derived from a quota sample of undergraduate students obtained at a particular time and place, the results reported here should not be generalized to other populations and places. Other limitations include the short time given to respondents to complete the survey and the fact that the survey was conducted during class time. In spite of these limitations, the survey included a broad cross-section of undergraduates and yielded useful information. Some of the connections among variables found in this paper may be similar to those found in other populations.

### **C. Support for multiculturalism (SM)**

#### **1. Construction of the variable SM**

Given the many meanings of multiculturalism, rather than constructing a single question to measure support for multiculturalism, we constructed a series of statements to measure responses about six aspects of multiculturalism (see Table 2). On a five-point scale from 1 indicating strong disagreement to 5 indicating strong agreement, the mean of all other responses was between 4 and 5, demonstrating agreement to strong agreement with each principle. From Table 2, it is apparent there was strong agreement with multicultural principles, except for the issue of government funding for festivals.

Since all six variables M1 through M6 correlated highly with each other and loaded on a single factor when I conducted a factor analysis, I decided to sort respondents into groups using a cluster analysis. After examining several different possibilities, I settled on a three-cluster solution and termed respondents as weak, moderate, or strong supporters of multiculturalism, depending on cluster membership. A summary of the cluster membership and mean level of support for each multicultural principle for members of each cluster is contained in Table 3. Note that approximately twenty per cent of respondents were weak supporters of multiculturalism, just over one-third were moderate supporters, and over forty per cent were strong supporters. For later analysis, the variable SM (support for multiculturalism) is the cluster membership of the individual respondent.

**Table 2. Statements and summary statistics of responses to questions on multicultural principles**

Label	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size
M1 – Diversity	Ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society	4.09	0.94	718
M2 – Equal Access	Canadian institutions should provide equal access regardless of ethnic, racial, or cultural background	4.52	0.76	716
M3 – Heritage	Ethnic and religious minorities should be given opportunities to preserve their cultural heritage	4.03	0.99	715
M4 – Barriers	Canadian institutions should eliminate barriers that make it difficult for some to participate	4.12	0.94	706
M5 – Festivals	The government should fund festivals and special events celebrating different cultures	3.05	1.25	715
M6 – Enrichment	Canadian society is enriched by having people from many cultural backgrounds	4.31	0.85	719

Note: Responses to statements were measured on a five-point scale from 1 meaning strongly disagree to 5 meaning strongly agree. A larger mean implies greater agreement with the statement.

**Table 3. Mean response to statements about multicultural principles for respondents with each level of support for multiculturalism**

Cluster name and value of support for multiculturalism (SM)	Sample size	Mean response to each statement concerning multiculturalism					
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Weak support (1)	144	3.1	3.7	2.9	3.0	2.2	3.4
Moderate support (2)	257	4.2	4.6	3.9	4.1	2.3	4.2
Strong support (3)	299	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.1	4.8
Total	700	4.1	4.5	4.0	4.1	3.1	4.3

## b. Correlates of SM

Table 4 demonstrates that support for multiculturalism was greater among females than males, and greater among those of visible minority or aboriginal status than of multi-European origin. While these differences are not large – about 0.3 points on a scale that has a range only from 1 to 3 – they are statistically significant. These differences are also reasonably consistent across issues examined in the survey.

**Table 4. Statistics of support for multiculturalism (SM) by sex and ethnic status**

Characteristic	Statistics of SM			F-value and significance from ANOVA
	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size	
Sex				$F_{1,698}=27.904$ $\alpha < 0.001$
Male	2.02	0.75	255	
Female	2.33	0.75	445	
Ethnic status				$F_{2,645}=6.169$ $\alpha = 0.002$
Visible minority	2.43	0.76	51	
Aboriginal	2.46	0.76	61	
Multi-European	2.17	0.76	648	

Support for multiculturalism among those who favoured particular political parties is examined in Table 5. Findings may not be surprising – support is greatest among New Democrats, least among conservatives (Reform, Progressive Conservative, Alliance, Saskatchewan Party), and between these extremes for those who support Liberals or no political party. Again, these differences are statistically significant but might not be as great as anticipated. Even among those who favour one of the conservative parties, mean support for multiculturalism is at a moderate level, and only 0.3 to 0.4 points below that for the NDP supporters.

**Table 5. Statistics of support for multiculturalism (SM) by sex and ethnic status**

Characteristic	Statistics of SM			F-value and significance from ANOVA
	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size	
Provincial				$F_{3,526}=4.371$ $\alpha = 0.005$
Liberal	2.27	0.73	96	
NDP	2.31	0.70	171	
Conservative	1.98	0.76	101	
None	2.22	0.81	162	
Federal				$F_{3,516}=4.706$ $\alpha = 0.003$
Liberal	2.24	0.71	189	
NDP	2.38	0.71	92	
Conservative	1.98	0.76	88	
None	2.25	0.79	151	

**Table 6. Mean of responses to statements on social and political issues (V and E variables) and correlation of responses with support for multiculturalism (SM)**

Social or political issue	Mean of V variable (5-point scale)	Expected relation with SM	Correlation of V variable with SM (support for multiculturalism)	
			tau-b	Significance
Free trade positive (V1)	3.19	negative	-0.042	0.221
Individual Initiative (V2)	3.11	negative	-0.235	<0.001
Affirmative action (V3)	3.11	positive	0.279	<0.001
Recognize gay couples (V4)	3.05	positive	0.203	<0.001
Corporate tax increase (V5)	3.80	positive	0.211	<0.001
Govt. helps big business (V6)	3.57	positive	0.151	<0.001
Have power to affect future (V7)	3.28	positive	0.122	<0.001
User fees for health care (V8)	2.03	negative	-0.151	<0.001
More health spending (V9)	3.50	positive	0.188	<0.001
Social assistance (SA) (1-4 scale)	2.55	negative	-0.203	<0.001
Support for visible minority jobs (E1)	2.30	positive	0.235	<0.001
Non-whites restricted (E2)	2.67	positive	0.146	<0.001
White males lose jobs (E3)	3.12	negative	-0.225	<0.001
Government assistance (E4)	3.14	positive	0.363	<0.001

Note: Responses to V and E statements were measured on a five-point scale from 1 meaning strongly disagree to 5 meaning strongly agree. A larger mean implies greater agreement with the statement.



For each of the ten social and political variables in Table 6, the sign of the correlation coefficient corresponds to what was expected, as noted in the middle column. That is, less conservative or more progressive political and social views are associated with greater support for multiculturalism. For example, greater support for affirmative action (V3), recognition of gay couples as married (V4), corporate taxes (V5), and health care spending (V9) are associated with greater support for multiculturalism. On the other side, greater support for free trade (V1) and user fees for health care (V8) are associated with less support for multiculturalism. Also note that views concerning power to affect the future (V7) are positively related to support for multiculturalism. While the expectation was that this would be a positive relationship, this expectation was based on general considerations of optimism and assurance, rather than on political preference.

In examining issues of employment (E1-E4 in bottom four rows of Table 6), I considered it likely that respondents who were more accepting of affirmative action and job training programs, and less concerned about job loss, would be more likely to support multiculturalism. Each of the four employment variables showed a strong connection with support for multiculturalism. Those who expressed greater support for providing jobs for visible minorities (E1) and for government assistance to immigrants (E4) also expressed more support for multiculturalism than did those who disagreed with E1 and E4. Greater support for multiculturalism was expressed by those who agreed that non-whites faced restrictions (E2). Respondents who agreed that white males are losing jobs (E3) expressed less support for multiculturalism than did those who disagreed with this view. Each of these relationships was of the expected sign, with the value of tau-b significantly different from zero at less than the 0.001 level of statistical significance.

The findings in this section indicate that support for multiculturalism was related to political views, political party preference, and concerns about employment. Those more on the left or progressive end of the political spectrum tended to express greater support for multiculturalism than did those on the right or conservative end. This was the case for both political views and political party preference. NDP supporters showed the greatest support for multiculturalism, Liberal supporters less, and supporters of one of the parties in the conservative grouping the least support. Views on employment related issues also showed strong connections to support for multiculturalism. Respondents who supported employment programs and considered non-whites to have restricted opportunities expressed more support for multiculturalism. In contrast, respondents who were concerned that employment equity programs hurt job prospects for white males were less supportive of multiculturalism.

## **D. Problems of multiculturalism (PM)**

### **1. Construction of the variable PM**

At the same time as principles of multiculturalism have been widely accepted and incorporated into Canadian society, these principles and multicultural policy have been subjected to much criticism (Bibby, Bissoondath). Criticisms come from many directions – from misunderstandings of principles or policy, from disagreements with aims and

goals, and from shortcomings, contradictions, or inherent problems in policy. In a short set of statements, it was not possible to investigate all of these in detail. But in order to obtain some idea of how undergraduate students understood problems associated with multiculturalism, respondents were asked to state their extent of agreement or disagreement with statements about possible problems of multiculturalism. In particular, the five issues listed in Table 7 were identified as problematic and statements asked about these.

Statements about problems of multiculturalism included concerns about Canadian identity (PM1), overcoming racism (PM2), divisiveness (PM3), values (PM4), and offensive practices (PM5). (See Fleras and Elliott, 2002; Gingrich and Fries, 1996). As with earlier questions, respondents were asked to state their views on a five-point scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) – with the five statements alternating between negative and positive views. We anticipated that for the statements labelled negative in Table 7 (PM1, PM3, PM5), supporters of multiculturalism would tend to disagree while those who were less supportive would agree. In the statements labelled positive (PM2, PM4), we expected supporters of multiculturalism to be more likely to agree. The alternating negative and positive statements may have confused some respondents, or made it more difficult for them to respond, and there were fewer responses to these questions than for earlier questions. While responses will be taken at face value in this analysis, it is possible that, if respondents had been given greater time, responses might have differed somewhat. At the same time, there is a general consistency in responses, so they may be valid representations of respondents' views.

From Table 7, respondents expressed the view that multiculturalism and multicultural policy created some problems for Canada. At the same time, the overall view was that the extent of such problems was limited. Respondents generally did not look on multiculturalism as destroying identity or being offensive – problems that some critics of multiculturalism associate with the policy. At the same time, a sizable minority viewed these as problems of multiculturalism. There was greater concern about the possible divisive nature of multiculturalism and whether issues of racism and discrimination are addressed by multicultural policy and practice.

In order to construct an index of problems associated with multiculturalism, I conducted a factor analysis of the five variables in Table 7. This led to PM1, PM3, and PM5 loading on the same factor, while PM2 and PM4 loaded on another factor. The meaning of the second factor was not clear, especially since responses to PM2 showed some inconsistency with respondents' other views. As a result, I constructed a new variable, problems of multiculturalism (PM) as the sum of responses to the three variables that loaded on the first factor, a variable whose values ranged from 3 to 15, with a mean of 7.4 and a standard deviation of 2.4.

Table 8 summarizes how PM is related to sex and federal political party preference. Although none of these differences are large, differences are statistically significant and the direction of responses is consistent with the differences on SM. That is, males expressed less support for multiculturalism and stated there are more problems

with it, than did females. Respondents who supported the NDP expressed the strongest support for multiculturalism and consider there to be fewer problems associated with it, whereas those who supported a conservative party expressed lower support and consider there to be more problems. Those who supported the Liberals or no political party are in between these two groups. While there were differences among the three categories of ethnic status in terms of problems of multiculturalism, it can be seen from Table 8 that these were not significant different statistically. Notable though is that respondents of visible minority status considered there to be more problems associated with multiculturalism than did respondents in other ethnic groups.

**Table 7. Statements and summary statistics of responses to questions on problems associated with multiculturalism (question 32)**

Label	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size
PM1 – Identity (negative)	Multiculturalism makes it hard to know what it means to be a Canadian	2.24	1.15	713
PM2 – Racism (positive)	Multicultural policy addresses problems of racism and discrimination	3.12	0.88	689
PM3 – Divisive (negative)	Multicultural policy creates divisions in Canadian society	3.00	1.06	691
PM4 – Values (positive)	Multiculturalism encourages immigrants to acquire Canadian values	2.83	0.95	689
PM5 – Offensive (negative)	Multiculturalism maintains ethnic and cultural practices that are offensive to Canadian ways of life	2.18	0.97	697

Note: Responses to statements were measured on a five-point scale from 1 meaning strongly disagree to 5 meaning strongly agree. A larger mean implies greater agreement with the statement.

**Table 8. Statistics of problems of multiculturalism (PM) by sex, ethnicity, federal political preference, and support for multiculturalism (SM)**

Characteristic	Statistics of SM			F-value and significance from ANOVA
	Mean	Standard deviation	Sample size	
Sex				
Male	7.90	2.42	257	$F_{1,680}=16.202$ $\alpha < 0.001$
Female	7.15	2.34	425	
Ethnicity				
Visible minority	7.88	2.34	50	$F_{2,634}=1.263$ $\alpha = 0.284$
Aboriginal	7.14	2.41	57	
Multi-European	7.44	2.43	530	
Federal				
Liberal	7.43	2.29	186	$F_{3,509}=10.095$ $\alpha = 0.001$
NDP	6.75	2.55	91	
Conservative	8.64	2.42	87	
None	7.25	2.44	149	
Support for multiculturalism				
Weak support	8.88	2.18	140	$F_{2,667}=76.042$ $\alpha < 0.001$
Moderate support	7.89	2.17	249	
Strong support	6.29	2.15	281	

Note: The dependent variable PM has a range from 3 to 15, with larger values indicating greater problems of multiculturalism and smaller values associated with fewer problems.

From the bottom panel of Table 8, it is apparent those who expressed greater support for multiculturalism viewed the problems of multiculturalism as being less. While relationships of problems of multiculturalism (PM) with other social and political views are not reported here, for the most part, these relationships are in the opposite direction from the results shown in Table 6. That is, the relationship of SM and PM with position on the left-right spectrum, political preference, and issues of employment tended to be in the opposite direction. Those on the left tended to support multiculturalism and expressed fewer concerns about its problems. Those on the right tended to express less support for multiculturalism and viewed it as more problematic.

## **E. Models of relationships**

### **1. Regression models**

Given the number of variables and many possible interconnections among the variables, I constructed regression models (Tables 10 and 11) in an attempt to understand how sociodemographic and sociopolitical variables affected views on multiculturalism. For each of support for multiculturalism (SM) and problems of multiculturalism (PM), I tested several regression equations, to understand the structure of the relationships among the variables. These models are exploratory in nature, since I have not been able to find other estimates of such relationships. In order to understand the structure of relationships among all these variables, a structural equation model would appear to be more appropriate, but I have not yet constructed such a model. The two regression models here will have to serve as a proxy for this in the mean time.

A guide to the variables included in the regression equations is in Table 9. In order to sort through the variables measuring attitudes and opinions about social, political, and employment issues (Tables 4-8), I constructed several new variables. Some of these were obtained using a factor analysis on the variables measuring social and political attitudes (Table 6). Using findings from the factor analysis, I constructed five variables as combinations of the social, political, and economic variables. These five variables are Employment, Corporations, Individual initiative, Future, and Health – a summary of these is contained in the middle part of Table 9.

In this paper I do not provide a detailed discussion of the regression results of Table 10 and 11. Rather, I summarize the overall results in the schematic diagram of Figure 1 and discuss that. But a few comments on the regressions are in order. First, my preferred models are model 4 for support for multiculturalism (SM in Table 10) and model 3 for problems of multiculturalism (PM in Table 11). Other models are provided for purposes of comparison, to demonstrate that some variables that might be expected to be statistically significant, ended up dropping out.

In the models explaining SM, most issues identified in the correlations of Table 6 were statistically significant, even after taking account of the other variables. However, some variables appeared to be collinear with others – in particular, Employment proved to be particularly problematic so was omitted from model 4. In my view, model 4 presents a focussed and clear model that is statistically acceptable. While issues related to employment may have an effect on SM, it is with respect to problems of multiculturalism that views on this issue appear to be more connected (Table 11).

For problems of multiculturalism (PM), fewer of the variables are statistically significant. As a result, models 2 and 3 are simpler than for SM. My evaluation of the combined results of the earlier tables and the models in Tables 10 and 11 is that support for multiculturalism is broadly based, with connections to general social and political views; for problems of multiculturalism, views are more specific and connected to employment and related issues.

**Table 9. Guide to variables in regression models**

- SM** – three-point ordinal scale of support for multiculturalism from weak support (1) to strong support (3).
- PM** – ordinal scale indicating respondents views about problems of multiculturalism, from minimal problems (3) to maximal problems (15).
- Sex** – dummy variable with 0 for males and 1 for females.
- Visible minority** – dummy variable with 1 for visible minority status and 0 otherwise.
- Aboriginal status** – dummy variable with 1 for aboriginal status and 0 otherwise.
- Diverse ancestry** – number of ancestries mentioned by respondent.
- GPA** – grade point average reported by respondent.
- Values** – ordinal scale of importance of religious and spiritual values to respondent. Values from 1 (not at all important) to 4 (very important).
- Employment** – seventeen-point ordinal scale from 4 to 20, sum of four five-point scales E1 (jobs for visible minorities), E2 (restricted jobs for non-whites), E3 (white males lose jobs), and V3 (affirmative action). Larger value indicates greater support for employment programs/affirmative action.
- Corporations** – nine-point ordinal scale from 2 to 10, sum of two five-point scales, V5 (taxes on big corporations should be increased) and V6 (governments help big business). Larger value indicates greater anti-corporate sentiment.
- Individual Initiative** – twelve point ordinal scale (from 3 to 14), sum of two five-point scales and one four-point scale, V1 (free trade positive), V2 (help to people thwarts initiative), and SA (view on social assistance). Larger value indicates greater support for individual initiative.
- Future** – nine-point ordinal scale from 2 to 10, sum of two five-point scales, V7 (power to affect future) and E4 (assist immigrants to develop skills). Larger value associated with more optimistic view of future.
- Health** – nine-point ordinal scale from 2 to 10, sum of two five-point scales, V8 (user fees) and V9 (more dollars for universal health care). Larger value indicates greater support for universal health care.
- Recognize gay couples** – five-point ordinal scale from strong disagreement (1) to strong agreement (5) that tax laws and job benefits should recognize gay and lesbian couples as married.
- Social programs** – dummy variable with 1 for those who say top priority for the federal surplus should be to expand social programs, 0 for other priorities.
- Integration** – four-point ordinal scale with smaller values representing view that immigrants integrate less well and larger values representing view that immigrants integrate well.

**Table 10. Regression models with degree of support for multiculturalism (SM) as dependent variable and various independent variables**

Independent variable and expected sign of regression coefficient	Unstandardized regression coefficient b (standard error of b)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Sex (+)	0.088 * (0.063)	0.101 * (0.060)	0.100 * (0.060)	0.129 ** (0.059)
Visible minority (+)	0.218 ** (0.111)	0.201 ** (0.106)	0.181 ** (0.104)	0.277 *** (0.101)
Aboriginal status (+)	0.107 (0.113)	0.125 (0.112)		0.244 ** (0.108)
Diverse ancestry (+)	0.017 (0.028)			
GPA	0.008 ** (0.004)	0.010 *** (0.004)	0.009 *** (0.004)	0.010 *** (0.004)
Values (+)	0.025 (0.032)			
Employment (+)	0.024 ** (0.011)	0.025 *** (0.010)	0.028 *** (0.010)	
Corporations (+)	0.070 **** (0.017)	0.068 **** (0.016)	0.069 **** (0.016)	0.075 **** (0.016)
Individual initiative (-)	-0.016 (0.014)			
Future (+)	0.089 **** (0.018)	0.091 **** (0.018)	0.091 **** (0.018)	0.101 **** (0.017)
Health (+)	0.059 **** (0.018)	0.066 **** (0.017)	0.064 **** (0.017)	0.075 **** (0.017)
Recognize gay couples (+)	0.046 ** (0.024)	0.043 ** (0.022)	0.042 ** (0.022)	0.048 ** (0.022)
Social programs (+)	-0.074 (0.075)			
Integration (+)	0.252 **** (0.037)	0.247 **** (0.036)	0.245 **** (0.036)	0.256 **** (0.036)
Constant	0.100 (0.436)	-0.182 (0.343)	-0.169 (0.343)	0.099 (0.341)
R-square/adjusted R squared	0.343/0.324	0.332/0.319	0.331/0.319	0.325/0.313
Standard error of estimate	0.624	0.629	0.629	0.631
F-value, degrees of freedom	F (14,472) = 17.603 ****	F (10,503) = 25.038 ****	F (9,504) = 27.670 ****	F (9,509) = 27.169 ****

Note: Asterisks denote one-tailed significance of regression coefficients and of F-values as follows:

\*\*\*\* <0.001

\*\*\* <0.01

\*\* <0.05

\* <0.10

**Table 11. Regression models with problems of multiculturalism (PM) as dependent variable and various independent variables**

Independent variable and expected sign of regression coefficient	Unstandardized regression coefficient b (standard error of b)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Sex (-)	-0.329 * (0.215)	-0.194 (0.187)	
Visible minority (+)	0.572 * (0.380)	0.651 ** (0.347)	0.693 ** (0.345)
Aboriginal status (-)	0.377 (0.390)		
Diverse ancestry (-)	-0.006 (0.095)		
GPA	0.002 (0.013)		
Values (-)	-0.045 (0.110)		
Employment (-)	-0.073 ** (0.036)	-0.076 *** (0.031)	-0.084 *** (0.030)
Corporations (-)	0.024 (0.058)		
Individual initiative (+)	0.162 **** (0.014)	0.147 **** (0.042)	0.149 **** (0.042)
Future (-)	-0.192 *** (0.062)	-0.216 **** (0.054)	-0.216 **** (0.054)
Health (-)	-0.062 (0.061)		
Recognize gay couples (-)	-0.076 (0.081)		
Social programs (-)	0.026 (0.256)		
Integration (-)	-0.926 **** (0.126)	-0.833 **** (0.110)	-0.845 **** (0.110)
Constant	7.277 **** (1.485)	7.138 **** (0.708)	7.081 **** (0.706)
R-square/adjusted R squared	0.261/0.239	0.214/0.206	0.213/0.206
Standard error of estimate	2.124	2.139	2.139
F-value, degrees of freedom	F (14,470) = 11.883 ****	F (6,607) = 27.583 ****	F (5,608) = 32.881 ****

Note: Asterisks denote one-tailed significance of regression coefficients and of F-values as follows:

\*\*\*\* <0.001

\*\*\*

<0.01

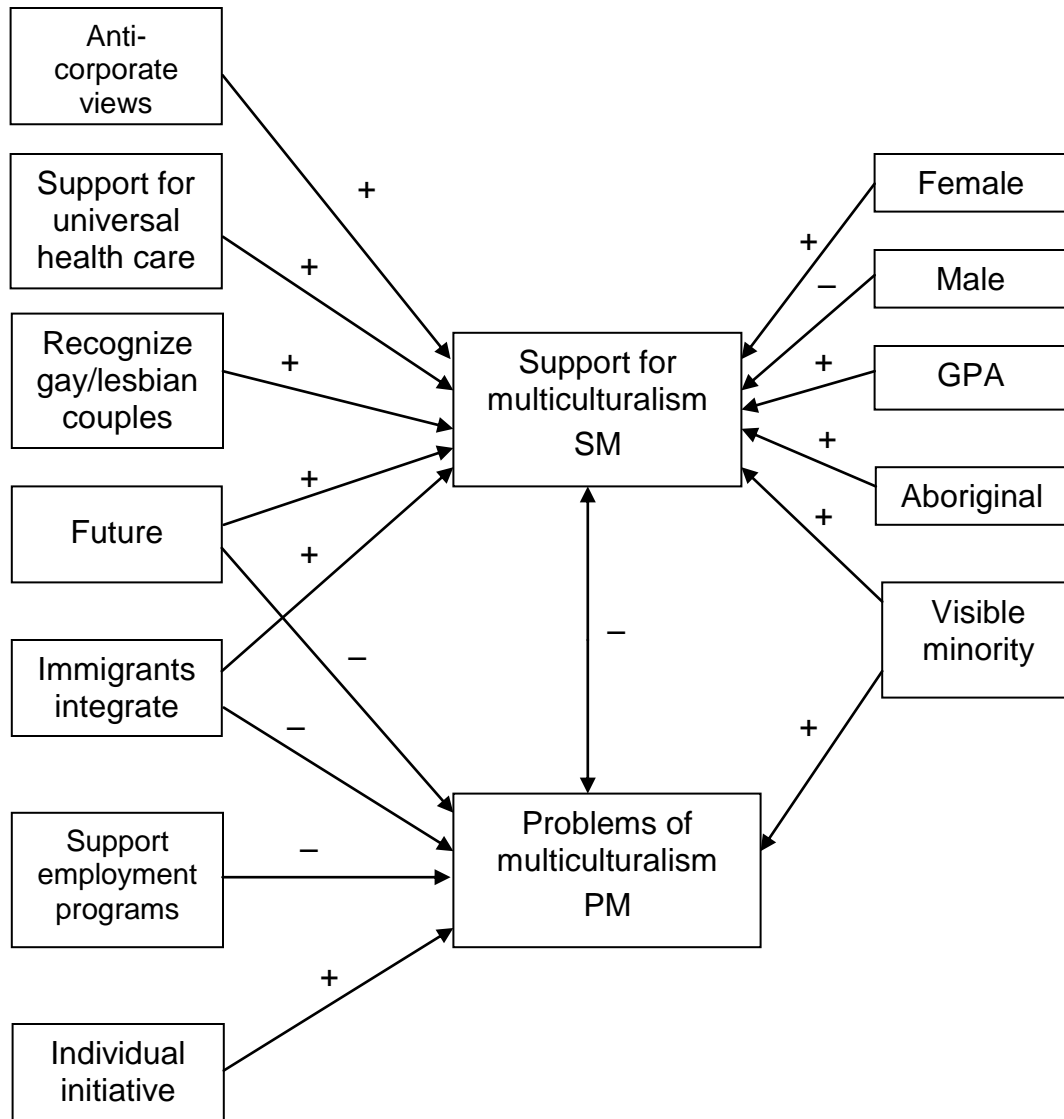
\*\*

<0.05

\* <0.10



**Figure 1. Schematic diagram of regression models explaining support for multiculturalism (SM) and problems of multiculturalism (PM)**



Note: Signs on arrows represent the sign from the regression equation of model 4 for SM (Table 10) and model 3 for PM (Table 11). Boxes connected by arrows represent statistically significant relationships using a one-tailed test, at the 0.05 level.

## 2. Schematic diagram – Figure 1

In this section of the paper I present and discuss a schematic diagram that summarizes the results of the regression models of Table 10 and 11. The schematic diagram of Figure 1 presents the results of the regression models explaining support for multiculturalism (SM) and problems of multiculturalism (PM). Arrows connect boxes for each of the variables with statistically significant regression coefficients in either Model 4 for SM (Table 10) or Model 3 for PM (Table 11). These are the models that appear best in the light of earlier analysis, goodness of fit, and statistical significance. Where there are no arrows connecting the explanatory variables to SM or PM, the relationship is statistically insignificant at the 0.05 level or greater, using a one-tailed test. I have also connected SM and PM with a two-directional arrow to denote that these variables are negatively correlated with each other. The Pearson correlation coefficient between SM and PM is  $-0.427$ , significantly less than zero at the 0.001 level of statistical significance.

Sociodemographic explanatory variables are shown in boxes on the right-hand side of Figure 1. Each of the characteristics being female, of aboriginal status, of visible minority status, or higher grade point average (GPA) is positively associated with support for multiculturalism. In contrast, support for multiculturalism is lower for individuals with the following characteristics: male, non-aboriginal, non-visible minority, and lower grade point average. Among the sociodemographic explanatory variables, it is only visible minority status that is significantly associated with PM, and then with the opposite sign to what I initially expected. That is, those of visible minority status look on multiculturalism as having more problems associated with it than do those who are not members of visible minorities, as noted in Table 8.

The connections of SM and PM with views on social and political issues are shown on the left-hand side of Figure 1. What is interesting about the relationships there is that only two variables – views on immigrant integration and ability to affect the future – are connected with both SM and PM. That a different set of variables affect SM than affect PM indicates that SM and PM are not just the reverse of views about multiculturalism. In these models, support for multiculturalism is related to one set of social and political views while problems of multiculturalism is related to different combination of social and political views. This implies that views about problems of multiculturalism emerge from a different concerns than does support for multiculturalism, with implications for how multicultural policy is constructed and applied.

Support for multiculturalism is related positively to willingness to recognize gay and lesbian couples as married, support for universal health care, and views that corporate taxes should be increased and government helps big business. Views about health care and anti-corporate sentiment are two measures that have been associated with placement on a left-right spectrum of political orientation. Thus, support for multiculturalism appears to align itself on such a spectrum, with those more on the left being more supportive of multicultural principles than are those more on the right end of a political orientation spectrum. In the factor analysis, views on recognition of gay and lesbian

couples as married did not align themselves with any of the other factors, so I considered these views to represent a different set of social and political concerns – a recognition and acceptance of diversity in a broader sense.

The variables common to the two models each represent a distinct idea. Respondents' views concerning how well immigrants integrate are connected to SM and PM, but with opposite sign. That is, respondents who looked on immigrants as integrating well expressed more support for multiculturalism than did those who considered immigrant integration to be a problem. It was the group of respondents who considered integration to be problematic who also considered multiculturalism to have more problems associated with it. In contrast, those who considered immigrants to integrate well looked on multiculturalism as having fewer problems associated with it.

The variable concerning the future was also connected to SM and PM in opposite manner. Respondents with larger values for this variable considered themselves to have the ability to affect the future and supported government assistance to immigrants to prepare them for job and educational opportunities. That is, they seemed relatively confident about themselves and at the same time recognized that some individuals and groups may need assistance in order to participate more fully in society. In contrast, those feeling less power and less supportive of assistance programs expressed both less support for multiculturalism and more concern about problems of multiculturalism.

The two variables associated with PM, but not SM, were views about employment programs and individual initiative. Respondents who were more opposed to social assistance, or said that money spent helping people means these people do not help themselves, also expressed more concerns about problems associated with multiculturalism. In contrast, those who were more supportive of social assistance tended to report fewer problems for multiculturalism.

Those more supportive of affirmative action or other types of employment programs aimed at visible minorities or nonwhites were less likely to report problems associated with multiculturalism. It was those more critical of such employment programs who were more likely to say that multiculturalism had more problems associated with it. While support for the employment programs variable was associated positively with SM in some models, it was deleted from model 4 since it appeared to highly connected with some other independent variables – meaning that I could not disentangle its influence from that of other variables.

### **3. Summary**

The regression models indicate that there are several dimensions to relationships between sociodemographic characteristics, social views, and political perspectives and support for and problems of multiculturalism. Sociodemographic variables are more highly related to support for multiculturalism than to problems of multiculturalism. The common influences on SM and PM are views concerning the success of immigrant integration and respondents' abilities to affect the future. The remaining variables

affecting support for multiculturalism are those associated with a left-right spectrum of political views and a general appreciation and support for diversity. These latter variables are unrelated to assessment of problems of multiculturalism. Rather, perspectives on employment programs and individual initiative appear primary in determining views about problems of multiculturalism.

## **F. Research and policy recommendations**

While this project is limited in terms of its scope and the sample, some suggestions concerning research and policy can be developed.

**1. Traditional multicultural principles. Continued emphasis on multicultural policy and programs – these appear to have developed broad support. Focus on the traditional multicultural principles of diversity, harmony, equality, resource, participation, and overcoming barriers. Emphasis on opposing racist attitudes, behaviour, and structures.**

Students had a good understanding and appreciation of the meaning of multiculturalism and generally supported multiculturalism, regardless of political or social view. From this, there appears to be widespread support for the principles of multiculturalism, limited concern about some possible problems of multiculturalism, more serious reservations about some of the policies associated with multiculturalism, and great concern about some problematic aspects of multiculturalism. But the latter appear focussed on specific issues, especially those related to labour market issues and immigrant integration.

These findings demonstrate that Canadian multicultural policy has been relatively effective in educating people about the policy and producing a broad level of support for a multicultural approach to social interaction in Canada. In my view, understanding and adoption of multicultural principles has positively affected Canada, making our society more open, accepting, and democratic; there is much to be gained by continuing to stress these principles in educational programs, in daily life, and in the workings of business, government, and other Canadian institutions.

**2. Overcoming barriers. Greater emphasis on principles of equality and overcoming barriers in designing and implementing multicultural policy and programs – these are insufficiently recognized as aspects of multiculturalism. Government, business, and educational and other institutions aim to eliminate barriers to participation and find ways for all Canadians to have equal opportunities to participate in these institutions.**

While not highlighted in this paper, the survey demonstrated that there is less recognition of the multicultural principles of culture as resource and equality in participation, and minimal recognition of the principle of overcoming barriers. Canadians should be especially concerned about limited recognition of these essential principles of multiculturalism, especially the latter two. While multiculturalism has been

relatively effective in some parts of the cultural sphere and has contributed to greater openness and participation for newcomers and those outside the mainstream, there is still much to be accomplished.

**3. Labour market. Opposition to multiculturalism emerges from concerns about specific problem areas, especially those related to jobs and employment. Attempt to ensure better job opportunities for all and improve educational and research programs to demonstrate how equitable participation and overcoming barriers can benefit all Canadians. Broaden the scope of multiculturalism beyond cultural aspects, and focus more on jobs and employment.**

**4. Newcomers. Concerns about immigrant integration could be reduced by providing newcomers with improved settlement, job preparation, and educational services.**

Respondents expressed concerns about availability of jobs and opportunities in education and the labour market. One way that Canada could welcome newcomers would be to provide a more complete range of settlement and support services – language training, labour market preparation, and assistance with helping them understand Canadian society and institutions. From the student survey, there appears to be support for such measures, although students generally did not favour affirmative action programs for minorities.

Students, mostly Canadian born, were concerned about job availability and, more specifically, that newcomers or equity programs might hurt job opportunities for these students. A two-stream policy approach is required to reduce these concerns – improving job availability and using educational efforts to inform people of the advantages of full participation for all. In the case of job availability, this would require linking multicultural and economic policy. In terms of education, research and policy could be better linked to show how all Canadians can benefit by eliminating barriers and having more equitable participation. This could assist in alleviating concerns of young males, some of whom appear to feel threatened by newcomers and equity programs.

**5. Research. This study is limited in scope, but is suggestive of issues that might be further investigated. In particular, it points toward comparative research on the meanings, principles, problems, successes, and shortcomings of multiculturalism among a variety of groups and regions in Canada. Investigate the specific ways that newcomers and others outside the social mainstream encounter barriers to full participation in Canadian society.**

The findings from this research apply to only a limited population – undergraduates at the University of Regina. I suggest that it would be useful to compare these findings with studies from other regions and groups, with investigation of specific policies and programs that would help multicultural policy to achieve more of its aims. If these findings are more generally applicable, then this suggests that multiculturalism has

been an effective policy initiative, and one that needs to be extended rather than abandoned.

Paul Gingrich

Regina, Saskatchewan

Last revised on March 31, 2004

## References

- Angus Reid Group. 1991. *Multiculturalism and Canadians" Attitude Study 1991. National Survey Report.*
- Berry, John W., Rudolf Kalin, and Donald M. Taylor. 1977. *Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada*, Ottawa, Supply and Services Canada.
- Bibby, Reginald W. 1990. *Mosaic Madness: The Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada*, Stoddart, Toronto.
- Bissoondath, Neil. 1994. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, Penguin Books, Toronto.
- Canadian Heritage. 2004. [http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/pc-ch/sujets-subjects/divers-multi/multi/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/pc-ch/sujets-subjects/divers-multi/multi/index_e.cfm), March 21, 2004.
- Fleras, Augie and Jean Leonard Elliott. 2002. *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada*, second edition, Toronto, Ontario, Nelson Thomson Learning.
- Gingrich, Paul and Chrisopher J. Fries. 1996. "A 'Great' Large Family: Understandings of Multiculturalism Among Newcomers to Canada," paper presented at the National Symposium on Immigration and Integration: New Challenges, Winnipeg, October 1996.
- Gingrich, Paul and Chrisopher J. Fries. 2002. "Views on Multicultural Principles and Problems – Implications for Research and Policy," paper presented at conference "Canada: Global Model for a Multicultural State," Edmonton, September 2002.
- Gingrich, Paul. 2002. "Immigration and Multiculturalism: Views from a Multicultural Prairie City," paper presented at the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association annual meetings, Toronto, May 30, 2002
- Gingrich, Paul. 2003. "Meanings of Multiculturalism," paper presented at the Canadian Ethnic Studies Conference, Banff, Alberta, October 3, 2003
- Isajiw, Wsevolod W.. 1999. *Understanding Diversity: Ethnicity and Race in the Canadian Context*, Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc., Toronto.
- Li, Peter S. 1999. "The Multiculturalism Debate," in Peter S. Li, editor, *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, second edition, Don Mills, Ontario, Oxford University Press, pp. 148-177.
- Parekh, Bhiku. 2000. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada). 2003. "Multiculturalism Issues in Canada: A Strategic Joint Initiative of SSHRC and the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage." Web site [http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program\\_descriptions/multiculturalism\\_e.asp](http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program_descriptions/multiculturalism_e.asp), accessed on July 17, 2003.