



Concordia Working Papers
in Applied Linguistics

Concordia Working Papers in Applied Linguistics, 3, 2012
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The Canadian Multiculturalism Policy within the Colombian Community

FERNANDA SOLER URZÚA
McGill University

Abstract

Canada defines itself as a multicultural country. Within its borders, people from varied ethnic backgrounds co-exist, making the country linguistically and culturally diverse. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act is intended to ensure mutual acceptance among the different ethnocultural groups that belong to Canadian society. According to Berry (1984, 2006), who drew on P. E. Trudeau's words, this goal is achieved as long as ethnocultural groups in society maintain and develop themselves as distinctive entities, have contact and share with other members of other ethnic groups and learn the official languages of Canada. The current study investigates the extent to which these three components of multiculturalism help achieve the policy's goal. A small sample of the Colombian community living in Canada participated in the study. Results revealed a significantly strong relationship between intergroup contact and sharing, and mutual acceptance and tolerance. The findings of the study, its limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

The purpose of the investigation presented in this article is to explore the extent to which three components of the Canadian multiculturalism policy contribute to the achievement of the policy's goal, namely to ensure mutual acceptance and tolerance among all ethnocultural groups in Canadian society (Berry, 1984, 2006; Trudeau, 1971). In this section, I provide a brief account of the evolution of multiculturalism in Canada. Then, I explain the components of the multicultural policy based on the theoretical framework provided by Berry (1984, 2006). Finally, a brief discussion of some previous studies exploring certain aspects of multiculturalism will follow.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MULTICULTURALISM

Immigration to Canada has been one of the most influential factors contributing to the ethnic and cultural diversity in Canadian society. Statistics Canada (2010) estimates there were over six million immigrants by the year 2006, among a population of approximately 30 million inhabitants. Two years later, the number of immigrants who were granted permanent residence had already increased by half a million (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009).

The attention paid to this ethnic and cultural diversity in Canada has shifted over the decades. Fleras and Elliot (1992) have identified three stages related to multiculturalism, namely incipient, formative and expansionist phases. Briefly, the incipient stage, which refers to the period before 1971, was characterized by a strong anglocentrism, in which assimilation and "anglo-conformity" were considered the "building blocks of Canadian society" (Fleras & Elliot, 1992, p. 71). During the incipient stage, cultural diversity was ignored by central authorities, and racial and ethnic differences were considered prejudicial to national interests and integrity (Derwing & Leman, 2006).

During the following phase, namely the formative stage of multiculturalism in Canada (1971-1985), the pressure from ethnic groups and other political events created a critical situation in which government action was urgently needed (Fleras & Elliot, 1992). The Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) had elaborated a set of 16 recommendations related to non-discrimination towards other ethnic groups, promotion of languages other than English and French in Canadian education, promotion of other cultures through broadcasting in non-official languages, publicizing of print materials in other languages, among others (RCBB, 1970). It was in this context that the former Prime

Minister Pierre E. Trudeau made a statement to the House of Commons in October, 1971, responding to the recommendations made by the RCBB. In his statement, Trudeau talked about the nature of a multicultural policy within a bilingual framework and stated:

A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.

The government will support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for all (Trudeau, 1971, p. 519).

The policy's objective, as suggested by Trudeau, was to integrate other ethnic groups (different from French and British Canadians) into Canadian society (Breton, 1986). In this policy, it is assumed that no group is superior to another, all cultures are equally valid, and they all contribute to the richness of Canada. In addition, to accomplish national unity, Trudeau stated that if the different groups were confident of their identities, they would be able to respect and share with other groups.

In 1988, during the expansionist phase, also known as *institutionalization* (Dewing & Leman, 2006), the House of Commons approved the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, in which Canada officially acknowledged the racial diversity of the country and "the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1990, p. 13). Canada then became the first country in the world to have a multiculturalism law.

In short, the Multiculturalism Act "denies the notion that everyone must fit into some set mold" (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1990). This includes, for example, that other languages, different from French and English, are equally valid, and that discrimination based on "race, national or ethnic origin or colour" (p. 5) is not tolerated. Through this act, the Canadian state officially recognized the existence of diverse

communities in the country, and the contribution they can make to Canadian society. In addition, by means of this law, the Canadian state is said to recognize that the “social, economic and cultural life of the country is strengthened by bringing together Canadians of different backgrounds” (p. 14).

MULTICULTURALISM POLICY COMPONENTS

In relation to the multiculturalism policy, as first stated by Trudeau, Berry (1984, 2006) identified a number of components to accomplish the policy’s goal: “mutual acceptance among all ethnocultural groups” (Berry, 2006, p. 723). He identified a cultural component, a social component and a communication component. The cultural component of the policy is what he calls “ethnocultural group maintenance and development” (p. 723). The social component is related to intergroup contact and sharing or participation, and the third component of communication is related to the learning of official languages.

Taking into account Trudeau’s words, Berry (1984, 2006) states that mutual acceptance among ethnocultural groups or “group acceptance and tolerance” (Berry, 1984, p. 355) is achieved through the encouragement of ethnic groups’ maintenance and development. This is what he calls the “multicultural assumption” (1984) or “multicultural hypothesis” (2006), which refers to the fact that one’s “own group development and maintenance permits a sense of confidence which will lead to other group acceptance and tolerance” (2006, p. 363). At the same time, if there is confidence in one’s group identity, that is, if the group is maintained and developed, this will lead to interaction with other ethnocultural communities as well. This interaction among different ethnic groups cannot be accomplished if the groups do not speak the official languages, that is why Berry considers the official languages as the “linguistic vehicle for sharing” (1984, p. 355) and also the means to accomplish mutual understanding. Another relationship that is made explicit in this model is the contact hypothesis (Amir, 1969), which assumes that group contact and sharing leads to acceptance and tolerance. The model proposed by Berry (2006) is illustrated in Figure 1.

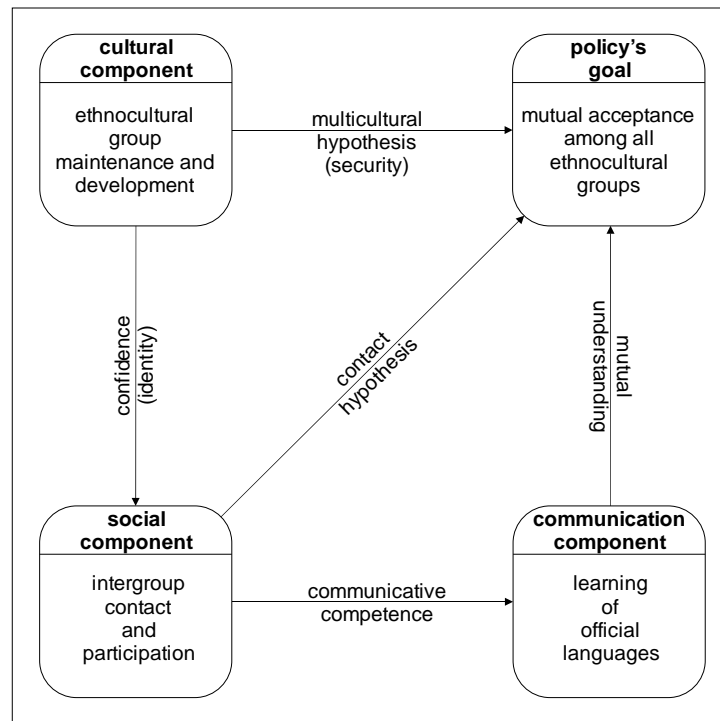


Figure 1. Components of the multiculturalism policy and relationships among them (taken from Berry, 2006).

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

Canadian multiculturalism has caught researchers' attention over the decades. However, to my knowledge, no previous studies have been conducted to find out whether all three components together have an impact in accomplishing the goal of the Canadian multiculturalism policy: mutual acceptance among all ethnocultural groups (Berry, 2006). A few have examined some components of the policy separately. For example, Lambert, Mermigis and Taylor (1986) set up an investigation in order to test the multicultural hypothesis, which, as previously mentioned, posits that confidence in one's group leads to greater acceptance and tolerance towards other groups. After conducting several interviews to Greek-Canadian couples, the researchers found strong evidence for this hypothesis and concluded that:

(The) more secure respondents (felt) about their economic and social standing of their own group, the more favourable their social perceptions of other ethnic groups in Canada, and conversely, the less secure they (felt)

about their own group, the less favourable (were) their perceptions of other groups (p. 43).

A similar study was conducted by Moghaddam and Taylor (1987), who explored the extent to which a group of women from India wanted to develop and maintain a distinct cultural group and whether they socialized with people from other ethnic groups. Moghaddam and Taylor found that the group of women wanted to retain some aspects of their culture, but also to “assimilate to some extent into the mainstream Canadian society” (p. 125). Another interesting finding from their study was the influence the participants’ level of education had on their patterns of interaction with members of other ethnocultural groups: less educated women interacted less often with other groups when compared to highly-educated women.

Other studies (e.g., Angus Reid, 1991; Berry, 2006; Berry & Kalin, 1995, 2000; Kalin & Berry, 1996) have examined tolerance and acceptance towards minority groups in Canada. In general, the findings have indicated that Canadians display a certain amount of ethnocentrism, but they have also shown that “there are good prospects for achieving a diverse and tolerant society in Canada” (Berry & Kalin, 1995, p. 301).

The communication component, that is, the learning of the official languages of Canada by minority groups, has also been studied. However, it was not possible to find many empirical studies focusing on minority immigrant groups’ attitudes towards or perceptions of learning the official languages of Canada or the importance of knowing these languages for integration within Canadian society. Most of the research in this area seems to focus on Canadian students’ attitudes towards learning either French or English in immersion programs. One of the exceptions is a study by Frideres (1989), who explored a visible minority group’s perception of the learning of one of the official languages of Canada (English) in an ESL program. The findings suggested that participants of this study recognized the importance of learning English for their integration into Canadian society. In other words, they considered English as the medium for interaction and integration. A second example is the study by Abu-Rabia (1996), who assessed Arab students’ attitudes towards learning English. He found this group of students learned the language for instrumental purposes rather than integrative purposes. However, a closer look at the results revealed that female students were more inclined towards integrative motivation than male students. Abu-Rabia concludes his study by stating that female Arab students “felt

emotional support for and identification with Canadian society" (p. 543), suggesting that their minority status encouraged these students to integrate into Canadian society.

Overall, there seems to be strong support for Berry's (1984, 2006) claims with respect to the achievement of the multiculturalism policy's goal. While each of the components has been studied separately in the studies presented above, the empirical evidence points in favour of Berry's multiculturalism model in terms of the contribution of the social, cultural and communication aspect to the mutual acceptance and tolerance among the different ethnocultural groups co-existing in Canada.

THE CURRENT STUDY

Because of the apparent lack of research on the combined effects of the cultural, social and communicative components of the multiculturalism policy, and the lack of research with Latin American communities, the current study aims to fill the existing research gap by integrating the three components of Berry's (1984, 2006) model into a single study and investigating their contribution to the achievement of the multiculturalism policy's goal within a small sample of the Colombian community in Canada. Colombians constitute a small part of the nationwide population –0.6% by the year 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2010). However, in the province of Quebec, where the latest figures date from 2009, the Colombian immigrants comprised 5.1% of the province's population (Institut de la Statistique Québec, 2010).

Before examining how the components of the multiculturalism policy contributed to mutual acceptance and tolerance, it was necessary to find out whether Colombians considered it important to develop and maintain their culture and language and whether they carried out specific activities to preserve these. It was also necessary to know if they deemed it important to interact with members from other ethnic groups, and whether they actually did. Additionally, it was crucial to explore their levels of tolerance towards other groups and whether they considered learning the official languages of Canada as important or unimportant.

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Is it important for Colombians to maintain and develop themselves as a group, and if so, to what extent do they do so? (cultural component)

2. Is it important for Colombians to have contact and share with other ethnic groups, and if so, to what extent do they do so? (social component)
3. What are their attitudes towards learning the official languages of Canada in terms of importance? (communication component)
4. Do Colombians show willingness to accept and tolerate other ethnic groups? (policy's goal)
5. To what extent do the cultural, social or communicative components contribute to the acceptance of other ethnic groups within the Colombian community?

METHOD

Participants

Twenty-three Colombian immigrants living in Canada, whose ages ranged from 19 to 34 ($M = 27.73$, $SD = 4.79$), participated in the study. The sample consisted of 15 females and 8 males. Participants' mean length of residence in Canada was 5.3 years ($SD = 4.21$), ranging from 0.5 to 14.3 years. Regarding participants' educational level, one was pursuing her undergraduate degree, 16 had an undergraduate degree, and 6 of them had obtained or were pursuing a graduate degree. In terms of marital status, 16 participants were single, five of them were married, one was divorced and one reported other status. All participants reported to speak English at different proficiency levels (beginner: 2, intermediate: 1, advanced intermediate: 5, advanced: 9, native-like: 6) ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.18$). Seventeen participants reported that they learned English in Colombia, three of them in Canada, and three elsewhere. Twenty-one participants reported speaking French at different proficiency levels (beginner: 1, intermediate beginner: 3, intermediate: 3, advanced intermediate: 8, advanced: 6) ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.55$). Seven participants indicated having learned French in Colombia, and 14, in Canada. Twenty participants lived in Montreal, QC; two of them in St. Catherines, ON; and one in Guelph, ON.

Materials

A thirty-eight question survey was presented to each participant in electronic format through the website surveymonkey.com. The complete

version of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix. The questionnaire was intended to elicit information on the following topics:

- *Background information*: participants were asked to provide their names, e-mail address, age, gender, length of residence in Canada, the name of the city in which they were living at the moment of the study, marital status, level of education, and their proficiency levels in the official languages of Canada.
- *Group maintenance and development*: participants were asked questions on the importance ethnic groups placed on maintaining their culture and traditions while living in Canada, and questions related to the extent to which they developed and maintained their ethnic group. The questions related to this topic were adapted from the study by Lambert et al. (1986).
- *Intergroup contact and sharing*: participants were asked questions on the importance of sharing and having contact with other ethnic groups while living in Canada, and questions related to the extent to which they shared and had contact with other ethnic groups in the country. Some of the questions for this section were adapted from Lambert et al. (1986) as well.
- *Mutual acceptance and tolerance*: participants were asked to answer questions intended to elicit their degree of comfort when dealing with people from other ethnic groups, as well as their likelihood to accept members from other ethnic communities playing different roles in their lives. Some of the questions for this section were adapted from Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford (1950), and others were obtained from Dr. Gatbonton, Associate Professor from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.
- *Learning of official languages*: participants answered a question related to the importance they gave to the learning of official languages of Canada.

Sampling and Procedures

This study used snowball sampling. An initial group of ten informants, who met the eligibility for the study, i.e., being Colombian and residing in Canada for at least six months, were contacted by the researcher. People from the initial group contacted the other 13 participants, who also met the criteria to participate in the study.

As previously mentioned, the survey was posted on a website for a month in May, 2010. Participants were first asked to give an informed

consent to participate in the study by providing an electronic signature, and then to proceed with the questions. The completion of the survey took approximately ten minutes. All questions, including the informed consent were written in Spanish.

For all questions, except for those intended to elicit background information, participants were asked to rate statements on scales of frequency, importance and agreement. Scales had four and five points, except for the scale of language proficiency level, which was a six-point scale.

RESULTS

The results are reported with respect to the research questions of the study. For all the questions, descriptive statistics will be presented. This will be followed by the results of a simultaneous multiple regression exploring the extent to which factors grouping the variables for group maintenance and development, contact and sharing with other ethnic groups, learning of official languages, contributed to the degree of acceptance and tolerance of this sample of Colombian immigrants towards other ethnic groups in Canada.

Cultural Component: Importance of Group Maintenance and Development

In order to elicit participants' perceptions of importance of own group maintenance and development, they were asked to rate four statements on a 4-point scale, where 1 meant 'not at all important' and 5, 'extremely important'.

For the question 'how important is it that minority groups maintain their traditions and lifestyles when they come to Canada', 69.5% of the respondents considered it either important or extremely important, and 30.4% deemed it unimportant. The overall mean for this question was 2.73 ($SD = .54$). When asked about the importance of maintaining their native language in Canada, 56.5% considered either important or extremely important, while a 43.5% thought it was unimportant. The overall mean for this question was 2.65 ($SD = .64$). With regard to the importance of celebrating Colombian holidays while living in Canada, 82.6% considered it either not at all important or unimportant, while 17.4% considered it important. The mean for this question was 1.69 ($SD = .76$). Regarding the maintenance of contact with people from their own ethnic group, 30.4%

considered it either not at all important or unimportant, while 69.5% considered it either important or extremely important. The mean for this question was 2.78 ($SD = .73$). Table 1 below shows the means and standard deviations for each question regarding the importance of group maintenance and development.

Table 1. Importance given to the cultural component of the policy

Item	<i>M (SD)</i>
Minority groups maintaining their traditions and lifestyles	2.73 (.54)
Maintaining own native language while in Canada	2.65 (.64)
Celebrating Colombian holidays while in Canada	1.69 (.76)
Maintaining contact with members of own group	2.78 (.73)

Cultural Component: Actual Group Maintenance and Development

In order to find out whether participants developed and maintained themselves as a group, questions related to the frequency in which they carried out activities related to their culture were asked by means of a 5-point scale, where 1 meant 'never' and 5, 'always'.

When asked about the frequency with which they listened to Colombian music, 13% of the participants responded that they almost never or never did. Around half of the participants (52.2%) answered 'sometimes' and 34.7% declared doing it either very often or always. The mean for this question was 3.30 ($SD = .97$). Participants were also asked how often they read Colombian newspapers. Thirteen percent answered 'almost never', 34.8% said they read newspapers sometimes, and 52.2% reported doing it either very often or always. The mean for this question was 3.56 ($SD = .94$). Informants were also asked how often they listened to Colombian radio programs. Most of the participants (65.2%) responded to this question saying they never or almost never did. Around a quarter of the respondents (26.1%) said they sometimes did, while 8.6% listened to Colombian radio programs either always or very often. The mean for this question was 2.21 ($SD = 1.04$). They were also asked how often they watched Colombian television. Most of them (69.6%) responded to this question saying they never or almost never watched television programs from their home country. Twenty-one point seven percent said they sometimes did, while 8.6% watched Colombian television programs either always or very often. The mean for this question was 3.56 ($SD = .94$). When asked about the frequency with which they ate typical Colombian

food, 13% said they almost never ate it, 52.2% said they sometimes did, while 8.7% said they always ate typical Colombian food. The mean for this question was 3.30 ($SD = .82$). Participants were also asked how much time they spend with people from their own ethnic group. Thirteen percent reported sharing little time with other Colombians, 30.4% said they spent half of their time with them, and 56.5% said they spend plenty of or all the time with other Colombians. The mean for this question was 3.56 ($SD = .89$). Table 2 below shows the means and standard deviations for each of the questions.

Table 2. Frequency of activities fostering cultural component of the policy

Item	<i>M (SD)</i>
Listening to Colombian music	3.30 (.97)
Reading Colombian newspapers	3.56 (.94)
Listening of Colombian radio programs	2.21 (1.04)
Watching Colombian TV programs	3.56 (.94)
Eating typical Colombian food	3.30 (.82)
Sharing with people from same group	3.56 (.89)

Social Component: Importance of Intergroup Contact and Participation

When asked about the importance of maintaining contact with other ethnic groups in Canada, 8.7% considered it unimportant, while 91.3% considered it either important or extremely important. The mean for this 4-point scale question, in which 1 meant “not at all important” and 4, “extremely important”, was 3.17 ($SD = .57$)

Social Component: Actual Intergroup Contact and Participation

Participants were asked to answer by means of a 5-point scale how much of their time they spent with people from other ethnic groups. In this scale, 1 represented ‘no time’ and 5, ‘all the time’. Eight point seven percent (8.7%) said they spent little time with people from other groups, 39.4% spent half of their time with other groups, and 60.8% spent either plenty of time or all of their time with people from other ethnic groups. The mean for this question was 3.56 ($SD = .72$).

In a different section of the survey, participants were asked to judge four statements in terms of agreement and disagreement with respect to

their contact with other groups. For these questions, a 4-point scale in which 1 meant 'strongly disagree' and 4, 'strongly agree' was used. In the first statement, which was 'I have more Colombian friends than friends from other ethnic groups', 56.5% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, while 39.1% either agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.47 ($SD = 1.16$). For the second statement, 'when I invite people to come over, most of them are Colombians', 52.2% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, while 47.8% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.56 ($SD = .89$). For the third affirmation, 'most of the people I send e-mails or write letters to are members of my ethnic group', 56.5% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 43.5% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.39 ($SD = .83$). For the last statement, 'I do not invite people from other ethnic groups to come over', 78.3% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 21.7% agreed. The mean for this question was 1.69 ($SD = .82$). Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of this set of questions.

Table 3. Contact of Colombians with other ethnic groups

Item	<i>M (SD)</i>
Having more friends from own ethnic group than from others	2.47 (1.16)
Inviting people mostly from own ethnic group over	2.56 (.89)
E-mailing more friends from own ethnic group	2.39 (.83)
Not inviting people from other ethnic groups over	1.69 (.82)

Communication Component: Importance of Learning the Official Languages

As outlined in the participant section, all of the respondents spoke English, while 21 of them spoke French, both languages at varying proficiency levels. In order to elicit information on this topic, participants were asked whether they considered it important to learn the official languages to live in Canada. Eight point six percent (8.6%) of the participants considered it 'not at all important' or unimportant, while 91.3% considered it either important or extremely important. The mean for this 4-point scale question was 3.60 ($SD = .78$).

Policy's Goal: Acceptance and Tolerance towards Other Ethnic Groups

In order to measure acceptance and tolerance, participants responded to two sets of questions. The first one measured their likelihood to accept people from other ethnic groups in different roles in life, while the second was intended to measure their degree of comfort when dealing with people from other ethnic groups in different situations. These results are presented below.

Policy's Goal: Likelihood of Acceptance and Tolerance of Other Ethnic Groups

To elicit information for this section, participants were asked to judge three statements in terms of agreement or disagreement. For the first statement, 'I am more likely to accept Colombians as new members of my family through marriage than people from other ethnic groups', 86.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 13% agreed. The mean for this question was 1.73 ($SD = .68$). In the second statement, 'I am more likely to accept Colombians as friends than people from other ethnic groups', 95.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 4.3% agreed. The mean for this question was 1.56 ($SD = .58$). For the last statement, 'I am more likely to accept Colombians as co-workers than people from other ethnic groups', 100% of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed ($M = 1.43$, $SD = .50$).

Policy's Goal: Degree of Comfort Accepting Members from Other Ethnic Groups

To elicit information on their degree of comfort when dealing with people from other ethnic groups, participants were asked to judge five statements in terms of agreement or disagreement. For the first statement, 'I am more comfortable dealing with members of my ethnic group than dealing with members of other ethnic groups', 65.2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 34.8% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.26 ($SD = .86$). In the second statement, 'if I have any problems, I am more comfortable discussing them with members of my group than with members of other ethnic groups', 65.2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 34.8% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.26 ($SD = .86$). For the third affirmation, 'I am more

at ease talking about personal matters with members of my ethnic groups than with members of other ethnic groups', 69.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 34.8% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.17 ($SD = .77$). For the statement 'when I'm feeling low, being with members of my group brings me more comfort than being with members of other ethnic groups', 60.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 39.1% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.30 ($SD = .87$). For the last statement, 'when I need help, I am more comfortable approaching members of my ethnic group to assist me than approaching members of other groups', 60.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 39.1% agreed or strongly agreed. The mean for this question was 2.26 ($SD = .81$). Table 4 below summarizes the results of participants' degree of comfort dealing with members of other ethnic groups.

Table 4. Degree of comfort accepting members from other ethnic groups

Item	<i>M (SD)</i>
More comfortable dealing with members of own group than others	2.26 (.86)
More comfortable discussing problems with members of own group than others	2.26 (.86)
More comfortable sharing personal matters with members of own group	2.17 (.77)
When feeling low, being with members of own group brings more comfort	2.30 (.87)
When in need of help, more comfortable approaching members of own group	2.26 (.81)

Contribution of Components to the Policy's Goal

In order to find out to what extent the cultural, social and communication components of the Canadian multicultural policy help achieve the policy's goal, that is, mutual acceptance and tolerance, variables (questions) measuring actual behaviour were first grouped into three different factor groups, each representing the policy's different components: group maintenance and development, contact and sharing with other ethnic groups, and acceptance and tolerance. There was no need to do this with the data elicited for the learning of official languages, because participants answered only one question in which they rated their overall proficiency

in French and English. Therefore, the answers related to the two official languages constituted one factor each.

Based on reliability analyses, some of the variables belonging to the above mentioned factors were discarded. For the first factor, group maintenance and development, there was an internal consistency of .87 (Cronbach's alpha). For contact and sharing with other ethnic groups, reliability was .87. For the third factor, acceptance and tolerance, the estimate of reliability was .95.

After obtaining the factors for each component, a simultaneous multiple regression was conducted. The independent variables were the factors grouping variables representing the cultural and social components, together with the factors representing the communication component. The dependent variable in the model was the factor grouping the variables representing acceptance and tolerance towards other ethnic groups. The results showed that the regression model significantly predicted the dependent variable (i.e., the policy's goal), $R = .75$, $F(4,18) = 5.93$, $p < .005$. The coefficient of determination suggested that 57% of the variation in terms of acceptance and tolerance towards other ethnic groups accounted for the factors representing the independent variables. The factor representing the cultural component significantly predicted the dependent variable, $b = 2.72$, $t(18) = 4.26$, $p < .005$. However, their actual group maintenance and development did not contribute significantly to the dependent variable, $b = .18$, $t(18) = .87$, $p = .39$, neither did their French level [$b = .009$, $t(18) = .03$, $p = .98$], nor their English level [$b = .003$, $t(18) = .01$, $p = .99$]. Overall, the results of the multiple regression analysis show that intergroup contact and sharing helps in the tolerance and acceptance towards other ethnic groups.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to investigate whether the three components of the Canadian multicultural policy – group maintenance and development, intergroup contact and participation/sharing, and learning of official languages – helped achieve the policy's goal, which is to ensure mutual acceptance and tolerance among all ethnocultural groups living in Canada. For that purpose, it was first necessary to find out whether the sample of Colombians who participated in this study showed willingness to maintain and develop themselves as a group, had contact with other ethnic groups, spoke the official languages of Canada and considered that

fact important, and showed signs of being tolerant and accepting of people from other ethnic groups.

Although some of the means obtained for group maintenance and development were not high enough for some behaviours, and some of the standard deviations for the scores of those behaviours were rather high, it can be concluded that this particular group of Colombians shows an overall willingness and carries out some concrete activities to develop and maintain themselves as a distinctive ethnocultural group. Most of them value the importance of groups maintaining their traditions and lifestyles, of preserving their mother tongue and having contact with people from their group. From the results of this section, it can also be concluded that this group of Colombians are able to find spaces and instances while living in Canada to be informed about what happens in their home country by reading their national newspapers, and to carry out certain activities that help them preserve their culture, for example, by listening to Colombian music and spending some time with people from their own ethnic group. The results on group maintenance and development of this sample of the Colombian community resemble to some extent those obtained by Lambert et al. (1986), who found that their Greek participants showed a strong desire to preserve their culture while living in Canada.

In terms of intergroup contact and sharing, the results revealed that this particular group of Colombians value the importance of having contact with other ethnic groups that are present in Canadian society. Additionally, the means obtained in the questions on the extent to which they share with other ethnic groups reveal that these participants carry out concrete actions to share and have contact with other ethnic groups. They also find instances to be in contact and share with people from other cultures. Their self-reported interaction patterns revealed that they have affective relationships, such as friendship, with members who do not belong to the Colombian community. This suggests that we may think of Canada and Colombia as culturally diverse societies; however, it may also be the case, such as in Moghaddam and Taylor (1987), that ethnocultural groups isolate themselves and do not interact much with other members of Canadian society. From the results of this section, it can be concluded that isolation does not define this particular group of Colombians.

In terms of the learning of official languages, most of the participants agreed that it was either extremely important or important to learn the official languages in order to live in Canada. This may be due to their desire to integrate into Canadian society, as well as to their desire to be able to make a living and have the necessary linguistic tools to survive in

Canada. However, as instrumental or integrative motivation were not measured in this study, it is difficult to know the reason why they considered it important to learn the official languages. Their self-reported proficiency levels revealed that this group of people have an advanced command of the English language, while their proficiency in French is intermediate.

When measuring acceptance and tolerance towards other ethnic groups, the results reveal that this group shows willingness to accept members from other ethnic groups playing different roles in their lives, such as members of their family, close friends and co-workers. The results also showed that they feel comfortable dealing with people from other ethnic groups at a personal level in such a way, that they are able to share personal issues and personal experiences with members from other communities. However, it is rather impossible to know whether there is a particular group with which they feel more comfortable, since no references were made to concrete ethnic communities because of ethical constraints. It may be the case that they feel differently towards some ethnic groups in particular, as in previous studies (Lambert et al., 1986).

In terms of relationships between the components of the Canadian multiculturalism policy, the results showed that intergroup contact and sharing was a significant predictor of mutual acceptance and tolerance. The findings related to the relationship between these two components support the contact hypothesis (Amir, 1969), which assumes that contact between different ethnocultural groups leads to mutual acceptance and tolerance. However, these results should be taken with caution, since a multiple regression is a more complex form of correlation, and therefore, does not indicate the direction of this relationship. Maybe this group of Colombians are tolerant, and therefore, they are more prone to having contact and sharing with members from other ethnic groups, or because of the contact with other ethnic groups, they might have developed a sense of tolerance and acceptance towards members of other communities.

No more significant relationships were found among the components of the multicultural policy. This suggests four conclusions. First, the multicultural hypothesis (Berry, 1986, 2006) does not hold for this particular group of Colombians. Therefore, their group maintenance and development does not seem to ensure acceptance and tolerance towards other ethnic communities. Second, the fact that they develop themselves and maintain their culture does not seem to lead to intergroup contact and sharing. Third, as no relationship was found between intergroup contact and sharing and the learning of official languages, it can be assumed that

in this case, the contact with members of other communities has not facilitated the learning of the official languages. An explanation for this is that most of the participants reported having learned English in their home country. However, it seems difficult to explain the case of the French language, since most of them learned to speak it while in Canada. Finally, the learning of official languages does not seem to lead to mutual acceptance and tolerance, despite the fact that languages allow mutual understanding.

CONCLUSION

This research set out to investigate whether the relationship between the components of the multicultural policy helps achieve the policy's goal, which is to ensure mutual acceptance and tolerance among the diverse ethnocultural groups that converge in Canadian society. The results showed that intergroup contact and sharing was closely related to acceptance and tolerance, but no other relationships were found. Overall, this particular group of Colombians shows interest in developing and maintaining themselves as a distinctive ethnocultural group. Furthermore, the participants seemed to value the importance of having contact with members of other ethnic groups while living in Canada. Additionally, the respondents also showed that they were mostly tolerant and were willing to accept members of other ethnic groups in close personal relationships.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

It is important to mention that results obtained in this study should be taken with caution for several reasons. The first one is related to the sampling procedure used: snowball sampling. This procedure transforms the sample into a non-probabilistic one; therefore, results are less generalizable. Additionally, snowball sampling "poses the risk of capturing a biased subset of the total population" (Morgan, 2008, p. 816). In the case of this study, the initial sample consisted of people who shared several characteristics, for example, most of them spoke English before coming to Canada, they all had or were pursuing university degrees, and they were all young adults. Future studies should consider another sampling procedure, or have a more diverse initial group of participants, so as to reach different segments of the Colombian population.

The second limitation of the study is that it uses a self-report measure only, which may affect participants' willingness to respond to the survey

conscientiously and accurately. Future research should consider including more elicitation procedures, such face-to-face interviews or phone interviews, in order to obtain more reliable results.

The third limitation of the current study is related to the measurements of tolerance and acceptance of other ethnic groups, since no particular communities were referred to in the questionnaire because of ethical constraints. Results might be different if future studies considered identifying particular groups, as it was the case in Lambert's et al. (1986) study.

To conclude, future research should certainly take these limitations into account, so as to provide us with a deeper view of the reality of the Colombian community in Canada.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Please, answer the following questionnaire as transparently as possible taking into account your personal information only and your own beliefs, opinions and perceptions about the topics you are being asked.

1. Name: _____
2. E-mail of contact: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Years of residence in Canada: _____
5. City in which you live: _____
6. Marital status:
a) Single b) Married c) Divorced d) Other
7. What is the highest level of education you have attained so far?
a) primary b) secondary c) higher d) post-graduate
8. Do you speak English?
a) Yes b) No
9. Do you speak French?
a) Yes b) No
10. How would you rate your level in English?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Basic</i>						<i>advanced</i>
11. How would you rate your level in French?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Basic</i>						<i>advanced</i>
12. Please indicate where you learned English:
a) In your country b) In Canada c) Elsewhere, please specify

13. Please indicate where you learned French:
a) In your country b) In Canada c) Elsewhere, please specify

14. How important do you consider the fact of learning of the official languages to live in Canada?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Unimportant</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Extremely</i> |
| <i>important</i> | | | <i>important</i> |
15. How important is it for you that cultural and minority groups maintain their traditional ways of life when they come to Canada?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Unimportant</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Extremely</i> |
| <i>important</i> | | | <i>important</i> |
16. How important is it for you that the Spanish language is maintained in Canada?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Unimportant</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Extremely</i> |
| <i>important</i> | | | <i>important</i> |
17. How important is it for you to celebrate Colombian holidays while you are in Canada?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Unimportant</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Extremely</i> |
| <i>important</i> | | | <i>important</i> |
18. How important is it for you to maintain contact with other Colombians living in Canada?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Unimportant</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Extremely</i> |
| <i>important</i> | | | <i>important</i> |
19. How important is it for you to maintain contact with people from other ethnic groups living in Canada?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Unimportant</i> | <i>Important</i> | <i>Extremely</i> |
| <i>important</i> | | | <i>important</i> |
20. How often do you listen to Colombian music?
- | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <i>Never</i> | <i>Almost</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Almost</i> | <i>Always</i> |
| | <i>never</i> | | <i>always</i> | |
21. How often do you read Colombian newspapers?
- | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <i>Never</i> | <i>Almost</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Almost</i> | <i>Always</i> |
| | <i>never</i> | | <i>always</i> | |

22. How often do you listen to Colombian radio programs?
- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <i>Never</i> | <i>Almost
never</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Almost
always</i> | <i>Always</i> |
23. How often do you watch Colombian television?
- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <i>Never</i> | <i>Almost
never</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Almost
always</i> | <i>Always</i> |
24. How often do you eat Colombian typical food, such as empanadas, arepas, bandeja paisa?
- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <i>Never</i> | <i>Almost
never</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Almost
always</i> | <i>Always</i> |
25. I am more comfortable dealing with members of my ethnic group than dealing with members of other groups.
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Strongly
disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly
agree</i> |
26. If I have any problems (e.g., lose my job, need money) I am more comfortable discussing them with members of my ethnic group than with members of other ethnic groups.
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Strongly
disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly
agree</i> |
27. I am more at ease talking about personal matters (e.g. divorce, death of a family member, personal disappointments and failures) with members of my ethnic group than with members of other ethnic groups.
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Strongly
disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly
agree</i> |
28. When I am feeling low (e.g., sad, discouraged, defeated), being with members of my social/group brings more comfort than being with members of other ethnic groups.
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Strongly
disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly
agree</i> |

29. When I need help, I am more comfortable approaching members of my ethnic group to assist me than approaching members of other groups.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

30. I am more likely to accept Colombians as new members of my family through marriage than people from other ethnic groups.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

31. I am more likely to accept Colombians as close friends than people from other ethnic groups.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

32. I am more likely to accept Colombians as co-workers than people from other ethnic groups.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

33. I have more Colombian friends than friends from other ethnic groups.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

34. When I invite people over, most of this I invite, are Colombians.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

35. Most of people I send e-mails or write letters to are members of my ethnic group.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

36. I hardly invite members of other ethnic groups to my home.

1	2	3	4
<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
<i>disagree</i>			<i>agree</i>

37. How much of your time do you spend with other Colombians:

1	2	3	4	5
No time	Little time	Half of my time	A lot of time	All the time

38. How much of your time do you spend with people from other ethnic groups:

1	2	3	4	5
No time	Little time	Half of my time	A lot of time	All the time