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## **Multiculturalism and crisis of identity: the experience of the USA and Canada**

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**Abstract.** *The article provides an overview of international experiences, namely the practices of the United States of America and Canada in which «multiculturalism» acts as a state policy in defining national identity in the area of cultural policy, in the contemporary world the problem of overcoming the crisis of the national identity for any state is one of the most essential topics. The paper also shows that Canada and the United States of America are some of the few countries in the world that use the model of multiculturalism as an integration policy, have a multi-ethnic population, and receive hundreds of thousands of temporary or permanent immigrants every year. The policy of multiculturalism, as one of the models of integration policy, is used in these states as one of the ways to achieve this goal.*

*The purpose of the authors is to analyze the policies and actions of these foreign countries and to show that the calling of a multicultural policy is considered to be the consolidation of a fragmented society by ethno-cultural characteristics, through the comprehensive support of cultural diversity.*

**Keywords:** *cultural policy, identity crisis, conflict, multiculturalism, globalization, politics, legislation system, peaceful coexistence, multi-ethnic population, migrant.*

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### **Introduction**

The diversity of cultures is the real state of the modern society in which there are different social classes, people of different levels of education, different ethnic, religious and age groups. Conditions of multiculturalism and globalization have created the problems of identity and interest in its consideration. Globalization, on the one hand, opens the borders of states and creates a single world cultural space, on the other, an increase in migration volumes cause a crisis of national identity at the state level. This current interest in the problems of multiculturalism and cultural identity is due to that cultural differences in societies organized into national

states do not disappear and have a clear tendency to increase.

The policy of multiculturalism, emerged as one of the concepts that could ensure the preservation of the uniqueness and existence of the most diverse cultures. This issue is especially essential in developed countries, where there is a major number of unique ethnic groups with their own foundations and customs. Even though the policy of multiculturalism is debatable, because it contains many controversial points, which can lead to a real crisis of relations between different cultural groups.

The concept of multiculturalism is based on the principle of recognizing the correctness and value of cultural pluralism, and for this

reason, all modern states are obliged to provide equal rights and services for representatives of ethnic groups. The difference between cultures should be regarded not as secondary but as an object of close attention and study.

According to G. Therborn, Professor of Sociology at the University of Cambridge, one of the most cited contemporary sociologists, the concept of «multiculturalism» is usually used in three contexts: political, empirical, and social-political. As the researcher of the problem of multiculturalism notes, the first one in a political context, within the framework of which arguments “for” or “against” the policy of multiculturalism and the corresponding method of management are presented, and this term is used by both supporters and opponents of this policy.

The second context is empirical, descriptive or analytical. It takes place in public debate on various manifestations of cultural heterogeneity in society, and is most closely associated with the emergence of «multicultural societies.»

The third context is related to social and political philosophy, to issues of social and political order and human rights in the context of the heterogeneity of the culture of a society [1, p. 51].

New waves of immigration and identity politics have sparked an explosion of multiculturalism because the policies of many states were based on monoculturalism, achieved as a product of political integration and the principle of citizenship growing out of it. The relations among people are carried out not in a natural, but in a sociopolitical environment, and that the interaction of cultures is also a product of a certain policy.

The adoption of a multicultural integration model by the state means that it is open to migrants of other ethnicities and is responsible for creating conditions for their integration. This model of the nation is based on the fact that cultural differences within society are normal. Therefore, at the first stage of the formation of the concepts of multiculturalism, its main task was to create such legal and political conditions that would ensure the equal status of minorities and the national majority, equal chances for the preservation and development

of their cultures. For this model, achieving equality before the law remains a priority.

The theoretical basis of multiculturalism considered to be liberalism, especially its values such as freedom, equality, democracy and internationalism. Moreover, a multicultural society is a liberal society in which it is possible to defeat not only social injustice, but also injustice associated with racism. However, unlike liberalism, multiculturalism is concerned with the rights of ethnic and cultural groups, not individuals.

National identity is a product of deliberate cultural construction and is formed through the normative and social institutions of the state: in particular, the legislation system, the education system and the media [2, p. 273].

Interest in identity is associated with a change or crisis of the identity, with the growth of multiculturalism, more precisely, the spread of the policy of multiculturalism, which will be discussed in this article.

Cultural policy is one of the ways of overcoming the crisis of national identity. For this purpose, mechanisms are used to correct the negative sociocultural trends that are ripening in society, to maintain conditions for the self-realization of various groups, and the disseminate positive cultural practices [3, p. 6].

One of the main tasks of any state is to ensure the interests of all ethnic groups living on the territory by creating state democratic institutions for their coexistence together on one territory.

As we know, there are many different models for implementing the country's cultural policy in the world, All of them are characterized by their diversity and can be aimed at national consolidation, assimilation, and interethnic integration, and due to their multidimensional nature, interethnic relations are a complex phenomenon with many ways of peaceful cooperation.

The article will analyze and show the experiences of more successful states in which «multiculturalism» acts as a state policy in defining national identity: the USA and Canada. When considering the international experience in the implementation of the country's cultural policy, it is also necessary to consider the geographical, natural, and economic aspects of the countries.

**The Experience of Multiculturalism in the U.S.** It is a well-known fact that the United States is a state where representatives of various cultures, ethnicities, and languages exist. Initially, the main mechanism for the formation of the American nation was immigration. The basis of the ethnic history of the United States is the interaction of the arriving peoples with the original population, cultural assimilation, as well as the physical mixing of these people.

The United States of America, being one of the few countries in the world that uses the multiculturalism model as an integration policy, has a multi-ethnic population and receives hundreds of thousands of temporary or permanent immigrants every year.

At the beginning of the formation of the US statehood, Benjamin Franklin, who was rightfully considered the most democratic of the "founding fathers", was seriously concerned about the scale of immigration to the country from the "old world". His fears were based on the fact that the insufficiently cultured and uneducated strata of the population were arriving in the US, thereby creating the preconditions for causing disorder in society.

For the representatives of the Afro-American population, the formation of a "united nation" was extremely tragic, as there were attempts at mass extermination from the part of the "white" population. Even after the official abolition of slavery in the country, the struggle between «whites and blacks» continued for a long time to equalize the rights of both, but in fact, they were nothing more than illusory.

The formation of the US cultural policy took place in three main stages: Anglo-conformism, the principle of the "melting pot" and the principle of multiculturalism.

According to the American Sociologist M. Gordon, Anglo-conformism implies the maintenance of English culture, traditions, and language as an exemplary indicator of the American standard. This theory was created in the 17th century at the height of the migration of the first settlers from the Old World, who established their way of life as dominant.

The main requirements of the first settlers to the newly arrived immigrants were the

abandonment of their language and culture, lifestyle, the adoption of English as the main language, and the perception of their traditions.

The second stage in the formation of the ethnic model of the country is the principle of «melting pot», which means mixing and assimilation of all existing ethnic groups of the country into one, thereby fundamentally excluding all kinds of ethnic and social conflicts within society.

The term «melting pot» was introduced in 1908 by I. Zangwill, who is the author of the play «melting pot» based on American life. Israel Zangwill collaborated with the "International Territorial Association" on the resettlement of Russian Jews to the United States. Until this time, the notion of a «melting pot» did not exist, although American liberals such as Jefferson used universalist ideas in an earlier period. He believed that the pot principle works best in big cities [3, p. 8].

However, at the moment, this policy has not taken root in American society and led to the refusal by the citizens of the country in the 1960s-1970s in favor of the strategy of preserving the country's ethnocultural diversity.

According to the well-known American scientist and author, who deals with the ethnic problems of the United States, D. Hollinger, the end of the 20th century can be marked by the triumph of the doctrine of multiculturalism. According to him, the country should preserve, instead of eliminating the diversity of ethnic groups.

At this stage, two types of multiculturalism appeared: soft and radical. Proponents of the first type stated that the idea of multiculturalism should remain within the framework of one nation. Representatives of the second type argued that for a long time, America was unfair towards national minorities, the concept of a single nation should be abolished, and all funds available in the country should be invested in the development of individual ethnic characteristics.

According to some politicians, the 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the US, Bill Clinton began a policy of multiculturalism, which differed from the recognition of cultural diversity and its integration and focused on the prevalence

of diversity over unity. One of the goals of such a policy was to win the sympathy of minorities and gain their support in the elections, to separate the democratic part from the majority, which supported such a policy from the principled conviction that democracy takes place only when and where the rights of minorities are ensured. The fundamental right in this case was the right to cultural isolation.

Multiculturalism in the United States is mostly associated with the problem of nationality, not only the identity of the nation but also its survivability. Despite the presence of Spanish and other languages in the United States, the question of linguistic differences is extremely rare. Primarily in the United States, they talk about race, not linguistic differences. Multiculturalism aims to combat discrimination and racism and is used by racial minorities as a means of inclusion in the cultural and political life of the country. It must be remembered that it is possible to introduce legislation against discrimination, but it is impossible to plant love through laws. However, multiculturalism brings more benefits, as it allows society to rise to a higher level of development [4, p. 63].

The US political elite is still faced with the task of developing new mechanisms on the basis of which the migration system will work more efficiently. Migration policy in the United States is going through a kind of crisis, the existence of which became especially obvious after the 45th President, D. Trump, came to power, whose reign was associated with consistent attempts to tighten migration legislation.

**Canada's successful cultural policy.** It is well-known that the cultural policy of Canada can be called quite successful. The state takes a serious approach to solving the problems of the coexistence of different cultures.

The term «multiculturalism» itself appeared in Canada in the 1960s, as a characteristic of the state's social policy in the context of the country's ethnocultural, racial, and religious diversity. For the first time in the world in 1971, the country's multiculturalism policy was proclaimed and a document called the «Canadian Multicultural Act» was approved by the federal parliament in 1988 [5].

In addition, a number of legislative acts are also being implemented in the country, such as the act on the protection of refugees who have arrived in the country, the act on various languages, the immigration act, etc.

The concept of multiculturalism is not opposed to racial, religious, or national diversity, on the contrary, it considers them as aspects of cultural identity. Under multiculturalism, there is no substitution of national identity, so, newcomers simply take root in the society that has accepted them, thereby accepting their customs, laws, and traditions, and the government, in turn, supports the cultural differences of newcomers, even to some extent adapting the existing regulatory legal acts and standards for immigrants.

In addition, the country's cultural diversity policy enables representatives of ethnic groups to develop and preserve their cultural heritage and also provides for the creation of communities whose members are linked by common origin and nationality.

One of the main distinguishing aspects of the Canadian idea of multiculturalism is the preservation and development of cultural heritage by immigrants. However, cultural diversity can only be welcomed if immigrants comply with Canadian law. Conflicts of any nature are resolved through judicial intervention.

For immigrants moving to Canada, various law enforcement agencies in the country conduct preventive work with newcomers. A special exam in the knowledge of English and French is held, and training courses are organized for those who do not speak. An interesting fact is that the level of crime among immigrants in the country is significantly below average.

According to many experts on cultural policy, Canada can rightfully be considered one of the most stable countries in the world in terms of security. However, despite its effective policy, it cannot be called a country with ideal interethnic relations. For example, there are still problems in relations with the Indians in this country.

Currently, prerequisites are being created for possible conflicts on ethnic grounds between local Canadians and immigrants, in particular from Asian countries - Taiwan,



Korea, and China. A large flow of visitors causes a violent reaction and nervousness among the local population. At the moment, there have been no direct clashes, but experts do not deny them in the future.

Also, a striking confirmation of this is the policy of Quebec. The province itself is an example of regional culture. The result of Quebec's "struggle for identity" was the adoption of two languages as official and the development of a policy of inter-culturalism. In any case, the state is very responsible for solving problems and guarantees its citizens a single common cultural identity. This, in turn, reduces the risks of developing an identity crisis [6].

Compared to the United States of America, where the methods of the «melting pot» were widely used, Canada is not a country where there was an attempt to assimilate citizens into a single Canadian culture, despite the diversity of representatives of various nationalities, which in terms of numbers can represent fairly large societies such as Japanese, Chinese, Jewish, Ukrainian, German, Italian, etc. Thus, we can say that the crisis of national identity in Canada is resolved through a correctly chosen vector of cultural policy.

To conclude, we can say that for multicultural countries, when developing state policies in the field of cultural policy, it is also possible to adopt the Canadian experience, in any case, the country's experience would be of great help in solving many interethnic issues.

The concept of multiculturalism is based on the principle of recognizing the correctness and value of cultural pluralism, and for this reason, all modern states are obliged to provide equal rights and services for representatives of ethnic groups.

In general, the idea of multiculturalism boils down to non-conflict coexistence in one vital society of different cultural groups. It presupposes respect for different cultures, not denying universality. In other words, this is the interaction of cultures through coordination, not subordination [7, p. 22].

The founder of the theory of politics of multiculturalism and multicultural society is the Canadian philosopher Kymlicka W., who outlined the essence of his concept in the book "Multicultural Citizenship. A liberal theory of minority rights".

The essence of Kymlicka W.'s concept is that a person should not become an object of discrimination on the basis of the fact of belonging to a certain minority, as well as minorities themselves should not be discriminated against. Racial, national, gender, religious, and other affiliations, or other characteristics that are the basis for a person's classification as a minority, should not be the reason for manifestations of intolerance or unequal behavior towards a person [8, p. 36-37].

**Advantages and disadvantages of multicultural policy.** There are lots of advantages of multiculturalism policy as the modern policy it also performs the function of resolving conflicts arising on cultural grounds between different groups, which have formed mainly as a result of large-scale globalization processes. In this regard, states that receive immigrants in significant numbers and on a long-term basis face the question of the need to provide conditions for the successful integration of immigrants, which directly depends on the methods and mechanisms for the implementation of immigration policy.

Also, this type of cultural policy can be defined as a politically and legally enshrined reflection of the state of the ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious diversity of the country's population. The politics of multiculturalism can be considered as a kind of consensus, which the recipient state, recipient society, and migrants come to as new members of this society. Such a policy gives the right to be different, despite the need for each state to develop a generally accepted value system.

Many scholars tend to describe the advantages of multicultural policy as the preservation of peace, elimination of separatism, recognition of minority rights, elimination of chauvinism, and disadvantages such as destruction of the nation, political disintegration, and categorization of minorities.

From my point of view, first of all, states that support multicultural policy mostly tend to have tolerant people in their society, who try to be neutral to all the members despite their gender, race, religious or cultural differences. Secondly, people that live in such states are more educated, and mentally bright,

as they grow up knowing and accepting different traditions, customs cultures, and even languages, so they get confidence in every sphere of life. They try to respect and develop good attitudes towards minorities, or minorities towards the majority. Thirdly, this type of cultural police can positively influence the image of the state, attracting different multinational, transnational corporations, companies, and people and affecting on state's economy.

If to go on to the disadvantages of multiculturalism, I think that cultural differences may divide society into groups despite effective cultural policy. There will always exist conflicts due to the fact that one cultural group will always think that their culture, customs, traditions, and religion are superior compared to other groups. Also, it may cause assimilation between societies when they have to accept other's way of life. Last but not least, some scholars tend to consider that that the main problem of multiculturalism is an attempt to link together the coexistence of Western civilization and culture, with the culture of Eastern countries, in particular Muslims. The unstable world situation, the radicalization of Islam and Islamic fundamentalism, as well as the growing number of refugees, can be reasons for it.

Despite a number of nuances, multiculturalism is very productive in resolving conflicts and disagreements by allowing each of us to look at our country, history, and tradition through the eyes of another person, and receive a more voluminous and panoramic picture of the world, it helps us to overcome the belief in our own superiority [9, p. 17-21].

Many researchers agree that multiculturalism is a concept that was created in the context of globalization to prevent discrimination against various groups and minorities on any grounds and ensure peaceful coexistence. That is why it can be surely concluded that multiculturalism has become a certain compromise between the demand for a single national political and value identity and the demands of national minorities for cultural and linguistic autonomy within one state.

It is quite difficult to analyze multiculturalism in individual countries since in each state this concept has its own shade and depends on many factors that must be taken into account in order to get the most complete picture of how multiculturalism is carried out. Due to the facts that were mentioned in this article, it is also can be concluded that the United States of America and Canada are keeping one of the effective cultural policies.

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### Мультикультурализм және бірегейлік дағдарысы: АҚШ пен Канада тәжірибесі

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада халықаралық тәжірибеге, атап айтқанда Америка Құрама Штаттары мен Канада практикасына шолу жасалады, онда «мультикультурализм» мәдени саясат саласындағы ұлттық бірегейлікті анықтаудың мемлекеттік саясаты ретінде әрекет етеді, өйткені қазіргі әлемде кез-келген мемлекет үшін ұлттық бірегейлік дағдарысын жеңу мәселесі маңызды тақырыптардың бірі болып табылады. Мақалада сонымен қатар Канада мен Америка Құрама Штаттары әлемдегі мультикультурализм моделін интеграциялық саясат ретінде қолданатын, көпұлтты халқы бар және жыл сайын жүздеген мың уақытша немесе тұрақты иммигранттарды қабылдайтын санаулы елдердің бірі екендігі көрсетілген. Мультикультурализм саясаты интеграциялық саясаттың бір үлгісі ретінде осы мемлекеттерде осы мақсатқа жетудің бір жолы ретінде қолданылады.

Мультикультурализм саясаты әр түрлі мәдениеттердің бірегейлігі мен өмір сүруін қамтамасыз ететін тұжырымдамалардың бірі ретінде пайда болды. Бұл мәселе, әсіресе, өзіндік дәстүрлері мен әдет-ғұрыптары бар көптеген ерекше этникалық топтар бар дамыған елдерде өзекті болып табылады.

Авторлардың мақсаты – осы шет елдердің саясаты мен іс-әрекеттерін талдау және мәдени алуан түрлілікті жан-жақты қолдау арқылы этномәдени сипаттамалары бойынша фрагменттелген қоғамды топтастыру көпмәдениетті саясаттың міндеті болып саналатынын көрсету.

**Түйін сөздер:** мәдени саясат, бірегейлік дағдарысы, жанжал, мультикультурализм, жаһандану, саясат, заң шығару жүйесі, бейбіт қатар өмір сүру, көп ұлтты халық, мигрант.

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### Мультикультурализм и кризис идентичности: опыт США и Канады

**Аннотация.** В статье представлен обзор международного опыта, а именно практики Соединенных Штатов Америки и Канады, в которых «мультикультурализм» выступает в качестве государственной политики определения национальной идентичности в сфере культурной политики, так как в современном мире проблема преодоления кризиса национальной идентичности для любого государства является одной из важнейших тем. В статье также показано, что Канада и Соединенные Штаты Америки являются одними из немногих стран в мире, которые используют модель мультикультурализма в качестве интеграционной политики, имеют многонациональное население и ежегодно принимают сотни тысяч временных или постоянных иммигрантов. Политика мультикультурализма, как одна из моделей интеграционной политики, используется в этих государствах как один из путей достижения этой цели.

Политика мультикультурализма возникла как одна из концепций, способных обеспечить сохранение уникальности и существования самых разнообразных культур. Этот вопрос особенно актуален в развитых странах, где существует большое количество уникальных этнических групп со своими собственными устоями и обычаями.

Цель авторов – проанализировать политику и действия этих зарубежных стран и показать, что призыванием поликультурной политики считается консолидация фрагментированного по этнокультурным характеристикам общества через всестороннюю поддержку культурного многообразия.

**Ключевые слова:** культурная политика, кризис идентичности, конфликт, мультикультурализм, глобализация, политика, законодательная система, мирное сосуществование, многонациональное население, мигрант.

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