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Megan Alexander, International School Kufstein, 5. Klasse, Sracherwerb 9 Jahre

Why are Canadians so supportive of immigration?

Canada is known worldwide as a multicultural country with a vast range of cultural influences that create its distinct spectrum of customs and traditions. Canada is extremely influenced by its conquerors, the French and the British. Furthermore, with its large number of immigrants there are many regions in the country with diverse adaptations of the different nationalities that have come to call Canada home. Of course, not every Canadian can be nice and polite as this has to do with each individual's upbringing and personality. But the question remains: why is Canada so welcoming to others? Is being polite and nice socially expected and encouraged? Is it because it's part of their culture? Is it because of their family traditions or is it a uniquely personal phenomenon?

Firstly, Canada is known to be culturally diverse. Over centuries, Aboriginal, French, British and more recent immigrant arrivals have combined to form a unique Canadian culture. Canadian culture is also strongly influenced by its linguistic, geographic and economic neighbour, the United States of America. Since the end of the Second World War, Canadians have supported multilateralism abroad and an integrated social and economic policy at home. Canada currently consists of ten provinces and three territories and is governed as a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state. This goes back to its origins with the bilateral influences of the French and the British. This was massively supplemented during the 1980s when Canadian public policy involved inviting people from all over the world to come and settle in the country in order to

help it develop and grow, thereby creating a multicultural environment which necessitated a highly tolerant atmosphere among all Canadians, new and old. The Canadian immigration policy has been historically known for their belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political and economic affairs. A significant example of this is enshrined in the Canadian Charter of rights and freedoms which was incorporated as part of Canada's constitution in 1982. The Charter protects every Canadian's right to be treated equally under the law. ("How Are Human Rights Protected in Canada?." In Canadian Human Rights Commission. http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/how-are-human-rights-protected-canada. Access: 15th March 2015.) This tolerance and respect not only develops "nice people" but significantly enhances a strong sense of community orientation. So although they are individualistic concerning their cultural traits, they also place a lot of value on the responsibility toward their community.

Secondly, many Canadian customs and rituals developed from western European Christianity which automatically involved a wide legacy of family traditions. These predominantly focus on a widely understood set of rules surrounding personal and societal behavioural norms. Christian ethics embody a defined definition of correct and incorrect behavior. ("Religion in Canada." In: New World Encyclopedia. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Religion_in_Canada. Access: 15th March 2016.)
However, many other traditions developed from the native North Americans with a more spiritual history which focuses on a different approach to life involving omens of good and bad luck. The influence of Christianity significantly altered life for the original Aboriginal Peoples and frequently resulted in hybridized religious practises. Lastly these evolving

Canadian traditions were supplemented by the large influx of immigrants. A 2014 sociological study concluded that "Australia and Canada are the most receptive to immigration among western nations. This has led to the modern day position of a diverse, tolerant and harmonious country that has led to the society whereby a heterogeneous population which includes different faith groups coexisting together mixing their own traditions and customs which encourages a significant atmosphere of mutual respect within the broader society." ("Immigration to Canada." In: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Canada. Access: 15th March 2016.)

Finally, the typical stereotype of Canadians is one of extreme politeness. They are seen as self-depreciating with a high sense of deference to authority. The major exception is when Canadians play Ice Hockey. When playing Ice Hockey, they seem capable of violence although confined to the ice rink. The reason they seem less violent than their southern neighbour was that in the 19th century the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, aka the Mounties, were created before settlers were able to establish a violent code of honour unlike the American Wild West. (Restrepo, Pascual (2015). "Canada's History of Violence." In: The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/11/opinion/sunday/canadas-history-of-violence.html. Access: 15th March 2016.) This stereotype of the "polite Canadian", albeit clichéd does go a long way to explaining why they are so welcoming. Furthermore, the business culture in a normal Canadian environment is also a more embracing atmosphere than in the USA with a strong emphasis on punctuality, consensus and organization. And even though it is difficult to be specific about any national trait, the standard communication style seems to be one of politeness and informality. Although disagreements occur the typical way of handling this is one tact and diplomacy. ("Canadian

Manners and Etiquette." In: JJs Complete Guide to Canada. http://www.thecanadaguide.com/manners. Access: 15th March 2016.)

In conclusion, there is no one reason why Canadians are so welcoming to immigrants. The cultural background reinforced by the historical development created an environment where the individual Canadian has a natural propensity to adapt to change. From the early days the necessity for France and Britain to work together despite being implacable enemies bred an atmosphere of toleration towards others, the idea of human equality and community orientation. The fusion of old fashioned ideas of spirituality and the alignment of Christianity provided a framework where these ideas could come together with mutual respect. In such an environment it was small wonder that the typical stereotype of a "nice Canadian" was created. And therefore, it is unsurprising that they should be so supportive of immigrants. Immigration has been good for Canada in the past and therefore there is no reason why they should not consider it to be good for them in the future.

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