

MULTICULTURALISM AND IDENTITY IN CANADA:  
A CASE-STUDY OF UKRAINIAN-CANADIANS

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis provides a political analysis of a position paper on government programming recently adopted by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) – a national ethno-cultural organisation that ostensibly represents over one million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage and a historically important player in the development of multiculturalism in Canada. The impetus for such an analysis is to explore whether there are alternative policy directions available to the UCC that could satisfy its mandate developing and enhancing the Ukrainian-Canadian community while taking into account the reality that Ukrainian-Canadians culturally resemble more and more the broader Canadian society.

In a wide-ranging analysis that criticizes both, official Canadian multiculturalism – for falling short in meeting its commitment to cultural pluralism – and the UCC – for upholding a position that relies on a static or retrograde version of culture, the thesis makes the case for a multiculturalism that can recognize cultural differences while allowing for change.

The thesis is significant because it asks relevant questions concerning how multiculturalism in Canada takes into account an increasingly heterogeneous citizenship characterized by cultural change. In this regard, the thesis is of particular importance to Canadians who claim a multiplicity of cultures rather than a single ethnicity and yet still express a desire to be included in the discourse on Canadian national identity.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 The Ukrainian Canadian Congress and Multicultural Policy**

The Ukrainian-Canadian Congress (UCC), a national ethno-cultural organisation that ostensibly represents over one million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage, and a historically important player in the development of multiculturalism in Canada, approved a policy paper in November 2003 outlining the organization's stance with respect to Canada's multicultural policy (see Appendix I). That paper criticizes both the government's interpretation and implementation of the principles associated with Canadian multiculturalism policy. It does so by asserting that current government policy addresses neither the preferences nor the needs of either the Ukrainian-Canadian community or other similar ethno-cultural communities.

Concerns articulated by the UCC include the attrition of the community's distinctive culture; loss of mother tongue; under-representation of the community's issues, names and stories in the mainstream media; inadequate representation of Ukrainian-Canadians in government and other institutions; and the lack of adequate financial support, by all levels of government, to ensure the sustainability of Canada's

multicultural reality.<sup>2</sup> A central theme in the UCC's critique of the government's multiculturalism policy and programming is that although the Multiculturalism Act appears to address their concerns, multicultural programming does not. In articulating that theme the UCC asserts that Canada's multicultural policy is designed to: "preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada [;] recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin [;] enhance their development (as well as) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French."<sup>3</sup>

The UCC points out that, despite the existence of those policy objectives, the funding for multicultural programming is currently limited to projects that fall within the government's narrowly defined programming objectives. These objectives include the participation of ethno-racial minorities in public decision-making; engagement by communities and the broad public in informed dialogue and sustained action to combat racism; the elimination of systemic racial barriers in public institutions; and augmenting the response of federal policies, programs, and services to ethno-racial diversity.<sup>4</sup> The UCC argues that none of these program objectives support the Preamble or Sections 3(1)(d) and (i) of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, nor do they meet the concerns of the Ukrainian-Canadian community or other comparable communities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These concerns are articulated by the UCC Multiculturalism Committee, Canadian Multiculturalism: The Law, the Reality and our Place. Online. UCC homepage.

<[http://www.ucc.ca/Section\\_5/PDF/Canadian\\_Multiculturalism.pdf](http://www.ucc.ca/Section_5/PDF/Canadian_Multiculturalism.pdf)>. (Retrieved 15 Nov. 2005).

<sup>3</sup> UCC Multiculturalism Committee, Canadian Multiculturalism.

<sup>4</sup> See Department of Canadian Heritage, "The Multiculturalism Program." Online.

<[http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/program/guide/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/program/guide/index_e.cfm)>. (Retrieved 15 Nov. 2005).

<sup>5</sup> UCC Multiculturalism Committee, Canadian Multiculturalism.



The claim made in this instance by the UCC is that there is a discrepancy between the intent of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and the objectives of multicultural programming. In light of the discrepancy, the UCC maintains that the Canadian government is not complying with either the letter or the spirit of existing legislation, pointing for instance to the exclusion of the Ukrainian-Canadian community and other such communities from access to funding. The UCC thus calls for a convergence between programming objectives and the intent of the federal government's multicultural policy as it has been expressed in the Multiculturalism Act and various other policy documents which preceded and followed it. Toward that end the UCC seeks to promote the broadening of current program objectives in keeping with the intent of the Act, which directs the federal government to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians, the use of languages other than English and French, and all communities whose members share a common national or ethno-cultural origin.

In summary, the position of the UCC is that the federal government's recent articulation and implementation of multiculturalism policy and programming is problematical. The UCC's position is informed by the perception that the Ukrainian-Canadian community increasingly risks assimilation. Finding government support wanting, the UCC has petitioned the federal government to address the current objectives of multicultural programming in order to meet the community's cultural needs. Presumably, the belief is that broader objectives would reverse or at least arrest the perceived 'attrition' of Ukrainian-Canadian community and culture in the country.

The position outlined by the UCC raises a number of pressing political, social and philosophical questions associated with the meaning and importance accorded both

the individual and the group within multicultural Canada. Those questions provided the impetus for and are at the core of this thesis.

### **1.1 Research Objectives and Central Themes of the Thesis**

The central objective of this thesis is threefold. The first objective is to provide a critical analysis of the UCC's position on multiculturalism as articulated in its position paper of November 2003 in light of an evolving Ukrainian-Canadian community. The second objective is to provide a critical analysis of the federal government's position on multiculturalism policy and programming since the introduction of the existing Multiculturalism Act in 1988 in light of the position of the UCC and, more importantly, the complex identity issues faced by an evolving Ukrainian-Canadian community. The third objective is to consider what both the UCC and the federal government have to do in their respective efforts to reconcile the complex needs and aspirations of an evolving Ukrainian-Canadian community and an evolving Canadian community.

In keeping with those objectives, the three central themes of the thesis regarding the positions of both the UCC and the federal government on multiculturalism policy and programming, and the positions that they should consider for the future, are as follows.

The first theme is that the position of the UCC on multiculturalism policy and programming is potentially flawed and not very productive. More specifically, given that it is predicated on particular notions of what constitutes culture, such as language, the UCC's position appears to be inherently flawed in that the policy speaks only to those members of the community who still retain their traditional culture. Moreover, even if the Canadian government were to respond to the organization's demands, in

view of the historical record on Ukrainian language acquisition and retention, to what degree can the UCC hope to recover and maintain a community-based language given that the vast majority no longer have facility in Ukrainian as mother tongue let alone home language?

In this vein the thesis argues that the UCC appears to be reacting to the government without addressing the problems inherent in the government's policy direction. More specifically, it argues that the UCC is focusing on the attrition of its community, and on the nature of the federal government's multiculturalism programming and ignoring what may be a movement by the government to re-interpret multiculturalism *per se*. Hence, the social binaries that may be associated with the contemporary multicultural discourse which privileges cultural commonalities and cultural bridging over cultural differences are left untouched by the UCC.

The decision of the UCC to emphasize the importance of articulating and perpetuating a singular cultural distinctiveness of Ukrainian-Canadians, when in fact they are highly diverse, renders that organization less than fully effective in two ways. First, it may end up being marginalized in the construction of a contemporary grand narrative on multiculturalism. The reason for this is that the UCC will not have the opportunity to address the issue of the proper place of cultural identity in the public sphere, and will therefore absolve the government of its responsibilities to deal with such an important issue. Second, as a result of its failure to articulate and represent the multiplicity of experiences, views and visions of its large and highly diverse membership of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, the UCC runs the risk of becoming less relevant for them. What is more, if it continues to advance its current position, the UCC increases the risk that it will divide Ukrainian-Canadians between those who, in

their day-to-day life, emphasize aspects of their selves that are considered by the UCC to be indicative of a 'Ukrainian' culture and those who do not. Echoing the language of the federal government on differences, the outcome of the UCC position creates a potentially problematical situation both within and outside the Ukrainian community regarding 'who is a real Ukrainian-Canadian' and 'who is not', and 'how does one become a real Ukrainian-Canadian'.

The second central theme of this thesis, and closely related to the first, is that the federal government's approach to multiculturalism programming and the position of the UCC to such an approach are equally problematical. The reason for this is that if multiculturalism policy exists exclusively or primarily either to recognize that group differences exist or to better integrate those differences, then multiculturalism does little more than replace the public/private binary with new social binaries. This is because a policy that emphasizes integration of minorities requires that both the 'Canadian' majority and the minority 'other' be clearly identified. The pertinent questions become: 'who are the real Canadians?' 'who are the 'others'?' and 'how do we integrate those 'others'?' On the other hand, a multiculturalism that recognizes and celebrates all individual and group differences as *Canadian*, rather than distinguishing between groups' and individuals' relative degree of difference from one another, might undo the public/private binary associated with liberal neutralism without the corresponding majority/minority social binaries.

The third theme is that there may be alternative approaches available both to the UCC and federal government in reconciling their respective multiculturalism and national identity and unity projects. In this respect, the thesis suggests a policy of 'Mainstreaming difference.' What is pertinent here is that in formulating policy related

to cultural differences, both the federal government and the UCC ought to address the institutions of the public sphere or the *mainstream*. Such an argument hinges on the possibility that Canadian identity can be made to encompass difference, rather than recognizing difference as distinct from ‘Canadianness’. The argument is that if the contours of what is Canadian can be made to reflect Canada’s cultural and racial heterogeneity, then Canadian citizens themselves could be free to adopt or drop their own definitions of identity, confident that no matter their displayed material cultural characteristics or their parentage, that they are uniquely possessed of their culture as well as their citizenship.

## **1.2 Importance of Thesis**

This thesis is important for several reasons. First, it provides an analysis of the federal government’s change in multiculturalism policy and programming. Second, it provides an analysis of the UCC’s response to that change in policy. Third, although this thesis focuses on the position of the UCC on the federal government’s recent efforts at articulating and implementing multiculturalism policies and programmes, it raises important issues and options which are also of relevance not only to all other comparable organizations, but also to all governmental and non-governmental actors who are interested in this important policy issue. Finally, and most importantly, this thesis provides some important insights on the challenges which Canadians and their governments face in reconciling multiculturalism with national identity and national unity. The ability of governmental and non-governmental actors to reconcile these matters in the future is at the heart of Canada’s stability and unity in the future.

### **1.3 Methodology and Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis employs a basic content analysis approach. More specifically, it is based on the content analysis of existing documents produced by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. The thesis takes as its principal document a position paper recently adopted by the UCC entitled Canadian Multiculturalism: The Law, the Reality, Our Place.<sup>6</sup> This document is supplemented with other materials published by the UCC that further describe the organisation's position with regards to cultural identity and multiculturalism. Other primary sources include government publications describing multicultural policy in Canada. Analysis is supplemented using secondary sources.

In addition to this chapter, which has provided the background to the case study of this thesis and outlined the central objectives and themes, along with its methodology importance, the thesis consists of five other chapters.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical discussion of multiculturalism. The purpose of the discussion is to bring to light the normative arguments that support multiculturalism as an appropriate way of coping with cultural diversity in liberal societies. In this way, the political development of Canadian multicultural policy can be assessed against its theoretical underpinnings.

Chapter 3 follows with an overview and assessment of the political development of multiculturalism in Canada. The key developments discussed here include the inauguration of Multiculturalism Policy in 1971, the enactment of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, and the Strategic Review of Multicultural Programs in 1996. The purpose

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<sup>6</sup> See UCC Multiculturalism Committee, Canadian Multiculturalism.

of the Chapter is to situate recent critiques of Canadian multiculturalism – of which the recent UCC position is a part.

Chapter 4 summarizes the critique of the reconfigured multicultural policy and program articulated by both the UCC and the CEC. Following this, the chapter assesses the UCC's position on current multicultural policy and programming, paying particular attention to the organization's views on social and cultural change amongst Ukrainian-Canadians.

Chapter 5 outlines the challenges faced by the UCC in satisfying its mandate of representing and enhancing the Ukrainian-Canadian community. In light of the challenges, the chapter explores ways by which the organized Ukrainian-Canadian community might better address identifiable shortcomings in the government's position on multiculturalism while taking into account Ukrainian-Canadians' own evolving sense of identity within contemporary Canadian society.

Chapter 6 summarizes the major themes and reflects on future directions that both the UCC and the federal government could pursue in the development of multiculturalism policies and programs.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Normative Foundations of Canadian Multiculturalism**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The normative foundations of Canada's multiculturalism policy are complex. They attempt to achieve a balance between various liberal and communitarian values, including those related to the rights of individuals versus the rights of groups both vis-à-vis each other and the state. The objective in this chapter is to provide an overview of some elements of the normative foundations of Canada's multiculturalism policy. These must be made clear in order to understand both the federal government's policy goals and means as well as the critiques of those goals and means provided by various stakeholders, including the UCC.

#### **2.1 The Normative Foundations of Canadian Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism, the most recent model for dealing with the diversity that marks Canada as a settler society, is said to allow "...for a more inclusionary political discourse than either liberal individualist or two-nations models of Canadian society, providing legitimacy for both the presence and the articulation of concerns of ethnic



minority collectivities.”<sup>1</sup> Will Kymlicka describes multiculturalism as a policy of recognizing and supporting poly-ethnicity within the national institutions of the English and French cultures.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the Canadian state accepted English and French as the languages of discourse, the existence of cultures outside of the strictly English or French cultural milieu was now affirmed.

The development of multiculturalism policy in Canada reflects a consistent multicultural vision. Activists, politicians and theorists alike have articulated and debated this vision. The existence of such a vision provides the context within which to evaluate the policy. In this case, the multicultural vision flows from a novel understanding of the meaning of nationhood. Such an understanding is based on a particular reading of identity that accords primacy to individuals’ universal capacity to reason *as well as their cultural milieu*. Such a reading, hotly contested in political and social theory, centres its defence on the notion that the recognition of collective identities is a way of acknowledging equality.<sup>3</sup>

Multiculturalism policy was an attempt to achieve national unity by officially recognizing that many individuals in Canada conceived all, or part, of their identities along distinct ethnic and racial lines within the Canadian polity. The premise was that the previous discourse over the meaning of Canadian nationality tended to ignore many of these individuals’ collective identities and their collective and individual

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<sup>1</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Daiva Stasiulis, “Ethnic Pluralism under Siege: Popular and Partisan Opposition to Multiculturalism,” *Canadian Public Policy* 18 (1992), 367 as cited in V. Seymour Wilson, “The Tapestry Vision of Canadian Multiculturalism,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 26: 4 (December / Décembre 1993), 645.

<sup>2</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17.

<sup>3</sup> See Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in Amy Gutman, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 35-43.

contributions to Canadian society building. Such disregard was thought to encourage division.

Employing strategies aimed at the group as well as the individual, multiculturalism takes the view that cultural homogeneity is not required for the maintenance and development of a national political community. Instead, “multiculturalism...calls, first for the action of societal decision-makers to recognize a social reality (polyethnicity) within their midst, and secondly, to articulate both a *vision* and a *policy* devised to achieve some basis for tolerance and mutual respect.”<sup>4</sup>

The architects of Canada’s multiculturalism policy were cognizant of the challenges that would be faced in reconciling the identities and rights of groups on one hand and individuals on the other. While debating the grounds for multiculturalism in 1971, Trudeau articulated various theoretical precepts that can be seen to underpin as well as guide the policy.<sup>5</sup> Echoed throughout social theory, many of these precepts have continued to provide the normative basis for multiculturalism from the concept’s original incarnation as a policy right through to its establishment in law.

Trudeau made it clear “that the Government of Canada had recognized the bias in its traditional support of arts and culture, and had intended multiculturalism to be a corrective measure for providing alternative support outside existing cultural institutions

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<sup>4</sup> Wilson, “The Tapestry Vision of Canadian Multiculturalism,” 653.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Trudeau declared, “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 us all. In the past, substantial public support has been given largely to the arts and cultural institutions of English-speaking Canada...[T]he policy I am announcing today accepts the contention of other cultural communities that they, too, are essential elements in Canada and deserve government assistance in order to contribute to regional and national life in ways that derived from their heritage yet are distinctively Canadian.” House of Commons Debates, October 8, 1971, p. 8545. As cited in Peter Li, “A world apart: the multicultural world of visible minorities and the art world of Canada,” Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 31: 4 (1994), 365.

for ethnic minorities.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, correlating the value of culture as it relates to one’s individual identity, Trudeau made clear that the notion of equality inherent in multiculturalism was to involve a blending of individual rights with those of the group. The concept was later confirmed in the Multiculturalism Act. For example, the Act affirms, “...persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion or to use their language.” Together, writes Kallen, individual and collective rights represent the twin principles of human unity and group diversity, which underscore the Canadian multicultural theme of “unity in diversity.”<sup>7</sup>

The introduction of multiculturalism into the Canadian constitution thus represents a symbolic negation of the assimilatory tendencies of traditional liberalism. It is a public affirmation by Canadian policymakers that the existence of a solitary or dominant culture is not necessary for a national democratic and civic discourse and that all conceptions of ethnicity within Canada are equally valid sources of Canadian identity. As such, Fleras suggests that official multiculturalism involves a renegotiation of the Canadian social contract. Here the public affirmation of the existence of a plurality of cultural groups underscores the separation of state institutions from nationality – as they were already separated from religion.<sup>8</sup>

In effect, as distinguished from traditional liberalism, multiculturalism was supposed to have made the possibility for ethnic pluralism in Canada to move beyond the private sphere into the public sphere, to move beyond the public/private binary.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Li, "A world apart," 365.

<sup>7</sup> Evelyn Kallen, "Multiculturalism, Minorities, and Motherhood: A Social Scientific Critique of Section 27," Multiculturalism and the Charter: A Legal Perspective, ed. Canadian Human Rights Foundation (Toronto: Carswell, 1987), 124-125.

<sup>8</sup> Augie Fleras, and Leonard Jean Elliott, Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002), 62.

Sociologist Wsevolod Isajiw suggests that the ideology of multiculturalism in Canada is pluralist, where all cultural differences are seen as good, and all are to be respected.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the entrenchment of multiculturalism in Canada leads Isajiw to conclude that the Canadian state had shifted from the active promotion and creation of a single political identity to one that would accept and even promote a political entity characterized by diversity and cultural pluralism.

Hence, from the Multicultural Policy of 1971 to the inclusion of multiculturalism in the Canadian Charter of Rights in 1982 and the adoption of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, the recognition of ethnic groups in Canada has always meant that inclusion was to be based on a notion of individual equality where true equality was to include recognizing the individual's cultural milieu. In this way, official multiculturalism presumes that encouraging confidence in citizens' varied social and individual identities will foster a more inclusive Canadian citizenship, tolerant of diverse modes of being.<sup>10</sup>

To summarize, multiculturalism policy in Canada is geared towards national unity. The central premise of this multiculturalism policy lies in the public recognition of diverse cultures that, if recognized and promoted, will lead to greater attachment by all individuals and groups, regardless of ethnicity, to the state. Theoretically, multiculturalism proposes moving beyond the public/private binary associated with state neutrality. In contrast to state neutrality, multiculturalism is an acceptance of cultural bias on the part of the state. Inherently anti-assimilationist, multiculturalism presents a notion of equality respectful of individual preferences as well as cultural attributes.

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<sup>9</sup> Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "Olga in Wonderland: Ethnicity in a Technological Society," Ethnicity in a Technological Age, ed. T.H. Angus (Edmonton: CIUS, 1988), 36.

<sup>10</sup> John W. Berry, Rudolph Kalin and Donald M. Taylor, Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada (Ottawa: Minister of State for Multiculturalism, 1977), as cited in Wilson, "The Tapestry Vision of Canadian Multiculturalism," 655.

Kymlicka portrays multiculturalism as the liberal means by which to accommodate the politics of recognition.<sup>11</sup> As such, the approach is “avowedly individualist, inasmuch as the good involved is ultimately a good to persons, rather than peoples.”<sup>12</sup> Consequently, while the politics of recognition involves demands by sub-state minority groups for the public recognition of their diverse ways of life, the main beneficiary is said to be the individual.<sup>13</sup>

The theory of multicultural accommodation is applied to a wide range of identity-based groups, including ethnic and racial minorities, disabled, and gay and lesbian groups.<sup>14</sup> In Canada, official multiculturalism is debated within the parameters of ethnicity and race. However, even though the politics of recognition, as it is debated in theory, does diverge from the case of official multiculturalism in Canada, some knowledge of the discussion is useful inasmuch as it brings to light a coherent set of principles informing the Canadian multicultural vision.

## **2.2 The Multicultural State versus the Neutral State**

Strategies employed by the multicultural state to cope with pluralism are often contrasted with those of the neutral state. Like multiculturalism, neutralism or individualism offers an alternative version of liberalism. In the former, it is thought that recognition of individuals’ cultures or ‘modes of being’ will enhance their attachment to the political community. In the latter, such attachment is thought to result from the

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<sup>11</sup> See Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, The Ethics of Identity (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 121.

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, Multiculturalism, 32-34.

<sup>14</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1.

celebration and protection of individual rights, in what has been called ‘civic nationalism.’<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to the multicultural state, the neutral state eschews public recognition of culture or race in favour of the entrenchment of a set of principles (individual rights, for example) based on their universality and inalienability.<sup>16</sup> In this way, the neutral state will seek to avoid conflict or division by recognizing and protecting only those characteristics allegedly shared by all.

The neutral state explicitly divides individual loyalties between the public sphere and the private sphere. Aspects of an individual’s identity that are culturally situated (such as religious needs) are relegated to the private sphere, which is to say that they are not officially acknowledged. On the other hand, aspects of the individual that are seen to be universal to all humans are acknowledged and protected through a set of codified individual equality rights. As such, it is held that the neutral state can manage diversity even in the case of extreme cultural pluralism as long as it treats all individuals equally according to universally held values and without reference to each individual’s cultural milieu.<sup>17</sup>

### **2.3 Reconciling Liberal and Communitarian Values**

In separating one’s individuality from one’s cultural identity by recognizing the former in the public sphere while leaving the latter to the private sphere, liberal neutrality has been accused of presenting a binary is either utopian or unrealistic. For

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<sup>15</sup> See Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> John Gray, “From Post-liberalism to Pluralism” *Nomos XXXVIII: Political Order*, eds. Ian Shapiro and Russell Hardin (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 352.

<sup>17</sup> Gutman, *Multiculturalism*, 4.

example, in denying the existence of cultural or communally held practices as a fundamental aspect of human existence, it is argued that the liberal (neutral) state explicitly seeks to roll back cultural diversity as an imaginary condition.<sup>18</sup> Understood in this way, the goal of the neutral state is to “...free people from their differences in the public domain and to equalize all members in their political capacity, *independently* from the particular human beings they are.”<sup>19</sup> Here “...the very feature that is most attractive in liberal ideology, its stress on equal concern and respect for the rights of every human being, is logically in tension with a vivid belief in the importance of one’s inherited communal memberships, including one’s citizenship.”<sup>20</sup> Hence, the neutral state assumes the existence of a single-status moral community: an assumption that necessarily “...demands the legal disestablishment of cultural traditions, which is to say, a denial of legal recognition to distinctive ways of life.”<sup>21</sup> If the neutral state can be seen to rest on a framework that is utopian, two broad criticisms as to its practicality emerge.

First, the effectiveness of liberal neutrality in fostering a sense of belonging or attachment to the political community has been criticized. Some theorists, for example, have argued that liberal values are themselves culturally situated – a proposition that calls into question the very neutrality of the liberal state.<sup>22</sup> What is more, social researchers have shown that in a neutral state, shared cultural values tend to permeate

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<sup>18</sup> Gray, “From Post-liberalism to Pluralism,” 354.

<sup>19</sup> Anna Elizabeth Galeotti, “Citizenship and Equality: The Place for Toleration”, Political Theory, 21: 4 (November, 1993), 590.

<sup>20</sup> Gray, “From Post-liberalism to Pluralism,” 230.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 352.

<sup>22</sup> See Galeotti, “Citizenship and Equality: The Place for Toleration,” 589; and Veit Bader, “Citizenship and Exclusion: Radical Democracy, Community, and Justice, Or, What is Wrong with Communitarianism?,” Political Theory 23: 2 (May 1995), 211-246.

the cultural majority or mainstream.<sup>23</sup> Social theorists affirm this position. For example, Leo Driedger, building on Wsevolod Isajiw (1978) and Everett Hughes (1952), suggests that the assimilatory tendencies of the marketplace are not necessarily entirely neutral, meaning that the common culture to which individuals converge is probably not the result of input from all participating cultures. Instead, some groups will be closer to the centre of power and have more influence, while others will find themselves in layers or concentric zones of less power.<sup>24</sup> Hence, the public sphere – that is, the social and economic marketplace – is seen to have a corrosive effect on an individual’s ethnic particularities, where greater participation and success requires them to leave his or her ethnic baggage at the door.<sup>25</sup>

The challenge has opened the possibility that, in the neutral state, an individual’s relative degree of attachment to the political community may be based on the individual’s similarity to the cultural and racial majority. Furthermore, the possibility of developing a sense of belonging or attachment to the political community may be even less likely for individuals incapable of assimilating with the majority because of intractable differences, i.e., physical or religious differences.

A second broad criticism of the neutral state has been levelled at its particular reading of the concept of equality. If the values characteristic of the neutral state are seen to reflect the cultural values of the majority, where there is unequal distribution of

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<sup>23</sup> Stanley Feldman, “Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values,” American Journal of Political Science, as cited in Jack Citrin, Beth Reingold and Donald P. Green, “American Identity and the Politics of Ethnic Change,” Journal of Politics 52:4 (Nov., 1990), 1126.

<sup>24</sup> Driedger explains, “...The largest mostly white (British) or most powerful group will try to shape society by leavening the whole so that its own language, culture, morality, and institutions are dominant and often may force such conformity upon other minorities. Thus the line between their goals and national economic and political values tend to be blurred.” Leo Driedger, Race and Ethnicity: Finding and Identities and Equalities (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford University Press, 2003), 33.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 33.



societal power among cultural and racial groups, it is argued that “approaches founded on the ideal of state neutrality effectively contribute to the perpetuation of power differentials, and thus the maintenance of privilege.”<sup>26</sup> Here the practical problem for liberal neutrality is a reading of equality that stresses universality.

In a political community where power is divided unequally between cultural and racial groups, it is questionable how effectively rights that are blind to particularity might ensure equality. Here, the argument is that “non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.”<sup>27</sup> As explained by sociologist Charles Cooley,

...people learn who they are, in part, from the responses of others to them. When a people’s images of themselves are absent from the major agencies of socialization (such as state institutions) those people are diminished, and perhaps even demeaned, in everyone’s eyes including their own. Thus, the demand for curricular inclusion is a demand for recognition.<sup>28</sup>

In a space opened by the critics of liberal neutrality have stepped the proponents of multiculturalism. Theorists defend multiculturalism as a means by which to blunt the assimilatory as well as discriminatory tendencies of the neutral state. Multiculturalism thus takes into account that, “though liberal values may be universally held, the conditions of society are such that the patterns of life in the public sphere as well as the central power structures reflect the values of the cultural majority.”<sup>29</sup> Evelyn Kallen explains that the theory is grounded in the proposition that “...most discriminatory practices are directed against individuals not as individual persons, but because of their

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<sup>26</sup> Tim Nieguth, “Privilege of Recognition? The Myth of State Neutrality,” Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy 2: 2 (Summer 1999), 113.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, Multiculturalism, 25.

<sup>28</sup> See Canada: Department of Canadian Heritage, Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs Prepared for Corporate Review Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage: Final Report (Brighton Research, March 1996), 64.

<sup>29</sup> Leo Driedger, Race and Ethnicity, 33.

(assumed) membership in particular groups.”<sup>30</sup> Kallen goes on to explain that, while individual rights are derived from the global principle of human unity, collective human rights derive from the global principle of human diversity.

According to Kymlicka, the idea of multicultural equality, which recognizes that individual preferences are based on personal as well as group norms, implies a rejection of strict liberal individualism, where the neutrality of the state is assumed.<sup>31</sup> Here, “...the politics of equal recognition involves two seemingly contradictory principles: universalism, which normally requires blindness to differences amongst citizens; and difference, which recognizes and values distinct ethnic and other identities.”<sup>32</sup>

Hence, in contrast to the traditional neutralist framework, multiculturalism accepts that state institutions reflect a specific cultural milieu and that questions involving cultural groups lying outside of the state’s cultural norms, if left to the usual process of majoritarian decision-making, would result in significant injustice at the hands of the majority.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.4 Conclusion

The existence of a rich body of theory on multiculturalism provides the context or vision within which multicultural policy is generated. Moreover, the theory provides supporters of multiculturalism a framework with which they can defend the policy against its critics. At the same time, the existence of a theoretical context also provides

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<sup>30</sup> Evelyn Kallen, “Multiculturalism, Minorities, and Motherhood: A Social Scientific Critique of Section 27,” *Multiculturalism and the Charter: A Legal Perspective*, ed. Canadian Human Rights Foundation (Toronto: Carswell, 1987), 124.

<sup>31</sup> Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way*, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban, “Unequal relations and the struggle for equality: Race and Ethnicity in Canadian Politics,” in *Canadian Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Toronto: Nelson, 2004), 328.

<sup>33</sup> Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way*, 5.

the critics of the manner in which multiculturalism is practiced with the tools to ensure policy continues to reflect its normative underpinnings. A notable example of this is the UCC's charges that the federal government is not living up to the letter and spirit of its multicultural policy. If this is true, questions arise as to what drives multiculturalism if not the theory upon which it is based? Furthermore, if it is true that policy has diverged from its normative foundations, questions arise as to the policy's practical value or implications.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Political Development of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

During the past 35 years Canadians have witnessed the development of a series of policy, statutory, constitutional, and programmatic review initiatives related to multiculturalism. This has included the Multiculturalism Policy of 1971, the provisions in the Constitution Act 1982 related to multiculturalism, the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, and the 1996 strategic review of multiculturalism. The objective in this chapter is to provide an overview of these initiatives. Such an overview is essential in understanding the critiques of Canadian multiculturalism policies and programs provided by stakeholder organizations such as the UCC.

#### **3.1 Multiculturalism Policy, Statutory and Constitutional Initiatives (1971-1988)**

The development of Canada's multicultural policy is articulated in numerous documents that span three decades. Canada's Multiculturalism policy arose in the aftermath of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1969 (B & B commission). The B & B commission made official the notion that national identity in Canada reflected the narratives of the two "founding nations." The report articulated the idea that the Canadian political community is characterized by its

cultural and linguistic duality. Multicultural theorist Augie Fleras explains that various ethnic groups, especially the Ukrainians and the Germans, were offended by the notion of biculturalism. In ignoring their contributions to Canadian society building, they argued that biculturalism presented a limited version of Canadian identity.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the various ethnic groups argued that their languages and cultures should be seen to be just as vital to Canadian nationhood as those of [Québec] francophone Canada inside and outside Québec. Owing to the persuasiveness of their arguments, 'Biculturalism and Bilingualism' was dropped in favour of the formula of 'Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework' in 1971.<sup>2</sup>

Canada adopted a multicultural policy in 1971. Introduced by the Liberal government led by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau as a strategy aimed at coping with increased pluralism arising from immigration, the policy represented a unique way of encouraging unity in light of growing diversity.<sup>3</sup> As such, the policy is said to have made a virtue out of necessity; it parlayed a potential weakness (diversity) into a potential strength (unity).<sup>4</sup> The notion that the government would protect and enhance Canada's multicultural heritage was later enshrined in the Constitution Act. Here section 27 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms reads that the Charter shall be "...interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Augie Fleras, and Leonard Jean Elliott, Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah V. Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada," International Journal on Group Rights, 5: 33 (1997), 47.

<sup>3</sup> Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 13.

<sup>4</sup> Fleras, Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada, 62.

<sup>5</sup> See Section 27 of Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (U.K.). Online.

<[http://canada.justice.gc.ca/Loireg/charte/const\\_en.html#egalite](http://canada.justice.gc.ca/Loireg/charte/const_en.html#egalite)> (Retrieved 25 Sep. 2005).

The Canadian government, led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, eventually adopted the Multiculturalism Act in 1988. The Act stipulated the role the Canadian government was to play vis-à-vis its multicultural responsibilities.<sup>6</sup> In affirming the authority of the Charter while recognizing the existence of communities and their right to cultural preservation, the Multiculturalism Act expanded on the notion that Canadian citizens could enjoy rights based on their individuality as well as their belonging in cultural groups.

With the addition of Section 27 in the Constitution Act, 1982, which affirmed the multicultural character of the Canadian polity, and the enactment of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988 which both described multiculturalism as well as spelled out the framework for federal policy, multiculturalism acquired somewhat of a coherent political, legal and philosophical context.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.2 The Multiculturalism Strategic Review**

During the mid-1990s official multiculturalism was subjected to significant popular criticism. Several widely read books as well as a major political party disapproved of the policy.<sup>8</sup> The criticisms centred on the notion that by officially recognizing the existence of ethnic groups, multiculturalism encouraged the development of permanent ethnic and racial ghettos, impeding the development of a pan-Canadian identity. Though multiculturalism's defenders have shown the criticisms to be largely unfounded in fundamentally misunderstanding the multicultural vision,

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<sup>6</sup> See the Preamble to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988. Online. <<http://laws.gc.ca/en/C18.7/32217.htm>> (Retrieved 25 Sep. 2005)

<sup>7</sup> Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada," 49.

<sup>8</sup> See Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Penguin Books, 1994) or Richard Gwyn, *Nationalism Without Walls: The Unbearable Lightness of Being Canadian*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995).

they nevertheless had an enormous impact on Canadian political consciousness.<sup>9</sup> In 1994, for example, a Decima Research Poll showed that 72% of Canadians surveyed thought that ethnic or racial groups should adapt to a Canadian value system rather than maintain their own.<sup>10</sup> Tom McConaghy explains that: "...in that same survey, a significant minority (41%) agreed with the statement: 'I am tired of ethnic minorities being given special treatment.'"<sup>11</sup> It was in such a political climate that throughout 1995, during Jean Chrétien's tenure as Prime Minister, multicultural programs underwent 'strategic evaluation'.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the 'Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs' process the federal government assured the public that the Multiculturalism Policy itself was not under review and that the government remained committed to both the Policy and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.<sup>13</sup> The government noted that:

The purpose of the review was to ensure that the federal Multiculturalism Program keeps pace with the needs of our evolving and increasingly diverse society. It was recognized that the government needs to respond to the public's desire for better management of limited resources, by ensuring the delivery of efficient and cost-effective programs that show results.<sup>14</sup>

The government explained that the final shape of the 'redesigned program' was to be based upon goals of the Multiculturalism Policy and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act

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<sup>9</sup> Will Kymlicka, Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Tom McConaghy, "Multicultural Policy Under Attack," Phi Delta Kappan: The Professional Journal for Education, (Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa International, February 1995), 76: 6, 498.

<sup>11</sup> McConaghy, "Multicultural Policy Under Attack," 498.

<sup>12</sup> See Canada: Department of Canadian Heritage, Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs Prepared for Corporate Review Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage: Final Report (Brighton Research, March 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1996-1997 (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1998), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

while responding to the key recommendations of the Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs Review, the so-called Brighton Report.<sup>15</sup>

The Brighton Report made the point that, although there was widespread racism and a pervasive misunderstanding of the Multiculturalism Policy amongst Canadians, there was support for immigration and multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the Brighton Report did bring to light the “...considerable feeling across the country that present immigration levels are too high.”<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the Brighton Report noted that recent surveys of public opinion showed “...repeatedly that many Canadians would like immigrants to assimilate better into mainstream society.”<sup>17</sup> To mitigate growing intolerance, the Report recommended:

**Notwithstanding the desires of some community members, the funding of ethno-specific organizations should not continue in its present form...In distinction to what in the past has appeared to some people to be “programming for special interests,” the Minister should make clear that all Canadians – rather than sub-groupings of Canadians – are the recipients of the benefits of multiculturalism...activities carried out under the banner of multiculturalism should be conducted directly by the public agencies and organizations that shape the public life of Canadians – rather than through institutions or agencies representing sub-groups within the Canadian population.**<sup>18</sup> [emphasis in original].

### 3.3 Reconfiguration of Multiculturalism Policies & Programs

In light of the findings and recommendations made in the Brighton Report, the government made clear the renewed program was designed to “provide a more strategic,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>16</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, “Strategic Evaluation of Multicultural Programs,” 45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 76.



issue-focused approach to all elements of the Multiculturalism Program.”<sup>19</sup> In this, the government was to place emphasis on proposals that addressed several objectives. The objectives included: assisting the development of strategies that facilitate the participation of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural communities; facilitating collective initiatives and responses to ethnic, racial, religious and cultural conflict and hate motivated activities; improving the ability of public institutions to respond to ethnic, racial, religious and cultural diversity; encouraging and assisting in the development of inclusive policies, programs and practices within federal departments; and increasing public awareness, understanding and informed public dialogue about multiculturalism, racism and cultural diversity in Canada.<sup>20</sup> Thus, programming and funding within the redesigned program framework was to be limited to objectives comprising participation, racism, the elimination of systemic barriers, and federal responses to diversity.

Considering the degree of antipathy to multiculturalism and immigration throughout the 1990s, it is not surprising multiculturalism programming underwent review. Nor was the outcome of the review surprising, based as it was on the Brighton Report, which pointed out that multiculturalism appeared to be widely misunderstood, noted the widely held view that multiculturalism catered to special interests and, in this regard, directed the Canadian government to publicize better the notion that multiculturalism was intended for all Canadians. What is surprising is that the government so readily accepted the Brighton Report’s recommendation to direct funding away from ethnocultural groups towards “public agencies and organizations that shape

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<sup>19</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, 1996-1997, 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

the life of Canadians.”<sup>21</sup> In order to minimize criticism that multicultural programming targeted ‘special interests’ the government made the decision to limit the amount of funds that it would transfer to organized ethnocultural communities. Though ethnocultural communities were still eligible for funding, the new arrangements specified that they were now required to show that any funds made available would address the ‘renewed program objectives’ – *none of which spoke to the issue of cultural development of individual ethno-cultural groups or their organizations*. Moreover, political scientist, Paolo Prospero adds, “(the implication) for ethnocultural organizations who were, in the past, the beneficiaries of core funding, (is that) those wanting to secure funding from this point forward will likely have to do so on a project-by-project basis.”<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the government made clear that, in addition to ethnocultural communities, multicultural program funding aimed at the new policy goals would be made available to “Canadian voluntary and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, non-governmental institutions, individuals, and private sector companies.”<sup>23</sup> That organized ethnocultural communities were to compete with other governmental and non-governmental organizations for multicultural funding leads to questions regarding the Canadian government’s commitment to fostering ethno-cultural diversity. Here University of Alberta professor Tim Nieguth’s observation is particularly resonant that

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<sup>21</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, “Strategic Evaluation of Multicultural Programs,” 76.

<sup>22</sup> Paolo Prospero, “Redefining Citizenship; The Politics of Multiculturalism Reform in Canada,” paper prepared for the Annual Canadian Political Science Association meetings, Sherbrooke, Quebec (June 1999), 19, as cited in Abu-Laban and Gabriel, *Selling Diversity*, 114.

<sup>23</sup> Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *1996-1997, 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Report*, 3.

“leaving issues of culture to the resources of groups effectively translates into favouring the dominant (British and French groups) since resources are unevenly distributed”.<sup>24</sup>

In hindsight, the concerns expressed by stakeholders such as the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) and others regarding the official multiculturalism’s policy ‘renewed’ relationship with Canada’s ethnocultural groups do not appear to have been misplaced. It is telling that, in expressing official government acknowledgement of the commitment to operate according to the new policy, the former Secretary of State of Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, Hedy Fry, claimed, “with the passage of time, the Multiculturalism Policy has become less and less a mechanism dedicated to isolated groups in Canadian society and more and more a means for all Canadians to work together to realize the ideals that are at the heart of our democracy.”<sup>25</sup> Two questions arise from that acknowledgement. First, to what degree was Fry responding to the notion that “ethnic minorities are being given special treatment?” Second, to what degree did her emphasis on the value of ‘all Canadians working together’ reveal an integrationist position?

If it is the case that the result of the ‘renewed program’ was a multicultural policy oriented principally towards integration suggests an understanding of multiculturalism that is at odds with what had previously been expressed. At issue here is the degree to which Canada’s ethnic groups are construed as ‘special interests.’ Such a notion gives the lie to what is expressed in the Multiculturalism Act, wherein, “the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or

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<sup>24</sup> Tim Nieguth, “Privilege of Recognition? The Myth of State Neutrality,” Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy 2: 2 (Summer 1999), 113.

<sup>25</sup> Department of Canadian Heritage, 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1997-1998 (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1999), introduction.

ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians.”<sup>26</sup> Surely the citizens who together comprise Canada’s racial, ethnic, national and religious diversity and represent a ‘fundamental characteristic of Canadian society’ were not taken to mean ‘special interests?’

If the fundamental characteristic of Canadian society lies with its diversity, are not all Canadians a part of the multicultural mosaic? To put this in another way, if ethnocultural communities serve ‘special interests’, then which Canadians are not served by these organizations? Is there a group of Canadians, not mentioned by the Multiculturalism Act, without culture, race, or religion? Is it these culture-free Canadians who are served by the ‘public agencies and organizations’ which the Brighton Report recommends should implement multicultural policy and programs?

To imply that Canada’s ethnocultural groups represent ‘special interests’ undermines the very notion of ‘unity in diversity.’ In this respect, the pertinent issue, as underscored by the CEC following the Program Renewal, is whether “we accept the argument that a Canadian identity exists (defined here by its essential pluralism), or we do not.”<sup>27</sup> It may be telling in this regard that leading up to, as well as following the program renewal, multiculturalism has undergone extensive budget cuts.<sup>28</sup>

For a policy that underwent renewal during a period of heightened critique, widespread misunderstanding, and extensive budget cuts it would seem unlikely that any “redesigned multicultural program” would adequately reflect the prescriptive elements

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<sup>26</sup> Preamble to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988. Online.

<<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C18.7/32217.html>> (Retrieved 25 Sep. 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Bohdan Kordan, “Multiculturalism, Citizenship and the Canadian Nation: A Critique of the Proposed Design for Program Renewal,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 24: 2, (1997), 139.

<sup>28</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization*, (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 115.

laid out in the Multiculturalism Act. In this case, it appears that the renewal may have been prompted by the need to address and appease multiculturalism's critics. In doing so, the government may have revealed an ideological predilection more concerned with ensuring the equality of the individual than that of the group. As such, it is not surprising the redesigned program has been found wanting. What is surprising is that the renewed policy appeared to ignore several elements of the Multiculturalism Act altogether.

Programming and funding within the redesigned program framework were limited to objectives comprising participation, racism, the elimination of systemic barriers to participation, and federal responses to diversity. Though the objectives are certainly laudable, the practical implication is that multiculturalism appears to have been re-oriented to focus on integration, cohesion, and equity, especially as they relate to race, without any corresponding proposal for the sustained maintenance or celebration of individuals' collective identities – now seemingly conflated with 'special interests.' As such, the government appears to have misunderstood the premise behind 'unity in diversity.'

Whereas state neutrality denies the existence of culture, which, in practice, forces individuals who participate in the public sphere to conform to the dominant culture, multiculturalism affirms the notion that individuals' collective differences will be recognized and even celebrated in the public sphere. Hence, the argument that the object of a multicultural policy "is not to bring us back to an eventual 'difference-blind' social space but, on the contrary, to maintain and cherish distinctness, not just now but forever" is what sets multiculturalism apart.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to the above theory, the

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<sup>29</sup> Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutman, ed., Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 40.

Canadian government, favouring integration, cohesion and equity over cultural recognition, appears to accept the argument behind reverse discrimination, in this case, “temporary measures that will eventually level the playing field and allow the old ‘blind’ rules (of liberal neutrality) to come back into force in a way that doesn’t disadvantage anyone.”<sup>30</sup>

Is difference thus something to be bridged on the way towards a universal or homogeneous Canadian identity? Is this behind the thinking that associates ethno-cultural organizations with ‘special interests?’

Inasmuch multicultural policy does recognize culture and ethnicity – so long as those ethnic groups are seen to be outside of the mainstream – there are questions as to the meaning of ethnicity or culture. For example, is one’s ethnicity seen to be a source of tension, something to be divested of along the way towards some perceived conception of universal liberal harmony? If this is the case, official multiculturalism, as it is practiced in Canada, may exacerbate even more the tension between the ‘ethnic’ and the ‘mainstream’ than did state neutrality.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The foregoing overview of the evolution of multiculturalism policy and programs suggests that from its inception in 1971 multiculturalism has been heavily influenced by political considerations related to creating a multicultural Canadian polity which balances the visions and interests of representatives of ethnocultural organizations with the prevalent views in mainstream society. Despite their efforts to find such a balance, successive federal governments have not been able to find a balance acceptable

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

to everyone. Their inability to find a balance acceptable to the UCC is the focus of the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Critique of the Government's Multicultural Policy and Program**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

As a policy that proposes nothing less than an undoing of the public/private binary associated with earlier models of the Canadian national community, the ideals of official multiculturalism policy are difficult to achieve in practice. Nevertheless, policy should, at the very least, be seen to be moving in a direction consistent with its normative foundation. Multicultural policy has been routinely criticized in this regard since 1971. Such criticism by some stakeholders within the multiculturalism sector were intensified after 1988 when the Multiculturalism Act was enacted, and again with even greater force in the mid-1990's after the federal government released the "Strategic Evaluation of Multiculturalism Programs" (Brighton Report) which was prepared for the department of Canadian Heritage. Such criticism has persisted despite the fact that some academics and ethnocultural organizations have suggested that Canada's official multiculturalism policy has been moderately successful in fostering social and political inclusion and integration.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Will Kymlicka, Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1-15.

The central objective in this chapter is twofold. The first objective is to provide an overview of the critique of the reconfigured multicultural policy and program articulated both by the UCC and the CEC following the release of the Brighton Report. The second objective is to provide an assessment of the UCC's position vis-à-vis the reconfigured multiculturalism policy and program.

#### **4.1 The UCC's Critique of Policy Goals and Policy Means**

The UCC's criticism of the reorientation of the federal government's multiculturalism policy of the past decade has focused on two key interrelated matters. The first is a shift in the importance of the overarching policy goals from the preservation and promotion of ethno-cultural diversity to intercultural understanding and social cohesion. The second is the diversion of funding from programming designed to advance the cultural programming of ethno-cultural organizations to intercultural programming. In the case of funding, the UCC claims that it is not receiving sufficient state support for its operations and for Ukrainian language and cultural programming. For the UCC, such funding issues open the question as to the Canadian government's long-term commitment to diversity.

A full appreciation of the UCC's criticism of reorientation of the policy goals of Canadian official multiculturalism policy has taken during the past decade requires an understanding of the criticisms or doubts which have existed among an array of stakeholders since the policy was first articulated in 1971. Early in the development of official multiculturalism in Canada there were doubts expressed as to whether the



government could live up to its obligations.<sup>2</sup> For example, the policy was charged with what one analyst described as "...reinforcing the concept of 'symbolic ethnicity' which provides an appearance of democratic pluralism but is in reality a racist policy of assimilation at best and exclusion at worst."<sup>3</sup> More recent criticism conveys a similar sentiment, expressing doubt as to the government's commitment to multiculturalism. Interestingly, the UCC's position that Ukrainian-Canadians are assimilating, given the lack of inclusion or recognition of their community's particularity, appears to be in line with this early critique. What does distinguish the recent spate of criticism – of which the UCC's position is part – is that it appears to be a reaction to changes in the management of multiculturalism that took place during the mid-1990s.

The UCC position statement contends that multicultural policy may not be entirely living up to its stated purpose of preserving and advancing the multicultural character of Canadian society. The UCC contends that the funding criteria outlined by the Canadian government deals with social integration (specifically, racial concerns) and social cohesion issues, and that funding towards the preservation and development of identity is explicitly excluded. Such a contention is borne out in government documents where the cultural development of ethno-cultural groups is conspicuously absent from the stated four program objectives (please see Appendix II).<sup>4</sup>

In such a situation questions arise as to whether *multicultural policy* and the *multicultural vision*, as it is described in various legislative documents, are diverging in their philosophical as well as practical implications. What is important is whether such a

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<sup>2</sup> See Karl Peter, "The Myth of Multiculturalism and Other Political Fables," in Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada, eds. Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando (Toronto: Macmillan, 1986), 288-315.

<sup>3</sup> V. Seymour Wilson, "The Tapestry Vision of Canadian Multiculturalism," Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique 26: 4 (December / Décembre 1993), 656.

<sup>4</sup> See "Multicultural Program guidelines." Online.  
<[http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/program/guide/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/program/guide/index_e.cfm)>. (Retrieved 25 Sep. 2005).

divergence is so great as to distance multiculturalism policy from its normative foundations. That is to say, is multicultural policy being interpreted in such a way as to deny the very justification for multiculturalism, as it has been described by theorists, officials, and other policy makers in government documents?

The UCC has not been alone in critiquing the reorientation of the policy goals of the Canadian multiculturalism policy. The Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC), a coalition of national ethnocultural umbrella organizations which, in turn, represent a cross-section of ethnocultural groups across Canada, also criticized the ‘redesigned program’ which emerged following the strategic review of 1996.<sup>5</sup> In doing so, the organization posed some interesting questions as to the direction of the ‘redesigned program.’

In a critique prepared for the CEC, Professor Bohdan Kordan of the University of Saskatchewan and a policy advisor to the CEC, charged that the “government’s initiative, although couched in the language of Canada’s Multiculturalism Act, moves away from the philosophical foundations and policy intent of the Act.”<sup>6</sup> The critique, adopted as the policy position of the CEC, observed that within the renewed multicultural program, initiatives supporting Canada’s diverse cultures were conspicuously absent. Noting that the Multiculturalism Act calls for “the full and equitable participation of Canada’s ethnocultural communities by engaging these communities through the promotion of their cultural and social rights,” the CEC claimed that the proposed direction of the ‘redesigned multicultural program’ did little in the way

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<sup>5</sup> The Canadian Ethnocultural Council. Homepage. Online.  
<[http://www.ethnocultural.ca/about\\_cec.html](http://www.ethnocultural.ca/about_cec.html)> (Retrieved 4 Oct. 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Bohdan Kordan, “Multiculturalism, Citizenship and the Canadian Nation: A Critique of the Proposed Design for Program Renewal,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 24: 2, (1997), 138.

of engaging ethnocultural communities.<sup>7</sup> The CEC argued that to successfully do so required “acknowledging and supporting the value of culture.” Without this, claimed the CEC, the notion of participation in this particular case is meaningless.”<sup>8</sup> The CEC concluded that, “that the Government of Canada chooses to ignore the pro-active elements of the policy highlights a certain level of non-commitment.”<sup>9</sup> In critiquing the program overhaul, the CEC appears to take issue with the aspects of the ‘renewed program’ that were influenced by the Brighton Report’s recommendations – namely that the Canadian government should avoid being seen to pander to special interests. In this regard, the CEC expressed concern regarding the new funding arrangements, among other things, within the proposed program. Such concerns regarding the new funding arrangements were fully shared by the UCC.

#### **4.2 The Instrumental Approach to Multiculturalism: Exploring Consequences**

Several factors, including budgetary restraints and growing public criticism, may have led the Government of Canada to reconfigure the official multicultural policy such that it might be seen to be more effective and palatable to the Canadian public. Whatever the case, the result has been that official Canadian multicultural policy now appears to emphasize societal integration and cohesion while de-emphasizing cultural preservation and development. This confirms the stand adopted by the UCC. Whether or not such a situation is merely the function of either fiscal and political expediency or sound policy rationale, the consequence is that behind program renewal lays a rejection of the notion of cultural pluralism as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian identity.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

This is problematic inasmuch as it is the notion of cultural pluralism that underpins the logic of Multiculturalism. Such rejection of principles could have a great many practical consequences for how national identity and ethnicity is conceived in Canada, not the least of which may include the polarization of differences as well as an increased tendency to reactive culturalism on the part of organized ethnic communities.<sup>10</sup>

By ostensibly ignoring cultural preservation and development, the Canadian government implicitly addresses the needs of new ethnic groups – by and large apprehensive about their new home and eager to integrate – over the needs of established ethnic groups – who are more concerned with the maintenance and development of their culture.<sup>11</sup> The importance accorded to the cultural group appears to depend, in part, on the relative degree of integration. In this way it appears the cultural aspects of individuals are allocated public recognition only so long as the individual is seen to exist or function outside of the mainstream.

Sociologist Peter Li, for example, argues that multicultural policy is best depicted as a vehicle through which “ethnicity is envisioned as a vestibule from which fully fledged individual Canadians emerge.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, once an individual is integrated, the cultural aspects of his or her identity are again relegated to the private sphere. As in a neutral state, the onus for the cultural development and preservation of integrated individuals are the responsibility of the individual.

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<sup>10</sup> Ayelet Shachar explains that “reactive culturalism” is a “response aimed at group self-preservation which takes as its goal the maintenance of a separate and distinct ethos.” See Ayelet Shachar, Multicultural Jurisdictions: Cultural Differences and Women’s Rights (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Leo Driedger, Race and Ethnicity: Finding Identities and Equalities, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 2003), 32-33.

<sup>12</sup> Roman Onufrijchuk, “Post-modern or Perednovok: Deconstructing Ethnicity”, Ethnicity in a Technological Age ed. T.H. Angus (Edmonton: CIUS, 1988), 4.

One consequence of Li's observation is that there may be acceptance of the binary associated with liberal neutrality on the part of the government, with new immigrants on one side and mainstream Canadians on the other; the only difference being that group rights are recognized in the case of new immigrants – as long as their differences are seen to prevent them from fully participating in the mainstream. In such a situation the problem of assimilation associated with the neutral order is still present, albeit in a more “humane manner,” raising questions as to the government's commitment to a multiculturalism that is designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians.<sup>13</sup> Presumably, however, the multicultural character of Canada as defined in the Multiculturalism Act refers to the existence of a heterogeneity of equally valid cultures in Canada and that some form of these cultures will continue to exist long into the future.

To affirm the existence of a societal binary, with a mainstream Canadian culture on one side – apparently mixing and integrating difference – and a variety of ethnic groups burdened with difference – lying somewhere on the other side – may, in fact, accurately describe the ‘Canadian vertical mosaic.’ Yet this denies the very basis of multiculturalism, presenting as it does such a limited notion of ethnicity. Here ethnicity is understood to refer to one's past instead of “...identity and culture (that) is both an inheritance and a project..., where one's ethnicity involves a shared history that appears as still unfulfilled and that its telling remains incomplete.”<sup>14</sup>

The version of culture referred to by Onufrijchuk that casts an eye towards the past while looking to the future can be said to comprise a great many aspects of identity

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<sup>13</sup> Habib Salloum, “The Other Canadians and Canada's Future”, *Contemporary Review*, 270: 1574 (March 1997), 134.

<sup>14</sup> Onufrijchuk, “Post-modern or Perednovok,” 4.

beyond a relationship with a real or imagined past. The limited or 'instrumental' approach to ethnicity currently embedded in Canadian multiculturalism looks to present a wholly different view of culture. Here policies are geared toward an individual's cultural heritage, rather than the as-of-yet unrealized aspects of the individual's culture. This has the effect of essentializing culture, whereby ethnicity is something to be remembered, rather than something on which to build and to create.<sup>15</sup>

The instrumental approach to ethnicity articulated in the Government of Canada's reworked multicultural framework suggests that ethnic groups are presented with a choice. Individuals may either relinquish their ethnicity and join the Canadian 'multicultural' mainstream or they may fight to preserve their ethnicity in opposition to the mainstream. With the first choice, in an environment of instrumental multiculturalism, the integrating ethnic group is permitted to celebrate their own 'culture,' but only so long as it remains backward-looking, not something to be carried forward into the future. As suggested by Salloum, the implication is that culture is frozen, continually defined by its connection to the 'old country'.<sup>16</sup> With the latter choice, the consequence is one of reactive culturalism, where an ethnic group must preserve its identity in opposition to the mainstream by physically limiting interaction with other groups while depending on replenishment by way of new immigration.

### **4.3 Analyzing the UCC's Position and Assumptions**

At first blush, the position of the UCC may seem sound. Upon reflection, however, questions arise regarding its merits. This is particularly true of its critique of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Salloum, "The Other Canadians and Canada's Future," 134.

what may be referred to as the federal government's framework for instrumental multiculturalism. Within the framework of instrumental multiculturalism it appears that the options available to individuals who choose to integrate as a result of school, work, or play do not offer much in the way of any meaningful reproduction of their culture. It is in such an environment that the UCC's policy position was conceived. The UCC is undeniably aware that there are problems with the way ethnicity is conceptualised within the rubric of Canadian multiculturalism, pointing to Ukrainian-Canadians' cultural attrition as an example that something is amiss. And yet, there are questions as to how the UCC frames the problem.

Not surprisingly, individual Ukrainian-Canadians cover a range of definitions with respect to their ethnicity; some are fully integrated with little knowledge of or desire to be associated with a distinct Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity while others define themselves more through their Ukrainian heritage, emphasizing, wherever possible, their distinctness from the mainstream. Apparently disregarding such diversity amongst Ukrainian-Canadians, the response by the UCC to the government's position on ethnicity emphasizes the perceived attrition of the community and consequently centres on language rights and cultural maintenance. This suggests that the organization is adopting the language of reactive culturalism, choosing a position that would maintain Ukrainian culture by emphasising its Ukrainianness, while opposing the integrative tendencies of the Canadian mainstream.

However, though the UCC appears to be consistent with what is said in the Multicultural Act, in adopting a reactive stance, has the UCC leadership fully grasped the nature of the problem? In attempting to shore up Ukrainian-Canadian culture through what appears to be an oppositional strategy, questions arise as to whether the

UCC is merely reacting to the instrumental nature of multiculturalism without addressing the very problems of how multiculturalism is conceptualised in Canada. How propitious is a strategy predicated on cultural isolation in opposition to the mainstream, especially in the long run? If such a strategy restricts personal choice, would it not be a difficult strategy to sustain in a liberal environment? Focusing on the evolving nature of Ukrainian-Canadian identity, the following sections will unravel the assumptions that frame the UCC's position, assess UCC policy objectives, and look at how the position relates to the needs of the Ukrainian-Canadian community and advances the Canadian multicultural project.

As an organization claiming to represent a million-strong Ukrainian-Canadian community, the UCC arguably has among its responsibilities the formulation of policy that, at its core, reflects the evolving issues, needs, and desires of the community. Indeed, the UCC claims, among other things, that its mission is to represent Ukrainian-Canadians before the people and Government of Canada, while identifying and addressing the needs of the Ukrainian-Canadian community to ensure its continued existence and development.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the UCC includes in its mission statement that it “strives to be a proactive, national, united and self-sustaining body that provides a high standard of leadership in developing the destiny of Ukrainian Canadians.”<sup>18</sup> Essentially, the merit of any policy initiative undertaken by the UCC should be evaluated by the degree to which it reflects the concerns of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, and secondly, the likelihood of its success.

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<sup>17</sup> See Mission Statement. UCC Homepage. Online. <[www.ucc/section\\_1/missionvision.html](http://www.ucc/section_1/missionvision.html)> (Retrieved 12 Sep. 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



Certainly, the UCC bases its position vis-à-vis official multiculturalism on the perceived concerns of its community. However, the concerns that the UCC considers to be important are grounded in a logic and on assumptions that are questionable. According to its own assessment, the UCC represents a community that faces ‘the attrition of a distinctive culture,’ under-representation in the media and the government, language loss, and lack of financial support at the official level.

In effect, in emphasising what is said in the Multiculturalism Act, the UCC appears to hold the government partially responsible for the sustainable maintenance of its distinct culture. As a result, where elements of a distinct culture are seen to be slowly vanishing, responsibility is perceived to rest, in large part, with the Canadian government. From this point of view it is argued that, failure on the part of the government to provide funding for the preservation and development of Ukrainian culture and language has ostensibly abetted their attrition.

Given the declaratory aspects of the Multiculturalism Act, the UCC position appears reasonable; Ukrainian Canadians are at risk of losing their distinct culture and, consequently, the UCC, charged with representing the concerns of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, has appealed to the Canadian government for help. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the assumptions embedded in such a position are entirely accurate. At question is whether the concerns outlined by the UCC truly reflect the concerns of its community, raising doubts about the merits of the position and whether it lends itself to the stated objectives of sustaining and enhancing the community. The UCC, for example, resorts to the use of such words as ‘attrition’ and ‘loss’ within a ‘community’ or ‘people.’ These words are loaded with meaning. Insofar as they serve as suppositions informing and guiding the UCC critique – a critique that outlines the

shortcomings of official government multicultural policy and programs in Canada – this begs analysis.

Specifically, the UCC characterizes Ukrainian-Canadians as being constitutive of a community or people; to this characterization one might also add ethnicity. A community, people, or ethnic group is often said to be defined in two parts. First, it includes perception of self and, secondly, the perception by others. Paul Spickard and W. Jeffrey Burroughs explain that an ethnic group is a group of people who see themselves as biologically and historically connected with each other, and who are seen by others as being so connected, whether the biological connection is true or not.<sup>19</sup>

By using words such as attrition, the UCC is implying that the distinct sense of community shared by Ukrainian-Canadians and perceived by other Canadians is declining or disappearing. Synonymous with erosion, wearing away, or decay, attrition describes a process by which a unit that started whole or *complete* is becoming something *less than complete*. From the perspective of the UCC, Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity is therefore perceived as real and verifiable in the sense that it is made up of static and identifiable markers where any loss or modification of those markers would result in something other than Ukrainian-Canadian culture.

The inference is that the attrition of Ukrainian-Canadian culture is self-evident in that it has *lost*, or is *losing*, certain overt and measurable cultural markers, such as the daily use of Ukrainian as a means of communication, categorically considered to be a central element of Ukrainian-Canadian culture. More particularly, in this instance, language is seen to serve as one of the principal means by which a sense of common

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<sup>19</sup> Paul Spickard and W. Jeffrey Burroughs, “We Are a People,” We Are a People: Narrative and Multiplicity in Constructing Ethnic Identity, eds. Paul Spickard and W. Jeffrey Burroughs (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 2.

ethnic identity is maintained, the loss of which necessarily corresponds to a diminished community. Hence, embedded in the UCC position are assumptions that purport to define as well as situate the cultural boundaries of Ukrainian-Canadians. Correspondingly, individual Canadians of Ukrainian parentage who do not exhibit the cultural characteristics assumed to be central to Ukrainian-Canadian culture must be seen to be suffering cultural attrition in the sense that their cultural identity or their sense of being Ukrainian-Canadian is something less than complete.

It is instructive to note that, in addition to representing, developing and enhancing the Ukrainian-Canadian community, the UCC includes in its mission the objective of promoting linkages with Ukraine. In doing so, the UCC has pursued measures to promote relations between Canada and Ukraine, assist people and democracy in Ukraine, and, most recently, pressured the Canadian government to increase the immigration of Ukrainians to Canada (Please see Appendix III, IV).<sup>20</sup> Questions here arise as to what degree the UCC conflates improved relations with Ukraine as well as the influx of Ukrainians with protection, development, and enhancement of Ukrainian-Canadian culture. For example, will a greater influx of immigration from Ukraine stop Ukrainian-Canadian cultural attrition or even develop and enhance the culture? In this instance, to what degree is the UCC informed by a logic that perceives the recent Ukrainian immigrant as one who is culturally complete, where subsequent cultural interface with Canadian societal culture necessarily leads to his cultural attrition?

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<sup>20</sup> The UCC emphasis on Ukrainian immigration to Canada was resolved at the recent Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians. The resolution on immigration can be found at "Resolutions of the Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians," <[http://www.ucc.ca/congress\\_xxi/resolutions/](http://www.ucc.ca/congress_xxi/resolutions/)>. (Retrieved 12 Sep. 2005).

This logic is unsettling inasmuch as the majority of individual Canadians who maintain by statistical and anecdotal evidence that they are Ukrainian Canadian are of mixed ethnic parentage and exhibit very little of those characteristics that are assumed by the UCC to be central to their sense of identity and community.<sup>21</sup> This raises certain questions: to what degree is the position of the UCC misplaced with regard to the contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian community; and, moreover, in applying a static conception of Ukrainian-Canadian identity as the means by which to appeal to the government for increased funding, is the UCC likely to succeed in its mission to enhance and sustain the community? In this instance, might a position that is more generally representative of Ukrainian-Canadians be more propitious? Further yet, is this possible in light of the underlying liberal values of Canadian society that celebrate individual choice and freedom?

To what degree can the question of individual versus group rights be reconciled from the point of view of multicultural practice? Equally important, despite the problems associated with government practice as it relates to multicultural programming, would increased funding result in the recovery of Ukrainian-Canadian identity as articulated by the UCC? In this case, a more realistic position might be one that ensures that multicultural programming reflects its legislative commitments, as well as remains responsive to the changing concerns of the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

#### **4.4 Critique of the UCC's Views on Social and Cultural Change**

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<sup>21</sup> Bohdan Kordan, "Identity and Diversity: Ukrainian Canadians, Canada and Globalization's Challenge," in *Canadian Speeches*, 15: 4 (September/October 1996), 49. For statistical data, see Bohdan Kordan, *Ukrainian Canadians and the Canada Census, 1981-1996* (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2000).

Beginning with the systematic migration of large numbers of Ukrainian settlers to Canada in 1892, the Ukrainian presence in Canada has now spanned well over one hundred years. Among the narrative strands in the history of Ukrainian-Canadians is their story as a people who helped lay the foundations of Western Canada's wealth.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, rightly or wrongly, there is the often-repeated claim of their status as a founding people in Western Canada.<sup>23</sup> To many prairie Canadians – Ukrainian-Canadian and non-Ukrainian alike – the origin myths and stories that describe the arrival and development of Ukrainians in Canada are well known. These are the myths that describe a 'sheepskin-clad' peasant people who quickly overcame significant economic, racial and cultural barriers as well as an unforgiving northern environment, to find themselves in little more than three generations speaking English, with middle-class trappings and being well-represented politically.<sup>24</sup>

Along with political and economic success, Ukrainian-Canadians have experienced profound social and cultural change. If "culture" is taken to include all of the broad range of topics listed by cultural theorist Kenneth Allan, including ideas, language, recipes for action, tools, products, norms, values, beliefs, art, and so forth, then certainly, the change undergone by Ukrainian-Canadians is undeniable.<sup>25</sup> Writing in 1984, Radoslav Zuk, for instance, observed that the daily environment of the contemporary Ukrainian Canadian – what he refers to as material culture – showed little or no reference to the culture of the early settlers or their homeland. Zuk explains that

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<sup>22</sup> The claim, for instance, is made in "A Report Presented to the Ukrainian Canadian Committee – National Headquarters by the Ukrainian Community Development Committee – Prairie Region," Building the Future: Ukrainian Canadians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, A Blueprint for Action, (1984), 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>24</sup> See Myna Kostash, All of Baba's Children, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1992), 25-36.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Allan, The Meaning of Culture: Moving the Postmodern Critique Forward (Wesport: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 4.

the lack of an active material culture has meant that Ukrainian culture in Canada is now identified almost exclusively with the agrarian culture of the homeland and its transplanted forms in Canada.<sup>26</sup> The implication is that for living Canadians of Ukrainian parentage, the visible symbols of Ukrainian-Canadian culture are almost entirely symbols of the past.

Social and cultural change amongst Ukrainian Canadians, however, has gone far beyond changes to their material culture, affecting the non-material content of their identity. As reported in various Canada censuses, there are proportionately fewer who fluently communicate in Ukrainian, while religious affiliation with either the Ukrainian Orthodox church or the Ukrainian Catholic church is in rapid decline, and rates of intermarriage with non-Ukrainian Canadians are high.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, among the purported one million Canadians who self-identify as Ukrainian – a number accepted and propagated by the UCC – most are now Canadian-born and increasingly of multiple ethnic origin.<sup>28</sup> These trends are unlikely to change, notwithstanding the trickle of Ukrainian immigrants who have started arriving anew since the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>29</sup>

As a consequence, Ukrainian-Canadians, outwardly, and perhaps inwardly, resemble more and more the Canadian mainstream. Noting these developments in 1991, Paul Magocsi, Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto, made the

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<sup>26</sup> Radoslav Zuk, "Endurance, Disappearance and Adaptation: Ukrainian Material Culture in Canada," Visible Symbols: Cultural Expression Among Canada's Ukrainians ed. M. R. Lupul (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1984), 8.

<sup>27</sup> See Bohdan Kordan, Ukrainian Canadians and the Canada Census 1981-1996, 24, 90, 103.

<sup>28</sup> Andrij Makuch, "Ukrainian Canadians in the 2001 census: an overview," Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: The Ukrainian Community in Canada, ed. Jaroslav Rozumnyj (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Canada, 2004), 62.

<sup>29</sup> W. Roman Petryshyn, "Toward a Framework of Voluntary Pluralism: Five Contemporary Lessons on Community Development Taken from Ukrainian Canadian History," Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: The Ukrainian Community in Canada, 17-21.

comment that most Ukrainian-Canadians "...simply are Canadians who, like all Canadians, have parents or grandparents who came from somewhere else."<sup>30</sup> For some within the organized community, such indicators are viewed negatively, interpreted as a warning sign of a community suffering attrition and assimilation.<sup>31</sup> In this case social and cultural changes are not seen to be the result of the natural evolution of a living culture but instead a case of Ukrainian-Canadians replacing their culture with that of another.

The social and cultural changes or assimilation experienced by Ukrainian-Canadians are often attributed to the high degree of participation by individual Ukrainian-Canadians in the Canadian public sphere. The argument is that the exigencies of the marketplace have required of Ukrainian-Canadians to conform their culture to that of others: recall that in a pluralistic society, the public sphere will tend to reflect the culture of the dominant group. The argument tends to fit well with respect to the Ukrainian experience within Canadian mainstream culture. Roman Onufrijchuk, for example, writes: "the opening of the West was impelled by an economic imagination and a profit motive. Wheat for export was the subject, East European immigrants were the object imported for its realization. Cultural integration meant a reorientation of the

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<sup>30</sup> Paul Magocsi, "Preface," Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating and Identity, eds. L. Luciuk and S. Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), xii.

<sup>31</sup> Writing in the 1984, the Ukrainian Community Development Committee noted, with regard to the Canadian Census, that "the multiple-response individuals in the Ukrainian category are likely to increase in the future. The multiple-responses are largely the result of intermarriage; the numbers indicate clearly that the Ukrainian group is being assimilated." As a result the community claimed that, "without the possibility of immigration from Ukraine in the foreseeable future, or special attention to the symptoms which indicate that the Ukrainian community is in a declining state of health, Ukrainian Canadians are headed for a major crisis." See Ukrainian Community Development Committee, Building the Future, 10, 14.

culture of these immigrants.”<sup>32</sup> Consequently, given the radical social and cultural changes that have occurred amongst Ukrainian-Canadians as a result of their continuing contact with the (Anglo) Canadian mainstream, a principal concern of the organized community has been to develop strategies in order to mitigate the perceived attrition of their common identity.<sup>33</sup>

The difficulty with such a strategy however, lies in its implications. Although Ukrainian-Canadian culture has certainly undergone much change, using the concept of assimilation as a principal frame of reference implies that the starting point of Ukrainian-Canadian culture can be easily identified. In other words, if the organized community is to pursue a strategy that seeks to stop or turn back assimilation, it must first identify the essence of “true” Ukrainian-Canadianness, whether that means going back to the myths of original Ukrainian-Canadian prairie culture or the creation of new myths. To do so, however, is difficult if not impossible – especially in the wake of the postmodern deconstruction of any aspiring ‘grand narrative.’

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<sup>32</sup> Roman Onufrijchuk, “Immigration and Organized Forgetting: Continuity and Change in Systems of Meaning,” Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta’s First Ukrainians, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton: CIUS press, 1988), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Driedger, Race and Ethnicity, 33.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Challenges and Potential Strategies in Recognizing Difference Today**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Today the leaders of the UCC face the challenge of how to effectively represent Ukrainian-Canadians before the government of Canada. The challenge is becoming increasingly more difficult because of the intermarriage of persons of Ukrainian descent with non-Ukrainians, and also because the youth find it easier to integrate into a mainstream culture rather than a sectoral culture based on ethnicity. Although the UCC is opposed to the resulting assimilation, it has really not been able to articulate a practical and efficacious alternative approach that provides either its own members or the government with a practical alternative. The relevant question is the following: even if the federal government were to accede to its demands for funding certain types of programming, would those whom the UCC claims to represent avail themselves of the opportunities provided by such programs and would they have a major effect either on their identity or on their affinity to the Ukrainian-Canadian community and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress?

The objective in this chapter is to provide both an overview of the challenges faced by the UCC in preserving and promoting a Ukrainian identity, culture, community, and a discussion of alternative strategies that the UCC may consider in its effort to formulate effective policy.

## **5.1 The Challenges faced by the UCC**

The UCC faces at least two major challenges in its efforts to preserve and promote a Ukrainian identity, culture and community in Canada. The first challenge is arresting or reversing assimilation, and the second challenge is conceptualizing Ukrainianness.

### **5.1.1 The Challenge of Arresting or Reversing Assimilation**

One problem in developing strategies to arrest or reverse assimilation is that a community's common culture defies categorization. If what postmodernists inform us is true, namely that the processes of modernity have produced a threshold point wherein culture, and thus reality, "has become so fragmented that the structure of culture no longer provides stable and consistent reality experiences for people," then certainly those who would identify a unified conception or 'grand narrative' of Ukrainian-Canadian culture are "chasing after the wind."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, if multiculturalism itself can be conceived as an accommodation of the postmodern fragmentation of culture by publicly deconstructing the antiquated foundational myths of an original Anglo/French Canada, then logic suggests that the unifying myths of ethnic groups themselves are probably susceptible to the same processes.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the originary myths of the 'sheepskin-clad' peasant are probably as universally applicable to Ukrainian-Canadians as are the originary myths of the French

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Allan, *The Meaning of Culture: Moving the Postmodern Critique Forward* (Wesport: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Vincent, *Nationalism and Particularity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 160-161.

voyageurs to Canadians. The point however is this: though both myths are surely applicable and important to some, to others they are probably not. Consequently, to ignore the fact of pluralism in the construction of social policy, whether we are referring to the UCC or the Canadian government, will invariably estrange at least some of the members of the target community. This is particularly true in the case of the purported one million Ukrainian-Canadians, a community that cannot be identified with one ‘grand narrative.’ The community is said to encompass every Canadian citizen of Ukrainian heritage whether they are economic migrants from a newly independent Ukraine, or the materially successful, well-educated and long-established heirs of the wearers of sheepskin coats.<sup>3</sup>

In the years since Ukrainians initially made their home in Canada even their self-definition has changed. Historian Oleh Gerus, for instance, claims that the majority of early Ukrainian immigrants actually became “ukrainianized” in Canada.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the meaning of Ukrainian identity reflects the division between the established Ukrainian Canadians, postwar Displaced Persons, and the so-called ‘fourth’ wave of immigrants. At its core, identity has followed the vagaries of a community split between those who are relatively indifferent to their heritage and those who “consider themselves Ukrainian first and foremost.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus, Ukrainian-Canadian identity cannot be said to encompass a single culture, nor can it be said to be static. Every new experience and every new foray into the

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<sup>3</sup> Janice Kulyk-Keefer, Dark Ghost in the Corner: Imagining Ukrainian Canadian Identity (Saskatoon: Heritage Press 2005), 22.

<sup>4</sup> Gerus is referring to the fact before that Ukrainian independence, Canadians of Ukrainian ethnicity were actually identified by the region from which they typically emigrated, be it Bukovynian, Galician or Ruthenian. See Oleh W. Gerus, The Ukrainian Canadians: A Community Profile, 1891-1991. Online. <[http://www.ucc.ca/Section\\_2/community\\_profile/](http://www.ucc.ca/Section_2/community_profile/)> (retrieved 15 feb. 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Magocsi, “Preface,” Canada’s Ukrainians: Negotiating and Identity, eds. L. Luciuk and S. Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), xiii.

Canadian social and economic marketplace changes the definition of the Ukrainian ‘Self’ with respect to the Canadian ‘Other’ (mainstream Canadians). Culture and identity change continuously with each passing set of Ukrainian immigrants who arrive in Canada and with each new generation born in Canada.

The cultural heterogeneity displayed by Ukrainian-Canadians illustrates the difficulty inherent in defining a cultural group. This is a community defined by its diversity; diversity played out even within the individuals themselves. For example, when passing each other on the street, do Ukrainian-Canadians recognize other Ukrainians? Likewise, while assessing aspects of their own identity, some individuals may have difficulty recognizing their own Ukrainianness. Certainly this difficulty helps to explain both the Canadian government’s and the UCC’s position vis-à-vis Ukrainian-Canadians: both can easily identify a Ukrainian immigrant – by their place of birth, mother language, religion, cuisine – but how to identify and define a community comprised of individuals displaying a heterogeneity of cultural traits? Furthermore, what if many of their cultural traits have come to resemble the cultural traits of the Canadian ‘Other,’ as the majority of Ukrainian-Canadians become further removed psychologically from the point of origin, the place from whence their ancestors came?

### **5.1.2 The Challenge of Conceptualizing Ukrainianness**

Robert B. Klymasz, folklorist and former curator of the National Museum of Civilisation in Ottawa, recently tackled the problem of defining Ukrainian-Canadian culture. In addressing the problem of conceptualization that confronts those engaged in Ukrainian-Canadian Studies, Klymasz noted the absence of any set of defining characteristics for Ukrainians.

What is the definition of Ukrainianness today? What are its properties? Is it something geographical / territorial, linguistic? Is it something one inherits? Are there different degrees of Ukrainianness? What are the qualifications for one to be called a Ukrainian? If it's a commitment to an idea or ideology, what is that idea or ideology? And what relevance does that idea have for today for me or for you?<sup>6</sup>

With respect to Ukrainian-Canadians, these are indeed difficult questions. In response, most might answer with reference to the mythologized Ukrainian-Canadian: the peasant, the orthodox, the wearer of sheepskin coats, etc. And yet, how useful, how relevant – to address Klymasz – are these myths when they are not at all applicable to the English-speaking, multiple-origin Ukrainian-Canadian or the graduate of a Ukrainian immersion school who is not even Ukrainian? They are, of course, relevant to some, and irrelevant to others. Thus, in a different response to Klymasz, one could also answer that the defining characteristics of the Ukrainian-Canadian are as divergent and as numerous as there are individual Ukrainian-Canadians.

Denis Hlynka of the Centre for Ukrainian-Canadian Studies at the University of Manitoba has recently added to this discussion. For Hlynka, any effort at defining the Ukrainian-Canadian cannot avoid contemporary cultural theories of postmodernism. Hlynka identifies, quite insightfully, that definitional problems associated with Ukrainian-Canadian identity in many ways mirror the definitional problems associated with national Canadian identity. Hlynka writes:

It is imperative that we realize that there is no one Ukrainian Canadian group any more than there is one Canadian group. There is no single community.

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<sup>6</sup> Robert B. Klymasz, *Crucial Problems in Ukrainian Canadian Studies Today*, (Winnipeg: Center For Ukrainian Canadian Studies, 2002). Online. <[http://www.umanitoba.ca/centers/Ukrainian\\_Canadian](http://www.umanitoba.ca/centers/Ukrainian_Canadian)> (retrieved 21 may 2005).

Ukrainian Canadians in Canada today are not one cohesive group. We are many groups. We cannot make them one group. It is useless to try.<sup>7</sup>

In light of Hlynka's rather stark depiction of the state of the Ukrainian-Canadian community it is not difficult to understand the position taken by both the UCC and the Canadian government. If Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity can only be defined by its inherent plurality, how does one develop strategies recognizing and defending the importance of the community's collective identity? Perhaps it is because neither are able to answer the question that both Canadian officials and the UCC fall back on strategies that are, essentially, geared towards identifiable, material cultural traits: the government in framing a narrow instrumental version of multiculturalism aimed at the integration of difference and the UCC in responding with a reactive strategy, focusing on specific cultural traits.

By focusing on material cultural traits however, the Canadian government, the UCC, and Hlynka, for that matter, all appear to ignore that there still is commonality with respect to Ukrainian-Canadian identity. In this case, it might be history that provides the common thread. Universal to all Ukrainian-Canadians is their shared departure point – their Ukrainianness. And, what is also true of all Ukrainian-Canadians is their shared present – Canadianness. This is true of all Ukrainian-Canadians, whether they arrived in the 1890s or 1990s. Thus, it is history, epitomized in the hyphen, which binds.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Denis Hlynka, Contemporary Multiculturalism: Telling our Stories, Paper presented at the Multiculturalism in the New Millennium Conference. Ukrainian Professional and Business Association, 2001. (Winnipeg: Center For Ukrainian Canadian Studies). Online.  
<[http://www.umanitoba.ca/centers/Ukrainian\\_Canadian](http://www.umanitoba.ca/centers/Ukrainian_Canadian)> (retrieved 21 May 2005).

<sup>8</sup> For a similar argument, see Kulyk-Keefer, Dark Ghost in the Corner, 21-23.

True, the importance Ukrainian-Canadians accord either their Canadianness or their Ukrainianness may not be similar for everyone at any given time. However, it is also true that many of these individuals still do *choose* to accord a place for both their Ukrainianness and their Canadianness within their own conception of 'Self'. To choose is an approach to identity and culture that is entirely personal in that it emphasizes the role of human agency in producing culture over the signs and symbols and discourses of culture. To recognize identity in such a way is to, at once, recognize inherent diversity while at the same time leaving room for an individual's personal attachment to their culture. Such a definition might surely be regarded as tenuous, and yet, are there any other options?

It has been shown that Ukrainian-Canadians as a group are increasingly diverse as well as increasingly of mixed parentage. To deny the existence of this diversity in favour of a fixed conception of identity and culture necessarily denies the individuals' very real psychic connection to their sense of cultural identity. To conceive of Ukrainian-Canadian identity as pluralistic and personal, on the other hand, is to recognize the diversity inherent within the postmodern moment. Writing about the increasing complexity of race and ethnicity in the United States, Maria P. P. Root has made a similar appeal for more complex models of recognizing and accommodating individuals' identities. For example, Root writes that, "models with more cognitive complexity would allow us to explore multiple identities and a multiracial experience that may mirror real life more closely than we currently do."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Maria P.P. Root, "Rethinking Racial Identity Development," *We Are a People: Narrative and Multiplicity in Constructing Ethnic Identity*, eds. Paul Spickard and W. Jeffrey Burroughs (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 214.

Moreover, to deny or ignore the importance an individual accords his or her Ukrainianness arguably abets assimilation by producing a sense of alienation amongst those who struggle to hold on to their culture. In a discussion of the relationship between ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ in the construction and maintenance of social identity, Dieter Haselbach helps to illuminate this problem. Haselbach explains that membership in a social group can be of two kinds: the result of choice by the individual or a form of identification by others. In reality, however, membership requires both.<sup>10</sup> Writes Haselbach: “a membership claim always has to be supported, or at least not objected to, by others, whether they are other members of the group or a third party that has taken interest in a particular category of membership.”<sup>11</sup>

The idea that social identity requires both a choice on the part of the individual as well as acceptance on the part of others is particularly useful when wrestling with issues of social change as well as assimilation. In this case, the degree to which Ukrainian-Canadians are ‘assimilating’ into the larger society might be better understood as a question of the degree to which these individuals are recognized as Ukrainian-Canadians, rather than the degree to which they are seen to be losing their Ukrainianness. The fact that over one million Canadians continue to identify themselves, at least in part, as Ukrainian, means that for these individuals the first criteria of belonging has been fulfilled. And yet, whether or not they are recognized by others as such is perhaps a more telling indicator of their degree of assimilation with mainstream Canadians.

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<sup>10</sup> Dieter Haselbach, “The Social Construction of Identity: Theoretical Perspectives,” *A Chorus of Different Voices: German Canadian Identities*, ed. Angelika Sauer and Matthias Zimmer (New York: Lang, 1988), 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



Thus, defining Ukrainian-Canadian identity may lie with simple identification. One is Ukrainian-Canadian because one says so, regardless of his/her displayed cultural characteristics. Notwithstanding their plurality, there is the claim that there are still over one million Canadians who continue to self-identify as Ukrainian-Canadians. Strategies that ignore this while focusing on definitional issues necessarily do so at the risk of alienating a good majority of those purported one million Ukrainian-Canadians. To recognize all million Ukrainian-Canadians regardless of their cultural traits is not a strategy of accommodating assimilation. If anything, such a strategy would acknowledge that those who have undergone change because of their participation in Canadian society are still a part of the community and that they are still important. In this regard, Kordan writes:

To the extent that the response is personal, it should not be taken to mean that ethnic identity, where it occurs, is an exclusively private matter, or that it exists primarily in the private domain. Rather, ethnic identity is also a uniquely social affair where the private easily translates into the public, and where the beliefs, hopes and expectations of the individual can and do align with others. Combined as an aggregate, these serve to define the content of an ethnic community and its boundaries.<sup>12</sup>

The wonder is that so many Canadians still grasp at their Ukrainianness, even after five generations. The question, however, is whether anyone is listening. To quote Adrian Boyko, a Ukrainian-Canadian community activist and leader in the multicultural movement, “Do we speak for the ever decreasing number of Ukrainian Canadians that speak Ukrainian at home, or do we speak for the million plus Canadians of Ukrainian

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<sup>12</sup> Bohdan Kordan, Ukrainian Canadians and the Canada Census, 1981-1996 (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2000), 7.

heritage that do not speak Ukrainian at home or send their children to Ukrainian Bilingual (English-Ukrainian) programs. Are they part of our community or not?”<sup>13</sup>

Historically speaking, Ukrainians in Canada variously have had to overcome racism and the cultural divide between peoples, as well as cope with significant change. Despite the challenge, these individuals and their dependents have done quite well for themselves. At the same time, it is unlikely that social and cultural change can be reversed. In the face of change and the increasing complexity of Ukrainian identity, efforts must be made to acknowledge and accommodate this diversity, ensuring as much as possible that all permutations are recognized and celebrated. If Roman Onufrijchuk is right that culture should be seen to encompass both one’s past and future, then there must be ways by which the Ukrainianness of Ukrainian-Canadians can be recognized without demanding individuals sacrifice any elements of their identity.<sup>14</sup> As such, there needs to be a way of bringing cultural recognition into the public sphere – in this case, a multiculturalism that would allow for change.

Within a liberal order, an essentializing and oppositional or reactive cultural stand is difficult to sustain. Given that most Ukrainian-Canadians operate within the mainstream *sans* traditional characteristics, the question is how meaningful can the UCC’s position be to these individuals? Specifically, will not the reactive stance do more in speeding assimilation than not by failing both to accord equal weight to all Canadians of Ukrainian heritage and to recognize their identity, no matter the material or non-material symbols of their ethnicity?

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<sup>13</sup> Adrian Boyko, “Prognosis for the Future,” Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: The Ukrainian Community in Canada, ed. Jaroslav Rozumnyj (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Canada, 2004), 69.

<sup>14</sup> Roman Onufrijchuk, “Post-modern or Perednovok: Deconstructing Ethnicity”, Ethnicity in a Technological Age ed. T.H. Angus (Edmonton: CIUS, 1988), 3.

In contrast, the UCC might be more propitious in adopting a position that speaks to the institutions of the mainstream. Such a position might address the practical meaning of ‘unity in diversity’ in pressing for Ukrainians’ stories to be told as a part of the Canadian story. In turn, this might open the possibility that Ukrainian Canadians might flourish as individuals as well as embrace elements of their ‘Ukrainianness’, in this case indistinguishable from their ‘Canadianness’.

## **5.2 Potential Strategies for the UCC:**

### **Recognizing ‘Ukrainianness’ by Emphasising ‘Canadianness’**

There is at least one potential strategy available for the UCC in its efforts to preserve and promote a Ukrainian identity, culture and community in Canada. Such a strategy is to recognize “Ukrainianness” by emphasizing “Canadianness”. This might also be referred to as the “mainstreaming of difference.” This potential strategy is discussed below.

To argue for a conceptual blurring between what is considered Ukrainian and what is considered Canadian in Canada is not an argument for assimilation: rather it is an argument for the ‘Ukrainianizing’ of the mainstream. This could allow for the myths of the Ukrainian-Canadians to become part of the national narrative; a fusion of the Ukrainian and the Canadian ‘selves’ presently embodied in the hyphen. The idea here is that if the Ukrainian-Canadian stories were to form a part of the national story, then individual Ukrainian-Canadians could live undivided, claiming aspects of their ‘Canadianness’ or ‘Ukrainianness’ – as they see fit.

To argue thus is to propose an undoing of the majority/minority cultural binary that continues to dominate the discourse on national identity in Canada and appears to be to

supported by current multicultural programming. The argument is for the recognition of the multiplicity inherent in all identities. As such, it is an argument for cultural reconstruction. As noted by Timothy Powell, “identity is reconfigured in the midst of a multiplicity of cultural influences that more closely resembles...the ‘lived perplexity’ of people’s lives and that more accurately reflects the multicultural complexities that have historically characterized...identity”<sup>15</sup> Such a reconstruction of cultural identity in the midst of a *multiplicity* of cultures could allow for a theory of identity where there are no centres and no margins.<sup>16</sup> This kind of thinking might be more in line with the spirit of multiculturalism than what is currently on offer.

For example, one problem with instrumental multiculturalism is that the model of ‘Canadianness’ and ‘otherness’ may be too simplistic and restrictive for a Canadian culture that is subject to change. A recent paper by Minelle Mahtani, a cultural geographer at the University of Toronto, illustrates this problem quite well. The paper explored the notion of the hyphen in multicultural policy, employed to articulate the marriage of ethnic and national identity, and its relationship to Canadian women who self-identified as ‘mixed race.’ As a result of a number of interviews Mahtani suggested that the “...existing notions of ‘multiculturalism’ did not adequately encapsulate their racial/national self-representation.”<sup>17</sup> As such, she noted that the women all held negative views on multicultural policy.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Timothy B. Powell, “Re-Thinking Cultural Identity,” in Beyond the Binary: Reconstructing Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Context, ed. Timothy B. Powell (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Minelle Mahtani, “Interrogating the Hyphen-Nation: Canadian Multicultural Policy and ‘Mixed Race’ Identities” in Social Identities, 8: 1 (2002), 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

The problem for the women interviewed is that within the current framework “Canadianness” or “Canadian identity” refers to a specific cultural mainstream that does not include their versions of difference. According to the women Mahtani interviewed, “an authentic Canadian is either British or French blood – those ‘real’ Canadians who are part of a ‘capital-C Canadian’ society.”<sup>19</sup> For the women in question, the particular underpinnings of the often-asked question of racial minorities, ‘where are you from?’ assumes their foreignness.<sup>20</sup> Because of visible difference, it is not enough to simply answer ‘I’m from Canada’ precisely because the question is one that is directed toward their exoticised ethnic identity.

The example of Canadian multiplicity explored by Mahtani illustrates the particular problems inherent to the current instrumental multicultural framework. The example is useful even for Canadians of mixed-heritage who are not considered racial minorities. In this, Canadians of ‘mixed-heritage’ and ‘mixed-race’ find themselves somewhere in the middle of a discourse that emphasizes ‘Canadianness’, on the one hand, and ‘otherness’, on the other. In this instance, are they ‘ethnic’ or are they not? Can they call themselves Canadian or would that exclude their ‘otherness?’ Unable to answer such questions, Canadians of ‘mixed-race’ or ‘mixed-heritage’ adopt personal definitions ‘Canadian’ identity – outside of the current discourse – that more accurately reflect their lived complexities.

No doubt there are multiple-origin Canadians that point to some degree of Ukrainianness when examining their complicated histories. At question, however, is whether these individuals have to carve out their own conceptions of Canadianness, in

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 75.

opposition to the current model? For example, how meaningful can fixed and essentialized notions inherent in the duality of Ukrainian (difference) and Canadian (mainstream) be for multiple-origin individuals, an increasingly germane characteristic of Canadians of Ukrainian heritage?

In contrast, a multiculturalism which makes space for a plurality of stories, but which also allows for change and multiplicity opens the possibility for a more holistic and realistic notion of Canadian identity. In this, the recognition of Canadianness or a Canadian identity could be divorced from the cultural mainstream. Thus, individuals who identify with a minority group could refer to their Canadianness, confident that their particularity has been accounted for.

The foregoing suggests that if organized ethnic communities, such as the UCC, are to have a hand in shaping the discourse of national identity in Canada while at the same time ensuring the survival of their culture, they may have to address the essence of their Canadianness rather than that of their own particularity. The idea that Canada is by definition pluralistic must be played out within the mainstream, not amongst a variety of ethnic communities, contributing to some conception of a “discrete and separate ‘Canadian’ society.”<sup>21</sup>

The tragedy is that it appears that there are individuals who, because of integration and intermarriage, are unable to access either their Canadianness or their difference within the current discourse. Who is to address these individuals – by definition ‘multicultural’ – and from where will they access the stories and myths of their rich and varied heritage?

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 80.

In the case of the UCC, it is unclear why an organization which claims to represent a very large ethno-cultural community of over one million Ukrainian Canadians uses words such as attrition and assimilation to describe the state of its community and advocates increased Ukrainian immigration and the need to promote the use of the Ukrainian language. Such a strategy is surely hurtful and alienating to the Ukrainians who no longer look, speak, or dress like 'traditional' Ukrainians and yet continue to express a desire to include their Ukrainianness as an aspect of their identity. In this case, why does the UCC not address the institutions of the mainstream, making it at least possible for all Canadians to embrace the inherent and intrinsic Ukrainianness of the Canadian national community itself?

What might it mean to address the mainstream? Taking up the question of ethnicity and art in Canada, sociologist Peter Li provides hints at how such a policy could be framed. Criticizing the role the Canadian government has played in promoting and sustaining art in Canada, Li argues that funding for 'Occidental art' through the Canada Council and funding for 'Ethnic art' through multicultural programming has produced two different and unequal art worlds. "The first is a formal, legitimized and high-status art world of white Canadians, and the second a marginal, folkloric and low-status multicultural circle reserved for recent immigrants of mainly non-white origin."<sup>22</sup> Li adds, "under these circumstances, the consumers expect the minority cultural products to be novel and exotic; and producers, in turn, try hard to live

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<sup>22</sup> Peter Li, "A world apart: the multicultural world of visible minorities and the art world of Canada," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 31: 4 (1994), 365.

up to public expectations in emphasizing their cultural uniqueness and in appealing to the sensationalism of the audience.”<sup>23</sup> Thus,

...there is little incentive to create and to develop minority art works that would reflect the contemporary reality of people; little attempt is made to convert the traditional art forms into an expression of the modern life of minorities in Canada. Minority art is relegated to the margin where, at best, only the form of an ancient folk culture is retained; it is a form that is devoid of the contemporary essence of lived experiences.<sup>24</sup>

Li’s critique appears to confirm the argument made here that multicultural policy in Canada does not address the public sphere, relegating minority cultures to the private sphere. As such, minority cultural experiences are increasingly bereft of meaning for individuals that are highly integrated in the mainstream. As a result, Li makes clear that for ‘ethnic art’ to have meaning in contemporary Canadian life, it must be accorded equal recognition with ‘occidental art’ within the institutions of the mainstream. Li’s example is one of many. If put to the same kind analysis, all of the institutions that together comprise the mainstream, including the workplace, schools, media, etc. might reveal a similar dichotomy between what is dominant and what is minority.

Consequently, if multiculturalism in Canada is to represent a blending of individual and collective rights, at question is how difference is played out in the public sphere. In contrast, leaving the question of culture to the private sphere, as in the case of liberal neutrality, or recognizing difference only as much as it is perceived to differ from the mainstream, as in the case of current Canadian multicultural programming, does little in the way of fostering a multicultural society.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



For multiculturalism to resonate for all Canadians, the question of who is Canadian and who is ethnic must be resolved, not privately in church basements, but in the social marketplace – the places where individuals go to be entertained, to work, to educate, and to be educated. Here the norm is defined by the convergence and divergence of plurality and multiplicity and yet multicultural policy appears to be absent.

The implications at the heart of the UCC's position leads to questions regarding what multiculturalism in Canada means for the individual who lives in a world that is fundamentally liberal but who claims culture divergent from the norm. In this case, is the individual doomed to a divided self, negotiating a world that is impossibly zero-sum where increased participation demands he/she shed of aspects of his or her culture? In such a situation do both the Canadian government and the UCC represent opposing versions of the good life; where the Canadian government offers individuals all the benefits of the freedom of choice and the possibility of material wealth while the UCC offers individuals another version, characterized by the comfort that comes from knowing that there are others like them, who understand them and where culture never changes?

This example surely presents the average Canadian with an impossible choice: submerge aspects of one's identity by replacing it with those of the mainstream or surround oneself with aspects of a static culture, choosing isolation. Such a choice is almost certainly moot for those who have already cast aside their traditional culture.

In this case, what is important is the right to choose. If ethnicity is increasingly a matter of choice, choices need to be made available. As they are forgotten and as they are remembered, groups' stories, and perspectives on what it means to inhabit this particular place need telling. Multicultural theory makes clear that the choice should not

be whether or not to maintain one's ethnicity, in opposition to one's participation in the mainstream, but rather, whether or not the mainstream will accommodate one's ethnicity. Such a choice might allow for the individual's participation in the Canadian mainstream where aspects of his culture would be present and respected. Here difference would be considered. Instead of being relegated to the periphery, discarded as an ethnic curiosity, culture might be allowed to change along with individuals, presenting them with the means to navigate within and negotiate their interface with the mainstream.

### **5.3 How the 'Mainstreaming of Difference' differs from Cultural Integration**

What distinguishes a policy of mainstreaming culture from a policy of cultural integration – such as, for example, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism – are the divergent ends. Whereas a policy of cultural integration is motivated by the desire for differences to coalesce in order to achieve societal cohesion, a policy of mainstreaming culture would leave the question of how culture evolves to the citizens themselves, focusing instead on ensuring as much as possible that differing cultural permutations are reflected throughout mainstream institutions. Thus, while cultural integration is a strategy of cultural creation, mainstreaming is a strategy of ensuring that all differences are recognized as belonging, however they converge or diverge. Furthermore, whereas cultural integration must engage in a dialogue of 'us' and 'them', mainstreaming is an attempt to ensure that no matter what are the differences, all are acceptable.

By doing away with the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them', the mainstreaming approach is forward-looking. For example, in a Canada where individual citizens are increasingly of mixed cultural and racial backgrounds a policy of cultural integration is

out obtuse and out of place. What may be important for these individuals, who must claim a Canadian identity in the absence of a single ethnicity is that 'Canadianness' reflects such heterogeneity. Instead of there being 'Canadian' culture and history, on the one hand, and a variety of 'ethnic' cultures and histories, on the other, 'Canadianness' would take into account as much as possible such varied culture and history. Thus, instead of wondering to which ethnicity he or she belongs, an individual of mixed-heritage could claim 'Canadianness' confident that such a moniker bears the stamp of their differences.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.0 Thesis Summary**

The thesis began with an analysis of the UCC's position on government multicultural policy and programming, especially as it relates to various assumptions about identity and community and corresponding issues and needs. The central objective of the analysis has been to explore whether there are policy and programming directions available to the UCC that could satisfy its mandate for developing and enhancing the Ukrainian-Canadian community while taking into account the reality that Ukrainian-Canadians culturally resemble more and more the broader Canadian society. The central objective of this thesis has been to note shortcomings in both the government's policy and programming and the UCC's critique of that policy and programming in addressing the needs of the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

In the case of the Canadian government, the main shortcoming has been its intent to abandon or at least subordinate some of the original policy and program objectives of the Canadian multiculturalism policy as articulated in 1971 and to some extent even in 1988. Its reasons for doing so are related to financial and political imperatives. This includes reduced funding for some type of programming due to the budget restraints imposed as a result of mounting deficits and debt, as well as a desire to placate a public uncomfortable with the active support of minority cultural groups. These two sets of

imperatives seem to have trumped concerns over the long-term recognition and preservation of their respective cultural identities. Moreover, with programming tied to objectives promoting participation, integration, and the elimination of racism, multicultural policy appears more concerned with the equitable participation of individuals in mainstream political, cultural and social activities than the recognition of and support for ethno-cultural groups and their organizations who wish to promote and preserve cultural and linguistic diversity. Within this framework, it is only when group differences are seen to be preventing individuals' participation in Canadian society that such differences are acknowledged, and in that case it is acknowledged as a problem. Thus, acknowledgement of ethnicity appears to be linked to minority groups' relative degree of integration and whether such degree of integration is perceived as being problematical or not. Consequently, multicultural policy and programming achieves little in the way of meaningfully integrating diverse 'modes of being' in the Canadian mainstream, notwithstanding the rhetoric that serves to defend multiculturalism as a policy recognizing diversity as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society.

The thesis has also argued that the position of the UCC both on the objectives and principles of the federal government's multiculturalism policy and programming during the past ten to fifteen years is not entirely sound or productive. In this it has been argued that such an environment appears to have led to a kind of reactive or retrograde culturalism on the part of the UCC which has expressed concern over the loss of a distinct culture while promoting language retention and greater ties with Ukraine. Though such a position may be in line with what is said in the Multiculturalism Act, the thesis has noted that it might not be entirely prudent or propitious, given the high degree of cultural change that has taken place amongst Ukrainian-Canadians.

Noting the increasing number of Ukrainian-Canadians with mixed parentage along with a decreasing number of individuals possessing traditional Ukrainian cultural markers, the thesis has argued that the issues and concerns of integrated Ukrainian-Canadians are at risk of being forgotten by the government's multicultural policy and programming which seems to be focused on the integration of differences, and ignored by the UCC's position which is focused on resisting integration. Hence, in contrast to both the policy of Canadian government and the position of the UCC, the thesis undertook to find an alternative position that could take into account all Ukrainian-Canadians – regardless of their degree of integration – that is consonant with the invaluable ethos of multiculturalism in Canada. In this regard, the thesis proposed that the UCC pursue a policy of 'mainstreaming Ukrainianness.' What was identified as important for a policy of mainstreaming is the notion that the Ukrainian-Canadian stories continue to resonate within the broader Canadian context. Thus, 'Ukrainianness' could be accessible to all Canadians in the long-term as an important element of 'Canadianness', regardless of the number of Ukrainian immigrants who continue to arrive, or the number of Canadians who speak Ukrainian. In making this argument, the thesis has tried to open the possibility of undoing the dichotomous discourse of 'Canadianness' and 'otherness' or 'us' and 'them'.

### **6.1 Multiculturalism as a Locus for Inclusive Citizenship**

It is important to note that, in making the argument for the 'mainstreaming of difference', there are several assumptions that both underpin and drive the thesis. For example, in engaging the question of belonging in a pluralistic national community, the thesis leans upon several assumptions and most notably two.

The first notable assumption in the thesis is that in a political order characterized by pluralism, and where the tendency is for the concerns of the dominant group to override those of minorities, an individual's own sense of belonging as well as his or her acceptance by others is an essential element of citizenship. Others, including University of Leeds Professor John Schwarzmantel appear to confirm this assumption when he posits that, "the chief problem of liberal-democracy in the present epoch is that of developing citizenship in order to create a greater sense of identification between individuals and the democratic state of which they are members."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, law professor Marc Cousineau writes:

It is impossible to contemplate a citizen's willing participation in a collective project of the state unless that citizen feels that he or she belongs to the collectivity. Furthermore, without that sense of belonging, the citizen is likely to feel alienation and hatred toward the state, and his or her actions will reflect this antipathy toward the collectivity. In other words, it is in society's interest to include all of its citizens in its activities.<sup>2</sup>

The second notable assumption is that "achievement of a uniform membership ideal is impossible, even assuming that it were desirable."<sup>3</sup> As such, the thesis takes for granted law professor William Kaplan's assertion that traditional notions of citizenship, "presupposing as they do shared values and goals, never accurately reflected Canadian reality."<sup>4</sup> It is through the lenses provided by the assumptions identified above the thesis considered the current and future state of multiculturalism in Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> John Schwarzmantel, Citizenship and Identity: Towards a New Republic (New York: Routledge, 2003), 34.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Cousineau, "Belonging: An Essential Element of Citizenship – A Franco-Ontarian Perspective," Belonging: The Future and Meaning of Canadian Citizenship, ed. William Kaplan (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>4</sup> William Kaplan, "Introduction," in Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship, ed. William Kaplan (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 22.

Multiculturalism, designed to encourage unity in light of such pluralism, therefore has become more often than not the locus of the discourse on national identity and, consequently, shapes the parameters of what it means to belong in Canada. Working on the premise that “the promise of being valued and allowed to develop fully as an individual without having to abandon a significant element of one’s identity is a powerful incentive to work for the preservation and amelioration of the society,” multicultural accommodation has enjoyed a fairly widespread popularity in a country where many citizens currently experience, or whose parents or grandparents experienced, exclusion and marginalization because of difference.<sup>5</sup>

In many ways, it is the notion of the hyphen that encapsulates multiculturalism in Canada. Absent a uniform national culture, the hyphen allows individuals to, at once, assert their difference as well as their Canadianness; hence, for example, Ukrainian-Canadians can draw on both their Ukrainianness as well as their Canadianness when asserting their identity. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the role the hyphen may have played in securing an individual’s sense of belonging to the national community, the thesis has taken issue with such a discourse. In this, the hyphen – appealing to a national ‘other’ and a national ‘here’ – is seen as a concept far too broad to effectively address the multiplicity and diversity characteristic of this country. As such, the hyphen is increasingly bereft of meaning for Canadians who neither identify as one of the ‘real’ Canadians nor wish to identify with a minority culture that emphasizes or privileges heritage and preservation over contemporary Canadian life.

In having argued this, the thesis does, in principle, acknowledge Canadian author Neil Bissoondath’s argument that official multiculturalism has had the tendency to

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<sup>5</sup> Cousineau, “Belonging: A Franco-Ontarian Perspective,” 151.



simplify and debase culture by reducing it to easily digested stereotypes.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, from there, the thesis moves away from critics like Bissoondath, who argue that multiculturalism should be done away with altogether. In contrast, the thesis has suggested that the theory informing multiculturalism is sound, and rather, that it is the way in which the policy has been recast and implemented that has led to the increasingly antiquated discourse on multiculturalism and national identity.

## **6.2 Reconstructing National Identity in “all its hyphenation, its ambivalence, its confrontation, and its restless exploration”<sup>7</sup>**

A discourse that centres on the overly simplified bifurcation of ‘Canadianness and otherness,’ epitomized in the hyphen, fails to account for an increasingly heterogeneous mainstream where identity is often the result of choice. As such, both the Canadian government and UCC should avoid constructing a situation where individuals are asked to choose between their group identity as biologically and culturally connected members of that group and their participation in Canadian society as individuals regardless of their biological or cultural connections to any particular ethno-cultural group or, as is increasingly the case due to the proliferation of multiple identities produced by intermarriage across the cultural divides, ethno-cultural groups .

Consistent with Driedger’s assessment of modern pluralistic liberal democracies, the thesis has argued that “...industrial changes to both societal structures and values

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<sup>6</sup> Neil Bissoondath, “A Question of Belonging: Multiculturalism and Citizenship,” in Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship, ed. William Kaplan (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 373-375.

<sup>7</sup> Myrna Kostash, All of Baba’s Great Grandchildren: Ethnic Identity in the Next Canada (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2000), 8.

tend to create a free-for-all where new needs for *gemeinschaft* are created.”<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it is the public sphere – the mainstream – that multicultural policy must address. Given that social change is an unavoidable consequence of industrial change it is clear that a strategy which emphasizes discarded ‘modes of being,’ not unlike the one pursued by the UCC, will increasingly lose relevance.

Instead of presenting individuals with an unrealistic choice, the thesis has postulated that both the Canadian government and the UCC should construct policy reflective of the constituents they purport to represent – individuals and groups who make choices that are both the product of individual desires and group socialization. As such, policy should be fluid, reflecting the fluidity of groups over long periods of time as well as individuals’ changing desires over a lifetime. And yet, though policy should avoid any fixed conceptions of identity, the thesis has argued that there should still be a place for the long-term official recognition of differences, in order to ensure all Canadians have a sense of belonging regardless of their ethno-cultural origin, their objective and subjective identity, or their degree or formal or informal affiliation or non-affiliation with any ethnocultural association(s) who directly or indirectly claim to represent them and to be advancing their interests.

### **6.3 Where Might the UCC Go From Here?**

With respect to the UCC, the argument is that the organization ought to formulate policy reflective of the commonalities true of *all* Ukrainian-Canadians. In this regard, what is true of all Ukrainian Canadians – regardless of how many generations

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<sup>8</sup> Leo Driedger, *Race and Ethnicity: Finding Identities and Equalities* (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 2003), 33.

their families have been in Canada, whether or not their parentage is mixed, or whether or not they can speak Ukrainian fluently – is their common point of departure as well as common point of arrival. That is to say that every Ukrainian-Canadian is defined and shaped by their interaction with the Canadian state and polity as well as all the people (i.e., groups and individuals) which it governs and serves.

In the opinion of at least one Ukrainian-Canadian, the implication of the opening up of Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union was clear: “...emotional and intellectual resources not invested in Ukraine are freed up for Canada.”<sup>9</sup> Such an opportunity should not be missed. As Kostash warns, “...until Ukrainian experience and articulation circulate in Canadian society, along with other narratives of displacement and discrimination, then even these twenty-first century Ukrainian-Canadians are still relegated to the margins of Canadian concern where their stories are confined in private memory and important only to them.”<sup>10</sup>

Since arriving in Canada, every Ukrainian has had the common experience of trying to find their place in their new home, where every interaction with the new country has involved something new, something different than what would have been experienced in Ukraine. The experience is uniquely Ukrainian-Canadian because it is entirely situated within the Canadian experience. This is true of all Ukrainian-Canadians no matter how much they resemble families and ancestors left in the Ukraine. This might be more in line with what it means to be Ukrainian-Canadian because, “in all its hyphenation, its ambivalence, its confrontation, and its restless exploration of the

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<sup>9</sup> Kostash, All of Baba's Great Grandchildren, 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

possibility of belonging to a place they themselves are in the process of redefining”<sup>11</sup> it is their conception of their lived reality in this country at this particular juncture in history.

Policy that draws on a false dichotomy between the group and the individual denies commonalities in favour of something leading to division and alienation. If policy is generated with a static conception of what it is to be Ukrainian-Canadian based entirely on previously defined notions of what it means to be Ukrainian in Ukraine, there is the risk of problematical divisions caused because some individuals identifying themselves as Ukrainian-Canadian will be more highly regarded than others. In such a case, the relative cultural distance from the true “Ukrainian” defines how much anyone can truly be called or call themselves “Ukrainian-Canadian.” This logic is divisive and negative in that it focuses on difference rather than similarity. In this case, it is not hard to imagine UCC meetings where the use of English is jeered, or where Ukrainian-Canadians of protestant faith are thought to be less Ukrainian-Canadian than Orthodox Ukrainians.<sup>12</sup>

Will the Ukrainian-Canadians who are reproached for not understanding Ukrainian attend another meeting, or have a false dichotomous notion of identity forced upon them find a new way to identify? Clearly, basing identity on a static notion not common to all Ukrainian-Canadians (the experience of actually having lived in Ukraine) can never be as inclusive as a more fluid notion of identity that recognizes that the common experience of all Ukrainian-Canadians is their *Canadian* experience.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>12</sup> Interviewed by Myrna Kostash, one Ukrainian Canadian’s experience with Ukrainian-Canadian community meetings are particularly telling in this regard. Writes Kostash, “*The (annual) meeting was conducted almost entirely in Ukrainian. One woman stood up and sneered (at an English-speaking speaker), ‘I didn’t understand a word you said. Speak Ukrainian.’*” See Kostash, All of Baba’s Great Grandchildren, 28.

Some of the concerns articulated by the UCC in its position on the federal government's multiculturalism policy and programming include under-representation of the community's issues, names and stories in the mainstream media, and inadequate representation of Ukrainian Canadians in government and other institutions.<sup>13</sup> For these concerns, at least, Li's analysis of how art is supported by the Canadian government points to the direction to how they might be resolved. Here the pertinent questions are the ones that address the needs and aspirations of Canadian-Ukrainians living in the mainstream. There are at least two such questions on which Ukrainian-Canadian citizens along with federal and even provincial and municipal governments alike must focus upon today and in the future. The first question is: How might the Canadian experience be more reflective of the Ukrainian-Canadian experience? The second question is: How should future federal, provincial and municipal policies and programs be framed to ensure that there is a greater degree of consonance between them and the lived experience of Ukrainian-Canadians, as well as members of other ethno-cultural groups, as they evolve socio-culturally and politically over time?

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<sup>13</sup> See the UCC Multiculturalism Committee, Canadian Multiculturalism. Online. UCC homepage. <[http://www.ucc.ca/Section\\_5/PDF/Canadian\\_Multiculturalism.pdf](http://www.ucc.ca/Section_5/PDF/Canadian_Multiculturalism.pdf)>. (Retrieved 15 Nov. 2005).

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## **Appendix 1: UCC Multiculturalism Committee Position Paper, Section 1-5.**

**Canadian Multiculturalism:  
The Law, the Reality and our Place  
a UCC Multiculturalism Committee Position Paper  
approved at the UCC Board meeting on November 8, 2003 in Winnipeg**

*"This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."*

*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

*"...the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians...as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada."*

*Canadian Multiculturalism Act*

### **1. Introduction**

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) established a Multiculturalism Committee to fundamentally assess the place of Canadians with Ukrainian roots within Canada's multicultural society. The Committee's goal was to advance on three fronts. It planned to hold a conference; to enhance the reflection of the Ukrainian Canadian community in the media; and, above all, to define what is needed, in policy terms, to foster a continuing and vital participation in Canada, while maintaining a vibrant bond with the Ukrainian heritage and language. Several discussions led the Committee to conclude that it must focus, primarily, on policy matters: this was clearly the area of greatest concern. This Paper is the output of these deliberations.

The Ukrainian Canadian contribution to Canada now spans more than a century. As we move confidently into the 2000s, members of our community are proudly among Canada's outstanding leaders. However, our presence brings new challenges and new responsibilities. We face these with the confidence that comes with the maturity of being an essential and indigenous part of Canada's multicultural fabric. Now, we need to address the future.

### **2. The Vision**

Our vision for Ukrainian Canadians, and other diverse groups, in a Multicultural Canada of today and tomorrow is:

- To lead in valuing and exercising our group rights and responsibilities to exist as a diverse and indigenous Ukrainian Canadian community;

- To ensure, at all levels of government, that public policies on Multiculturalism are responsive to the law;
- To partner with governments to build upon our experience and enhance a Canadian multicultural environment that treats all Canadian communities equally; and
- To continue treasuring and celebrating our culture and language by promoting and enhancing it in a uniquely Canadian way.

### **3. Issues and needs of the Ukrainian Canadian, and other communities, in Canada**

Concerns have been expressed in the Ukrainian Canadian community and other communities like ours which, briefly, include:

- the attrition of a distinctive culture;
- the under-representation of our issues, names and stories in the mainstream media;
- the loss of the mother language;
- the inadequate presence in government and other institutions, given the length of time, the numbers, and the importance of the contribution of Ukrainian Canadians in Canada; and
- the lack of adequate financial support, by all levels of government, to ensure the sustainability of Canada's Multicultural reality.

### **4. Canadian Multiculturalism Act**

These issues have been raised before, and to address many of them Canada passed the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1986. The Multiculturalism Committee examined the Act and it found that there are three important parts of the Act that address our needs:

- The Preamble to the Act says that: "Whereas the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada...";
- Section 3(1)(d) states: "...recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development";

- Section 3(1)(i) reads: “...preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada”  
(*Canadian Multiculturalism Act, R.S., 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.)*).

As can be seen from the examination of these Sections that the law empowers us to deal with our concerns; there is no need for UCC to seek changes to the legislation in order to do so. However, in the Committee’s view, the Multiculturalism Program within the Department of Canadian Heritage needs to reflect better the letter and spirit of the law.

An overview of the current Multiculturalism Program makes this point. At the present time the Program is administered according to a sumptuary policy that restricts funding in the form of grants and contributions to projects that meet certain criteria. The Multiculturalism Program requires individuals or groups seeking funding for their projects to meet at least one of four “program objectives.” To be considered for funding, the applications must deal with:

- (1) Ethno-racial Minorities Participate in Public Decision –Making;
- (2) Communities and the Broad Public Engage in Informed Dialogue and Sustained Action to Combat Racism;
- (3) Public Institutions Eliminate Systemic Barriers; and
- (4) Federal Policies, Programs and Services Respond to Ethno-racial Diversity.

Thus funding assistance is given to undertakings that address at least one of the four program objectives. It is critical to note that NONE of the four program objectives clearly and explicitly supports the Preamble or Sections 3(1)(d) and (i) of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* which are there to support needs of Canadian communities such as ours. To repeat: none of that stated **program** objectives deal with our community’s needs. This explains, in part, why the Ukrainian Canadian community and others like us have been on the sidelines of Canada’s Multiculturalism for some time now.

The time, therefore, has come to call for a more complete implementation of the Act in order to deal with the ongoing needs and issues of Canadian communities, such as ours, which, perhaps inadvertently, have been excluded from the full participation in Canada’s diversity and make them fuller participants in Canada’s equal society.

On a priority basis, the UCC must insist that the government respect the Act more fully in the areas that are crucial to the Ukrainian Canadian, and other indigenous communities. Policies and programs within Heritage Canada must reflect and support the three areas of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* which sets out to preserve, enhance and develop the multicultural character of Canada

***Priority Recommendation: That the UCC***

- *Bring to the attention of the government the discrepancy between the Canadian Multiculturalism Act and the Department of Canadian Heritage programs and seek to ensure that they reflect the letter and spirit of the law;*
- *Target the "program objectives" of the Multiculturalism Program and seek to have them changed to include the objectives of the Act:*
  - *preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians as stated in the Preamble;*
  - *preserving and enhancing the use of languages, other than English and French as per Section 3(1)(i) of the Act; and*
  - *enhancing the development of communities whose members share a common origin and historic contribution to Canada, as per Section 3(1)(d) of the Act.*

## **5. Specific Public Policy issues and recommendations**

In Item 3 of this paper the UCC Multiculturalism Committee listed several concerns of our community; not all of them will be dealt with at this time. The Committee selected three areas of greatest concern:

- There is not enough value placed on the development of languages other than English and French in Canada;
- In terms of cultural enhancement Ukrainian Canadian "faces", stories and points of view are not present in the media, in the arts and in government structures;
- There are inadequate financial resources committed by the government to deal with these concerns and to assist in sustaining a viable community infrastructure.

It has been many years since the UCC made a strong intervention with the government on Multicultural policy issues. It needs to do so now. The issues raised above won't go away. If not addressed, they will continue to spawn dissatisfaction among members of the community with the UCC for its lack of action in dealing with them. More importantly, they will continue to reduce our numbers to an ever smaller circle of dedicated, but less influential individuals while the contributions and impact of our entire community will lack the distinction afforded the majority and, more recently the Native Canadian and visible minorities. It is imperative that UCC make progress on all three issues now.

To remedy these lacunae the UCC, with other like-minded groups, must focus on seeking policy changes to:

- the special group needs of Ukrainian Canadians and other groups with unique requirements of language;
- government's support for cultural promotion and enhancement including public broadcasting, the arts, museums, media;

- financial support from the government for group needs, including sustainable funding.

It is the Committee's view that considerable progress is possible in these areas as they are highly visible in the Multicultural legislation.

### **5.1 Language: Building on success**

For over 100 years the Ukrainian Canadian community has voluntarily worked and paid for the teaching of Ukrainian language and culture to Canadian children and youth. This was, and is, motivated by the desire to maintain the cultural heritage of children born to Ukrainian speaking parents, and by the wish to share this identity with the general public: the community can contribute to the public good of Canada and be recognized for making this contribution.

As seen earlier, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, Section 3(1)(i) provides **for the promotion, enhancement and use of languages other than English and French**. To have this "abstract" right to diverse language translated into concrete support for this program much will be required as the situation, currently, is not a happy one. The needs are considerable and include, to name just a few the support for effective programs as teacher training; school books and teaching materials; expert academic advice.

Today, we cannot access granting programs that might enable us to explore and improve these issues: No funds in the Multicultural Program are directed to the enhancement and use of other languages. Even attempts at application for funding are discouraged by the delineation of the four departmental objectives, none of which support the delivery of this section on the Act. As a result, the lip service paid to diversity, and the intentions stated in the Act are at odds with the real treatment of the non-official language education which for the Ukrainian Canadian community, and other linguistic communities of Canada, is a key aspect of multiculturalism. This must change.

We need to have regular conferences that bring together the teachers and stimulate them; we need support at the level of developing language-teaching methodology and materials; we need to develop exchanges with Ukraine in order to bring in talented individuals to enrich the curriculum. A small step, however, has already been taken. The UCC Multiculturalism Committee has obtained agreement from the Learned Society of Canada to include language issues as part of its Conference, Winnipeg, May 2004. But more, much more is needed in the near and medium term to ensure that the Canadian law upholding our linguistic rights is being upheld.

### **Recommendations: That**

- *UCC press the federal government to re-institute its strategic plan for the legal recognition and development of the languages of indigenous Canadian communities;*

- *UCC Provincial Councils negotiate with Provincial departments of education an improved financial support package for Ukrainian language learning to be used as a model for other languages;*
- *UCC organize a national conference on ways to improve Ukrainian language learning in Canada;*
- *UCC persuade the federal government to put into effect the creation of the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute; and*
- *UCC support research projects documenting the current state of Ukrainian language instruction in the community and public systems.*

### **5.2 Culture: Government's bold Strategic Plan on Diversity and Culture needs clarification**

Significant progress has been made recently by the Departments of Heritage and Multiculturalism as a result of the May Roundtable on Diversity and Culture. This event led to The Strategic Plan on Diversity and Culture released by the Ministers of Heritage and Multiculturalism on June 27, 2003, Canada's first Multiculturalism Day. It goes a considerable distance in addressing some of the issues raised here. The UCC Multiculturalism Committee members participated in both events and, in the main, endorse it. However, there are some elements of the Strategic Plan that require immediate clarification in order to ensure benefits to our community.

The Plan states that a stronger Canada is a country that is inclusive of all parts of Canadian society. Then, it sets out six themes that will lead to the implementation of this vision. Two of the themes are of particular importance to UCC.

#### **Theme 1: Representation**

This theme of the Strategic Plan is designed “...to ensure that the composition of the Canadian Heritage Portfolio, including commissions, boards, juries, and workforce is representative of the diversity of Canada.” It undertakes to work through “...employment equity and other diversity plans” to ensure that, indeed, diversity is reflected in the Department's programs and funding.

It appears that here there are fine opportunities here for members in the Ukrainian Canadian cultural sector. However, it is very important to seek clarification from the government regarding the terminology used—“*employment equity and other diversity plans*” and be assured that there is no hidden discrimination against the Ukrainian Canadian community and others like us in accessing representation.

It is also very important to bring these opportunities to the attention of our communities. Indeed, UCC can show leadership by offering to assist Heritage Canada in partnering with the government in the dissemination of the information about this fine initiative.

***Recommendation: That UCC***



- *obtain clarification and assurance that all members of our community will be considered in the new appointment process based on the current wording of the program;*
- *contract a person to provide updates on a regular basis-- bi-annually-- on the status of vacancies to government appointments; and*
- *bring vacancies to the attention of our community and others.*

## **Theme 2: Capacity building**

The Strategic Plan contains a strategy to ensure “...that all organizations and individuals can better access programs and services of the Canadian Heritage Portfolio” ...by making the playing field level for all. The list of how this is to be done includes determining levels of current capacity building; working with cultural umbrella groups; providing training; reaching and offering opportunities to artists; developing audiences. The big “catch” to this fine approach is a clear statement to the effect that the Department will focus on “*new and emerging communities.*” This begs the question: what attention and, hence, funding will be available to communities such as ours to participate fully in the cultural life of Canada?

### ***Recommendation: That UCC***

- *obtain clarification on the meaning and intent of “new and emerging communities” to ensure that communities such as the Ukrainian Canadian and others are provided with appropriate support ”to preserve and enhance their multicultural heritage” as envisaged by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act;*
- *seek, if need be, equal treatment of all diverse groups in regards to all the Departments’ and governments’ policies and programs to ensure that there are no discriminatory practices of exclusion; and*
- *ascertain clearly what funding sources the Ukrainian Canadian community, and others should access for capacity building.*

## **6. Funding: Sustaining the Ukrainian Canadian Community**

There is no question that to do some of the work cut out for the Ukrainian Canadian and other communities funding will be required to develop, preserve and enhance them; but we need to make a case for funding to do all these things as they are in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and carry an obligation for the government. However, sustainable funding for umbrella organizations such as UCC is required even to begin tackling these issues: UCC, and others, need money to intervene before governments, study, confer, train, develop, and ultimately obtain successes for diverse groups in Canada.

At the present time Multiculturalism’s funding program to groups is specific in its exclusions. There is no funding provided, among others, for "regular annual general,

executive or board meetings of an organization or association; festivals, camps, religious activities, celebrations of foreign national days; certain budget items: salaries and honoraria for principal officers of an applying organization; capital costs or expenditures.

But there is hope: It appears that there is a shift in the thinking in Multiculturalism with regards to sustainability of umbrella organizations is taking place. This is reflected in The Strategic Plan under the theme on Capacity Building. Furthermore the Canadian Ethnocultural Council has been promised, publicly, some additional sustainable funding. This might make it easier for other umbrella organizations, like UCC, to seek sustaining funds for their operations. Regardless of current government funding practices vis-à-vis sustainability, and they might have changed recently, the “new wind” blowing in the direction of sustainable funding and more importantly the government’s obligation under the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* to enhance the development of "...communities whose members share a common origin" should move the UCC to go after sustainable funding from the government at this time once again.

***Recommendation: That UCC***

- *seek to remove the current restrictions on sustainable funding which make critical parts of the Act, specifically Section 3(1)(d) (enhance the development of a community whose members share a common origin) effectively inoperative; and*
- *make a case for sustainable funding for UCC, and others, to the government.*

**7. Other recent government announcements**

At the launch of Multiculturalism Day Minister Sheila Copps made two additional welcomed announcements. She promised financial assistance to some 250 new periodicals and newspapers, *including* ethnocultural ones, under the Publications Assistance Program and Canada Magazine Fund for a total of \$4 million. The Minister also announced the Spark Initiative to enhance opportunities in the audio-visual industry via a partnership approach between the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, Canada Council of the Arts and the Department. This initiative will make \$3.6 million available over the next three years to culturally diverse filmmakers and producers.

And finally, earlier this year the Department allocated \$3 million dollars, over the next three years, to “The Multiculturalism Issues in Canadian Society Strategic Grants Program”. It will be administered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The areas of priority for research in 2003 are given as cross-cultural understanding.

All of these announcements are of considerable importance to our community. Here is an opportunity for our newspapers and magazines to benefit financially; for the audio-visual sector to participate more fully in the mainstream media: The former marries well

with the announcement of the Kobzar Prize by the Taras Shevchenko Foundation which aims to award a top Canadian prize for literature dealing with a Ukrainian theme. The research and studies in multiculturalism offers many opportunities- research into our community; financial remuneration; influence on the way multiculturalism in Canada will evolve.

***Recommendation: That UCC***

- *obtain further information regarding the specifics of the three programs;*
- *advise members of the community how to avail themselves of this opportunity; and*
- *initiate or urge other appropriate institutions to undertake multicultural research, for instance on non-official language needs.*

## **8. Conclusions**

In this paper the UCC Multiculturalism Committee has examined Canada's law as it pertains to Multiculturalism; today's reality - the practices of Multiculturalism; and, has made recommendations to the UCC Board on what actions to take for the benefit the Ukrainian Canadian community, and others, in the context of Multiculturalism that will allow us to take our deserved place in Canada in the beginning of the 21st century. The vision also calls for a union of interests with other like-minded groups in seeking change and in reaping potential benefits.

In examining the legislation governing Multiculturalism in Canada and the Department's programs, the Committee found some gaps: there is some distance for the government to go in meeting the spirit and the letter of the law enshrined in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* specifically in the areas of language, culture and in group development. This offers the UCC an opportunity to take a lead role, both for the Ukrainian Canadian community and for other groups with distinct language and culture needs. The non-official language issue in Canada is serious. The Committee stresses that there still remains a need for deliberation within our and other linguistic communities on how to address it. To deal with the matter in part, the Committee has organized a further examination of the issues at an upcoming conference. Additionally, the Committee has put forward recommendations for UCC Board's consideration which build on our success in heritage language education in the provincial experience.

Recently, the government has moved forward in addressing diversity and culture. The Committee applauds these initiatives of Heritage Canada and calls upon the UCC to actively disseminate this good news in order to allow timely benefits to our members. However, it notes that immediate clarification of terms is required to ensure an equal playing field for all. The issue of operational or sustaining funding to umbrella organizations is an issue whose time has come and this matter is dealt with in the recommendations.

Also, on the matter of funding, the Committee notes the various new initiatives that the government has come forward with and it urges UCC to take a lead in their

dissemination. It further urges UCC to once again seek sustainable funding within the Multicultural Program basing its case on the provisions of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* “... to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.”

It is our view that Canada’s diversity is a fundamental right of each member of our community and to the diverse communities of Canada; that it is also a main tenet of UCC’s *raison d’être*. It is imperative for UCC to act in the interest of the community that it represents to ensure that it is accorded all the benefits of an inclusive, yet diverse, Canadian society. The time to act is now.

**MOTION: The UCC Multiculturalism Committee Chair puts forward a motion that the UCC Board accept the Position Paper on Multiculturalism and mandates the UCC Multiculturalism Committee to do the necessary groundwork to enable the UCC to act on the recommendations. MOTION PASSED**

with thanks to the participating members of the UCC Multiculturalism Committee  
Oksana Bashuk Hepburn, Chair  
Orest Cap  
Roman Petryshyn  
Gregory Smolynech  
Myroslav Shkandrij  
Evhan Uzwyshyn

## **Appendix II: The Multiculturalism Program Objectives**

The Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage is one important means by which the government pursues the goals of the multiculturalism policy.

This program focuses on initiatives to achieve the following Program objectives:

### **1. Ethno-racial Minorities Participate in Public Decision-Making**

Assist in the development of strategies that facilitate full and active participation of ethnic, religious, and cultural communities in Canadian society.

### **2. Communities and the Broad Public Engage in Informed Dialogue and Sustained Action to Combat Racism**

Increase public awareness, understanding and informed public dialogue about multiculturalism, racism and cultural diversity in Canada.

Facilitate collective community initiatives and responses to ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural conflict and hate-motivated activities.

### **3. Public Institutions Eliminate Systemic Barriers**

Improve the ability of public institutions to respond to ethnic, religious and cultural diversity by assisting in the identification and removal of barriers to equitable access and by supporting the involvement of these communities in public decision-making processes.

### **4. Federal Policies, Programs and Services Respond to Ethno-racial Diversity**

Encourage and assist in the development of inclusive policies, programs, and practices within federal departments and agencies so that they may meet their obligations under the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*

### **Appendix III: UCC Resolution on Immigration, 2004**

6. WHEREAS since the early 1950s, immigration of Ukrainians to Canada was almost nonexistent because of the Iron Curtain, and

WHEREAS, now, with the independence of Ukraine and the freedom of movement that this allows, the Ukrainian Canadian community would naturally like to see an increase in the number of Ukrainian immigrants being admitted to Canada, and

WHEREAS increased immigration not only serves to reunite families and communities which were artificially separated by years of Soviet dictatorship, but also brings great benefit to Canadian society as a whole,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this XXI Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians hereby calls upon the Government of Canada:

- a) To provide the necessary resources to alleviate the administrative bottlenecks at the Citizenship and Immigration Canada post in Kyiv so that the applications presently in the system -- along with new ones -- could be dealt with in a timely and efficient manner,
  - b) To provide increased support to Ukrainian Canadian community settlement and integration organizations, and
  - c) To meet with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to develop an effective and reasonable program that would dramatically increase the number of immigrants from Ukraine.
7. WHEREAS the Ukrainian Canadian Congress identifies immigration from Ukraine as an important community priority, and

WHEREAS to date Ukrainian Canadian Congress positions on immigration from Ukraine do not address temporary immigration of Ukrainians for short-term employment,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ukrainian Canadian Congress develop policy on this issue.

8. The XXI Congress of Ukrainian Canadians directs the National Office of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to create and maintain a data base on the

UCC Web site that would provide a national listing and the activities of organizations and projects directed towards assisting new immigrants.

9. The XXI Congress of Ukrainian Canadians directs the National Office of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to develop a general concept position concerning the involvement of new immigrants in active participation in the Ukrainian community.

#### **Appendix IV: UCC Resolution on Canada / Ukraine Relations, 2004**

1. The XXI Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians directs the Board of Directors of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) to undertake to strengthen Canada Ukraine relations, taking into consideration the cooperation of the Ukrainian community in Canada with the Government of Canada, the Government of Ukraine and international non-governmental organizations.
2. The XXI Triennial Congress of Ukrainian Canadians directs the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to develop an action plan related to strengthening ties of the Ukrainian community in Canada with non-governmental organizations in Ukraine, to include UCC Branches, Provincial Councils and member organizations in this plan, and to implement successfully the international observers project during the next elections in Ukraine.

3. WHEREAS Canada has been at the forefront in recognizing sovereign Ukraine and aiding it in its economic and social development, and

WHEREAS the Canadian experience as a pluralist democracy is extremely valuable to the emerging democratic and orderly Ukrainian society, and

WHEREAS a democratic and orderly Ukrainian society is essential to world peace, and

WHEREAS for over half a century Radio Canada International has provided objective news and promoted Canadian values in Ukraine in the Ukrainian language, and

WHEREAS such a service shall continue to be a necessary contribution to the nation and people of Ukraine for many years to come,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ukrainian Canadian Congress make it clear to the Government of Canada, as well as to all parties concerned, that the service provided by the Ukrainian Section of Radio Canada International continues to be a priority, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the proposed cuts to the Ukrainian Section of Radio Canada International be reconsidered and that this section be accorded the government support it requires for its continued growth and development.