



# **CPRN Discussion Paper**

## **Building Citizenship: Governance and Service Provision in Canada**

*Essays by:*

Jane Jenson

Jean Harvey

Will Kymlicka

Antonia Maioni

*and*

Eric Shragge, Peter Graefe, and Jean-Marc Fontan

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*Canadian Policy Research Networks  
250 Albert Street, Suite 600  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6M1  
<http://www.cprn.org>*

**Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN)**

600 – 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1

Tel: (613) 567-7500 Fax: (613) 567-7640

Web Site: <http://www.cprn.org>

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## Foreword

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is exploring the possibility of orienting one of its programs around the intersecting themes of governance, citizenship, and service provision. Thinking within IDRC has led to the hypothesis that perhaps there are lessons to be drawn from the Canadian experience for other countries, particularly those of Sub-Saharan Africa. To pursue this line of inquiry, IDRC asked the Family Network of CPRN to organize a *process of reflection* to feed into IDRC's internal processes of deliberation on these issues.

As part of this process, four research papers were commissioned by CPRN, each of which addresses the intersection of the issues of citizenship, governance and a policy domain important to the Canadian experience. The papers examine the ways in which policy choices, as well as the institutions and practices of governance have affected the citizenship of Canadians.

In addition to the four commissioned papers, Jane Jenson, Director of the Family Network of CPRN, has written an overview paper that situates the issues of governance, citizenship, and service provision primarily with respect to Canada. Her paper also frames these issues with an awareness of the discourse taking place in Canada, in Africa, and in major international organizations such as United Nations' agencies, the World Bank, and so on.

The papers, which we are pleased to present here, will be discussed at a Roundtable organized by CPRN in Ottawa on October 1, 2001, in the presence of IDRC staff and invited experts from Canada and Africa. A day of stimulating discussion is planned to enable participants to assess the relevance of the Canadian experience for policy directions and governance choices in Africa.

This project crosses traditional boundaries of academic and policy discourse in search of new ideas for addressing questions of concern both for Canada and Africa. I would like to thank all the authors for their important contributions. I also thank IDRC for the opportunity to participate in this innovative exercise.

Judith Maxwell  
September 2001



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**Building Citizenship:  
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By

**Jane Jenson**

Director, Family Network, CPRN

Department of Political Science, Université de Montréal

Canada Research Chair for Governance and Citizenship, Université de Montréal

Director of the Université de Montréal/McGill University Institute of European Studies

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## I. Introduction

In the last decades, we have seen a resurgence of attention to *citizenship*, as fundamental questions about both its design and its content appear on the public agenda, in the North as well as the South. A number of states have established new ministries and put aside time to celebrate citizenship. The European Union has put a “citizenship clause” into its fundamental treaties, while Canadians and many others worry about the consequences of new international agreements about trade for their capacity to maintain some of the defining elements of their citizenship, such as social and health services. Thus, both states and citizens have participated in proliferating claims explicitly framed in citizenship terms. Despite this level of interest, or perhaps because of it, there is not always agreement about the meaning of this notion.

As Ronald Beiner (1995: 1) puts it, citizenship is about “what draws a body of citizens together into a coherent and stably organized political community, and keeps that allegiance durable.” Citizenship is, then, about many more things than the passport one holds – it goes far beyond nationality. Questions about the ties that bind sometimes arise because of ethnic, national or religious differences within political communities that affect social cohesion in diverse societies. These are questions about who can be called “us” and who is “them,” about who *belongs*. But citizenship is about even more than that. It is relevant for matters of distribution of economic and social well-being and security. The terms of citizenship determine in part who has access to goods, services and resources and how they are *distributed* within a community. They also affect how intergenerational and other forms of solidarity are constructed, that is, the ties that bind members of the same community so they have some measure of responsibility for each other’s well-being. As well, rules of citizenship determine who can participate, who can *decide* about matters of diversity and of distribution, about inclusion and exclusion.

Therefore, while citizenship is a useful concept, sometimes it is also a confusing one. By way of introduction and clarification, this paper begins with a definition that is employed, with slight variations, by all four research papers written for this project.

Another theme that has attracted a huge amount of attention in recent years is that of *governance*. Too often, this word is used as a synonym for “government,” which we will argue below it is not. Others use it as a way to import models and values from corporate governance to the public sector, with little reflection on the differing purposes of the two sectors. So, again, we see that there is little agreement on what governance is, and why it is important. Therefore, the paper also provides a brief overview of this concept.

Then, the paper turns to a consideration of the appropriateness of this special initiative by the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC). It looks at some of the reasons why Canada’s historic and current experience of citizenship might advance IDRC’s thinking about a “citizenship entry point” for its research agenda, and its attempt to answer the key question: To what extent does the Canadian experience – past and present – have anything to say about options for Africans?

The next section provides a brief overview of the four commissioned papers and what they have uncovered about the links among, citizenship, governance and service delivery in Canada, past and present. It concludes with an overview of lessons drawn from the Canadian experience.

The four policy areas selected are the Canadian *health care system*, service delivery via the *social economy*, policies for *sport and recreation*, and policies to *accommodate diversity*. These policy areas are all relevant for Africa. Health has long been identified as a basic need, and one that can only be provided equitably if the state is involved in some way in its provision and distribution. In Canada as well as in developing societies, the economic and long-term social and political consequences of deepening poverty and polarized income structures is of profound concern for policy-makers as well as ordinary citizens. As the public provision of services is reduced as a result of structural adjustments, and social exclusion threatens the basic values of citizenship, the social economy is often identified as source of new well-being. The health and well-being of children and youth – those categories of the population most drawn to sport and recreation – is of concern to every society, as is the issue of which activities are likely to foster learning about citizenship. Finally, Africa just as Canada, faces hard choices about whether and how to recognize and accommodate ethnic, religious, linguistic and other forms of diversity.

## II. Citizenship – A Definition

The terms of citizenship are, as we have noted above, a mechanism for establishing boundaries, for identifying who is in, who *belongs*, and who has the right to be included. They thereby distinguish those on the inside from the rest, from those who are not citizens, who are excluded, and who do not belong. In a simple but fundamental way, being a citizen means have the rights and responsibilities associated with being a member of a group, a community, or a country.

In turn, we debate about citizenship because it involves public policies and government. The state has the power to recognize the common status of citizen, and to grant the *rights and responsibilities* associated with it. Since the French Revolution first popularized the notion of *citoyen*, there has been a social content to citizenship. Being a citizen has meant having civil rights and freedoms, and equal political rights and responsibilities. But it also has meant a societal commitment to sharing. The third element of the revolutionary triplet was *fraternité*, now correctly translated as social solidarity. Therefore, there is at the heart of the notion of citizenship the idea of responsibility for one another, as well as certain basic rights to well-being because one is included in the community. Thus, current debates about citizenship should be understood in broad terms, touching on the definition of the political community and the conditions of inclusion, and social exclusion, in the community – who belongs and under what conditions.

If the terms of citizenship establish boundaries, one key distinction is who is assured *access*. Only some – those on the inside, the included – may participate in making choices. From its beginnings in Greece, and through the history of European city-states and then the national states of the last centuries, being a citizen meant engaging in the affairs of governing, *les affaires de la cité* as is said in French. Indeed, for the Greeks, political participation was an obligation of citizenship, just as voting is obligatory for some countries to this day.

Given this history, and the range of matters affected by citizenship, in this paper we will analyze three dimensions:<sup>1</sup> (1) rights and responsibilities, (2) access, and (3) feelings of belonging (that is, identity). All three dimensions must be present in order for someone to be a citizen.

Not everyone, of course, who has the same nationality has the same feelings of belonging. Nor does everyone have the same rights and responsibilities. Not all citizens can participate in political life, and some may be excluded socially and economically.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in any analysis, it is important to identify the internal borders of citizenship, as well as those that distinguish the nationals of one state from those of another.

Indeed, these internal frontiers may be even more changeable than the official borders of a country. Whole categories of the population may find their citizenship status altered by a stroke of the legislative pen. Women, for example, went from being nationals with a clearly inferior citizenship status to having full political rights and responsibilities when the right to vote and stand for office was finally extended to them in the first decades of the 20th century. Aboriginal persons were long excluded from Canadian citizenship if they refused to renounce their Aboriginal rights. Finally in 1960, their plural identities as Canadians and as members of indigenous communities and nations gained recognition. Judges' rulings also may transform the citizenship status of some from "second-class" to equal, as they have done recently in decisions about Aboriginal rights, the rights of gays and lesbians, and so on.

Given that such internal borders do exist, and that there are patterns of social exclusion which make meaningful participation impossible, many authors and agencies have stressed the concept of *full citizenship*. By this they mean having an *equal capacity to exercise* the three dimensions of citizenship. In other words, being a full citizen requires having more than theoretical rights and responsibilities. They must be substantive and therefore achievable. Being a full citizen also means being able actively to engage so as to claim one's rights, exercise one's responsibilities, and participate in political institutions. It involves being empowered. As well, having full citizenship means sharing a sense of belonging to the political community. Being a full citizen therefore requires having the resources and opportunity to participate in social and public life, as well as to receive social services and express solidarities.

Often, of course, individuals do not have *full citizenship*. This is the case for many youth, who have only a partial citizenship status, either because they are not yet old enough or because their social and economic circumstances cause them to be excluded from full citizenship (Beauvais, McKay and Seddon, 2001). It is also the case for many women, who may lack key rights and may also be treated in society, the economy and the polity as less than men's equals. But it can also be the case for many people, both women and men, who suffer from poverty and social exclusion or who live in a polity that is less than a state of law.

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1 This definition was developed previously. See Jenson and Phillips (1996) and Jenson and Papillon (2000).

2 Definitions of citizenship do, of course, vary. Some people limit it to a matter of nationality, the passport one holds. Others define it simply in terms of political and civil rights, as well as nationality. Since the path-breaking work of T.H. Marshall (1950), the social rights of citizenship and social citizenship have been included in the concept by many authors. For those who define citizenship in multi-dimensional ways, there are also differences in specific details. See, for example, the definition used by Jean Harvey in this report.

*Equality* is a key principle underpinning full citizenship, and in particular, equality of participation. If rights and responsibilities are unequally distributed among age groups, genders, or persons of different ethnic origins and social classes, then the citizenship status of some is limited. If access is unavailable to certain groups because the polity is not democratic or because structured patterns of exclusion exist, then full citizenship is not achieved.

In this set of papers, there are two types of equality of participation upon which the authors focus:

- Equality of *access to services*, which are considered to be either a right of citizenship or a foundation for fostering citizenship, and
- Equality of *access to governance* and to decisions about service design and delivery.

Given this second notion of equality, and concerns that systematic structures of inequality in governance may undermine good governance, it is important to examine this second concept.

### **III. Governance – An Exploding Concept**

The concept of governance has received increasing attention over the last decade. A key first point to note is that it is important to distinguish between governance and government, although the two are closely related – and too often used as synonyms. In this project, we have made a distinction between *government* (defined as public institutions with the legitimacy to impose collective decisions, which include representatives in the legislature as well as the executive, both elected and appointed) and *governance* (the processes of governing by public policy networks that include both public and private sector actors).<sup>3</sup>

We make this distinction because the discussions of governance, as we will see below, imply that *relationships* are considered – among states, markets, families, and communities, between states and civil societies, between states and citizens, and so on. Actors from all of these institutions are involved in the policy networks of governance. They include bureaucrats and elected officials at all levels of government, but they also include the organizations and associations of civil society and, increasingly in many places, an influential private sector.

Increasingly, these patterns of governance are causes as well as reflections of shifting terms of citizenship. Definitions of rights and responsibilities, patterns of access, and feelings of belonging are all changing as markets become more important locations for making choices and distributing well-being and life chances, for example. Similarly, citizens' rights to make claims *as citizens* are being altered by the privatization of service delivery and off-loading to the voluntary sector. For example, many Canadians are concerned that a governance model in the health care sector that expands the private part of the public-private mix will reduce their access, as citizens, to health care services. They will gain access as consumers through the market, rather than as citizens.

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3 This distinction is from Lemieux (2000).

If governance is not the same as government, the two are certainly linked. For example, the World Bank issued its report *Governance and Development* in 1992, but explicitly rejected the idea that any particular form of government was prescribed. Good governance meant the exercise of power “in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (cited in Campbell, 2000: 2). It did not address the issue of governmental institutions and administrations, nor the rights and protections available to citizens. The Bank did understand, however, that structural adjustment alone, that is, its policy prescriptions of the 1980s, “cannot put Africa on a sustained poverty-reducing path, and therefore must be complemented with institution building and good governance, which must include *public accountability of government officials, transparency in government procedures, rule of law and efficacious public sector management.*” But for the World Bank, this would also mean “shrinking of the state and engendering support for non-state actors” (Codesria-Nzomo, 2000: 3).

Subsequently, however, and in response to the varied interests of international agencies and national governments concerned with governance, matters of institutional design as well as citizenship rights did become part of the discourse around governance. Subsequently, as Bonnie Campbell has identified them, there have been two broad sets of conceptualizations of governance and development. One set conceptualizes governance as a concern with the rationalization and consolidation of public institutions, while another addresses matters related to reorganizing social order (2000: 6-7).

This second set treats governance as having consequences for a wide variety of social issues (Campbell, 2000: 7) such as:

Political instability, the marginalization of citizens from the political life of their country, the absence of formal democracy and democratic institutions, the fragmentation of civil society and accompanying crises of identity, the ethnic basis of parties in power, inequalities concerning the distribution of power from region to region, and the absence of freedom of expression.

The first set conceptualizes governance as being about meeting objectives such as public sector reform, fiscal reform, capacity building for policy development, and administrative decentralization. While this focus might be seen as quite technical and administrative, several authors also identify the potential of decentralization to bring the state closer to the citizen, to better anchor local democracy, to fight poverty and, most generally, to redefine the way the state undertakes development projects (Bijl, Bossuyt and Land, 1998: 1-2; 10).<sup>4</sup>

These distinctions and hopes for governance find an echo in the European Commission’s recent *White Paper on European Governance* (2001). The White Paper sets out principles that should guide good government and develops proposals for change. In addition to refocused institutions and global governance, the Commission identifies “better involvement and more openness” and “better policies, regulation and institutions” as key objectives.

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4 This is also the perspective adopted by, for example, a recent report on public sector reform in developing countries for CIDA (Schacter, 2000).

In this list we find almost exactly the same concerns raised by agencies and research organizations focussed on countries and regional bodies in the South.<sup>5</sup> Of course, in Canada as well, there are extensive discussions of governance in research institutes in public, private and university settings.

#### **IV. Canada and Africa – An Appropriate Pair?**

Canada has had its own significant discussions about reforming the public sector and about engaging citizens at a time when cynicism and non-participation in traditional forums is rampant.<sup>6</sup> Governance questions are on the agenda, and citizenship is becoming a frame for thinking about them.

Results of Canadian Election Studies since 1965, along with other sources of public attitudes and opinions, find a “representation gap.”<sup>7</sup> As a number of studies report (Nevitte, 2000: S88):

A clear majority of Canadians believe that governments are non-responsive to them; confidence in parliament and political parties is low, and people do not trust their elected officials. ... There are two parallel developments taking place. One concerns the changing attitudes and capacities of citizens themselves; the new political culture encourages publics to be more articulate and critical. The other concerns the perceptions that MPs and citizens have about what priorities elected representatives should have. There is a gap between their respective views of representation.

Another key finding is that, despite such cynicism about politicians and lack of trust in them, engagement still continues. Indeed, “citizen’s *levels* of political participation, broadly conceived, are rising not falling” (Nevitte, 2000: S90, emphasis in the original). If young people hold a significantly less positive evaluation of the federal government, political parties and politicians than do their elders, this is related to feelings of “voicelessness” (Nevitte, 2000: S84). Herein may lie part of the explanation for the street mobilizations that have characterized high-level international economic gatherings since Seattle.

In the face of these and similar findings, governments have sought to reform their ways of doing, to provide both “better policy and delivery” and “better involvement.” Canadian governments, individually and in concert through intergovernmental institutions, have undertaken to provide more public involvement in the policy process, to break down the “silos” so as to make service delivery more coordinated, and to decentralize service delivery.

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5 Of course, attention to governance covers more of the South than Africa. In Latin America too, moves towards free trade regions have raised significant concerns about the fit between economic restructuring and governance, particularly the role of civil society. For one overview, see Blacklock (2001).

6 For a classic discussion of the New Public Management, that compares Canada to the United Kingdom and France, see Saint-Martin (2000). On citizen engagement efforts in Canada, see Stroick (1998), O’Hara (1998: Ch. 6), and Phillips (forthcoming).

7 A similar fear that European citizens feel remote from Brussels and the European Union institutions, as well as the rejection of institutional change and forward momentum in the 2000 Irish referendum, underpins the analysis in the European Commission’s *White Paper on European Governance* (2001).

Governments at all levels have held or are holding public consultations on a wide range of issues. For only two examples of many we see, in the fall of 2001, Canada's practices with respect to foreign aid are open to public scrutiny, while 2002 will bring citizen engagement exercises as part of the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (known as the Romanov Commission).

One good example of the links between governance and citizenship is provided by the pledges made in the *Social Union Framework Agreement* signed by 13 Canadian governments in 1999. It explicitly promises greater involvement in social policy decisions, as well as transparency and accountability. The Agreement states: "Canada's Social Union can be strengthened by enhancing each government's transparency and accountability to its constituents." At the same time, it made commitments to participation, by promising to "ensure effective mechanisms for Canadians to participate in developing social priorities and reviewing outcomes." All of this was to be undertaken in the name of the fundamental principle, that is, that "Canada's social union should reflect and give expression to the fundamental values of Canadians – equality, respect for diversity, fairness, individual dignity and responsibility, and mutual aid and our responsibilities for one another."<sup>8</sup>

Yet, at the same time, and despite such pledges, intergovernmental relations continue to be poisoned by accusations of "federal unilateralism" and "greedy" provinces. Concerns about citizens' rights and engagement mount when the two largest provinces force mega-mergers in their cities (thereby increasing the size of local government units); when provinces reassign responsibilities for some services (such as education in Ontario) from lower to upper levels of government; and when governments at all levels turn service delivery over to non-governmental agencies, in both the commercial and not-for-profit sector. All of these changes to governance have been opposed by many citizens and their representatives, in the name of citizenship. Some believe that a strong public sector is key to the well-being of Canadians, while others lament the loss of political access and opportunities for citizen engagement in policy choices.

In other words, identifying good governance, designing new relations among states, markets, families and communities, and between states and civil societies has been no easier and no less controversial in Canada than elsewhere. Nor are goals of citizens very different.

A recent report from the Commonwealth Foundation (2001: 86; 88) documents the findings from soundings of the populations of Australia, Canada, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. "Two themes emerged time and time again in the four countries. The first, and the strongest theme, was the desire to connect with other people in new forms of association." The second theme was "the desire for economic self-reliance based on people's own efforts. People wanted the dignity of work and employment in sustainable livelihoods." When asked about the role the state "should play in developing a good society, people suggested that there was an important role for governments to 'recognise the diversity of values and beliefs,' and to 'provide an environment that nurtures social and economic well-being of all.'"

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8 These quotations are from *A Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians: An Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Governments of the Provinces and Territories* (4 February 1999), available at <http://www.socialunion.gc.ca>.

These observations are not very different from those found in a similar sounding of Africans reported in the same study. The conclusion in the African chapter, too, is that “in a good society, the state should provide basic social services such as health, education, appropriate legal protection, and due recognition of every citizen.” A good society is one in which terms such as “justice, inclusiveness, the promotion of participation, transparency and accountability, security of citizens, protection of the environment and the observance of moral values” make sense (Commonwealth Foundation, 2001: 14; 12).

These various elements of governance – citizen engagement and accountability, decentralization and centralization – all touch in important ways on citizenship:

- Choices made within governance networks about who will provide which services to whom and under what conditions all have profound effects on the content of citizens’ social and political rights.
- The design of institutions, patterns of accountability and support for associations all open up or close down routes to representation for citizens and their representatives.
- Decisions about who is included and who is not, as well as the degree to which everyone can count on security and well-being, will have consequences for feelings of belonging and identity.

These generalizations are as true for Africa as for Canada, and therefore CPRN has joined with IDRC in this project to explore the connections between citizenship rights, including access to public goods and national identity in Canada.

## **V. Building Canadian Citizenship: Governance and Public Services**

No long and common history, no supposedly heroic exploits of military power, no “civilizing mission” provide the myths of Canadian citizenship. Rather, Canadians have expressed their national identity frequently through the collective demand and support for public services, provided through public policy. In addition, they have struggled to identify a workable and just manner to recognize the diversity that has characterized the country from its first days. Differences of national identity, of religious affiliation, of ethnic and racial origin have divided Canadians. But they have also recently come to serve as an element for commonality. Unity in diversity has emerged as Canada’s self-proclaimed identity. In the cultural as well as the social and economic realms, public policy has been central to anchoring this project. This means that mechanisms for collective choice – that is, democracy and responsible government – have become the instruments to express commitments to solidarity and of the ties that bind.

With a separate citizenship only invented after the Second World War, and therefore at a time when governments were assuming greater responsibilities for distributing well-being and economic security, Canadians have relied on governments’ capacity to recognize basic needs as an expression of their citizenship.

## *Governance and Citizenship Building via Health Care Services*

Universal access to *health care services* has taken on iconic importance as an expression of Canadian citizenship. In the 1980s, the country went through a series of important debates about governance on the extent to which Canadian governments would allocate a portion of their sovereignty to supra-national agreements on free trade. At that time, Canada's health insurance system and universal access to medical services in hospitals and by doctors was seen by many as the expression of Canadian citizenship. Indeed, the design of the health care system, as Antonia Maioni describes it in her paper, does reflect decisions about the terms of citizenship.

Canadians do enjoy a right to universal access to a range of medical services. The system is designed to share the risk of ill-health and sickness across the population and, therefore, is an expression of social solidarity. It is not surprising then that this particular program came to represent for many the best of Canadian citizenship.

What the paper tells us, however, is that Canadians are having difficulty coming to terms with pressures and demands for new forms of governance in the health care sector. Four different issues of governance have come to the fore. These are: (1) the respective roles the federal and provincial governments, that is, governance across levels; (2) the extent to which governance should include market-based decision-making; (3) the ways to decentralize service delivery to meet local needs; and (4) the allocation of powers and decision-making capacity within the system.

The original program designed in the late 1960s was one for which the federal government assumed a great deal of responsibility by agreeing to fund half the cost, in exchange for setting certain minimum standards that were common across the country. Over time, it has reduced its role by cutting back substantially on its financial contribution. By setting limits on how much money it is willing to inject into the system, the federal government has forced provinces to take responsibility for hard policy choices about which kinds of services to provide, to whom, and under what conditions.

This has, in effect, been a form of decentralization that has had the result of increasing diversity in the system, as provinces make different choices. However, this way of decentralizing does not provide a compelling model for other countries. It has exacerbated intergovernmental conflicts with spillovers into other policy domains, and the wrangling has no doubt contributed to Canadians' lack of confidence in their political institutions.

Moreover, as provincial governments face up to these hard choices, they have begun to entertain the notion of making another significant shift in governance, that is, to increase the private sector's involvement in service delivery. The private not-for-profit sector has always played an important role in the whole health sector, providing many services not covered by Medicare. However, as changes are made within the public system (shorter hospital stays, fewer beds, and so on), this sector is reaching its limit.

The involvement of for-profit firms is a hugely controversial issue in Canada, as decentralization to the market begins. Again this is an issue which has been fought over in intergovernmental relations, as the federal government instructs provinces about the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. It is also an issue that citizens struggle to understand and to discuss. Several consultations have been held and others are ongoing, all seeking citizen input into possible reforms. Nonetheless, there is little evidence that these consultations have, as yet, become the basis for making choices about governance. Indeed, the iconic status of the health care system as the expression of Canadians' sense of belonging may be making it harder to get to viable decisions about rights and access.

There have been, in almost all provinces, important moves to decentralize health care decision-making to regional bodies, and these have often involved changing governance structures to provide more and better access by citizens to governing bodies. However, Maioni's paper does not report great success in this area as health care professionals, especially doctors, continue to exercise a preponderant influence in this realm, and as entrenched interests make it difficult to make change. Moreover, she signals a need for caution, so that offers of "citizen engagement" will not become a smokescreen for cuts to services, or to protect politicians from the consequences of what still remain their decisions.

So what conclusions about building citizenship via governance and service delivery might we draw from Canada's health care experience? It is clearly the case that meeting Canadians' needs for medical care and doing so via a publicly financed and delivered service did contribute to solidifying a sense of belonging and solidarity. It also succeeded in sharing risk, taking illness and its costs out of the private realm.

But this was a system created in and for an earlier time, a time when centralized decision-making was the norm, when professional expertise was valued more than citizens' everyday knowledge, when an active state was a common institution. Now, Canada's health care system is both facing the same challenges and struggling with the same rigidities that others confront. Efforts to decentralize and to engage citizens, to maintain equitable access while achieving fiscal stability, and to have a common citizenship in a mixed system are all the current issues the health care system faces here, as elsewhere. Alas, we have few stories of success to share with others about such restructuring.

### ***Governance and Citizenship Building via the Social Economy***

Because citizenship is about inclusion and about equality, poverty and social disadvantage are considered to be threats to full citizenship. Poverty hinders access to citizenship and reduces feelings of belonging. Social inequalities cumulate with political inequalities, thereby making it difficult for citizens to both claim their rights and exercise their responsibilities. In light of this correlation between social exclusion and diminished citizenship, in their paper Eric Shragge, Peter Graefe and Jean-Marc Fontan explore innovative efforts to use the *social economy* to foster capacity on the three dimensions of citizenship.

While the social economy has always existed, because non-profit agencies and associations have always provided services as charity or to supplement public services, attention to it has grown in recent years. This is primarily because service provision by such agencies seem to help reduce costs for financially strapped governments; they seem better able to identify local needs, and therefore to seize the advantages of decentralization; and they seem to provide ways to address social exclusion through activities that provide opportunities for democratic governance as well as employment.

It is in many ways a vision of service provision that is the opposite of the professional, universal and centralized form of service that underpinned Canada's health care system in its heyday. Moreover, if universal access to health care has come to represent the epitome of the post-war welfare state, and the social investments and entitlements that it involved, a strengthened social economy is proposed by activists, academics and governments as a response to the job scarcity, poverty and social exclusion that characterize many European societies as well as Canada. It is intended to provide access to services at a time of cutbacks in public spending and to offer an alternative to fully marketized rules of access. Therefore, in both its service delivery and its governance structures, it is meant to foster a more inclusive citizenship.

Those who promote a strong social economy as a tool for citizenship building explicitly identify its implications for governance in two ways. First, fostering social economy activities directly indicates that the well-being of citizens is produced by more than states and markets. The not-for-profit sector is also very relevant. Proponents identify the not-for-profit organizations of the social economy as potentially even better positioned to address problems of unemployment and poverty, and of social exclusion and lack of full social citizenship. These organizations are often considered ideally located to respond to the needs of their local communities, by mobilizing community resources to create jobs and social services that the market will not and the state is unwilling to provide. As well, the social economy has its own forms of governance – its principles are those of democratic participation, self-management, and maintaining links between workers and the broader community. It is therefore a decentralized form of service provision, which provides space for engagement and capacity building.

Shragge, Graefe and Fontan agree with many such enthusiasts that attention to the social economy might contribute to advancing a citizenship agenda. It is a way of providing necessary services, of responding to the basic needs of the poorest citizens for income and for inclusion, and for doing so in ways that take into account community differences. Its democratic practices also provide practice in self-government and ongoing engagement.

They also, however, sound several notes of caution. Sometimes public services that had been provided as a right of citizenship are withdrawn in favour of services in those places where a social economy enterprise is available and can provide them. This decentralization of service delivery to the private, albeit not-for-profit, sector can result in uneven and limited access. Therefore, the authors conclude that the benefits of social economy provision must be coupled with a renewed state commitment to protecting broad social rights, and by assigning significant public resources to the goal of reducing inequalities among communities.

The authors also echo a concern expressed by Antonia Maioni when she considered governance in the health sector. This is not surprising in that many not-for-profits are involved in providing local services for home care, support for the dependent elderly, and so on. The concern is that the increased off-loading of service delivery from the state to not-for-profit partners threatens the long-term viability of these partners. They are challenged to provide more services, to account more carefully for public funds, and so on. Because of pressures from work overload and the need for particular skills, the observed results have often been that professionals have displaced volunteers, thereby reducing the space for democratic governance and citizen engagement. There is no guarantee, in other words, that decentralized service delivery via a social economy firm will increase or maintain citizens' engagement with decision-making.

In addition, Shragge, Graefe and Fontan are concerned that a turn to service delivery via the social economy may generate new forms of social and economic inequities, despite its key goal being social inclusion. In effect, reducing state provision of services also means changing labour markets. When public services are provided by public servants, wages and working conditions tend to be good. In other words, a public sector job is often a means to improved life chances, especially for categories of the population that traditionally have difficulty accessing good jobs in the private sector. Jobs in the social economy, in contrast, are rarely well paying ones. Thus, services such as home care, which, in the past might have been provided by a reasonably well-paid public employee, are now provided by an "employee" of a social economy firm, who may be working at the minimum wage or even below in order to gain experience and the skills needed to enable her insertion into the labour market. Thus, while the risk of social polarization is addressed by social economy initiatives, to be sure, the result is unlikely to be equality in access to income.

The lessons from the social economy experience are particularly relevant to this project because, in many ways, discussions of its potential and limitations in Canada echo the debates about decentralization of services and governance that are going on in Africa and elsewhere. We learn that assessments of the benefits and limits are as divided here as they are for the situation of developing countries, as seen in the analyses of Bonnie Campbell (2000) and Maria Codesria-Nzomo (2000), for example.

### ***Governance and Citizenship Building via Policies for Sport and Recreation***

Since the time of the Greeks and certainly throughout the 20th century, sport and sporting competition have been treated as activities that promote the basic values of citizenship, such as national identity. In his paper, Jean Harvey documents that such activities go far beyond the very familiar Olympic Games and other international competitions in which "Canadian" achievements are lauded and losses regretted. He tracks the successes that Canadian governments at all levels have had in using sporting events, especially specialized Games for minority communities, as ways of affirming multiple identities and maintaining communities. Linguistic and Aboriginal communities find in such events, organized by the voluntary and private sectors but with some public funds, the spaces for affirming and confirming feelings of belonging to the community.

Sports policy in Canada has been used to promote visions of an equitable Canadian citizenship, by insisting on fair practices and positive actions with respect to the promotion of women and minorities. It also provides examples of forms of governance that encompass significant levels of voluntary activity, as well as public and private funds. Over time, as Harvey describes, sport and recreation policy has always been seen as doing more than promoting national and community identity. In earlier decades, sports and physical activities were organized by the voluntary sector and governments to provide experiences of involvement and engagement for groups such as the unemployed or the “disadvantaged” who were at risk of social exclusion. Recent studies confirm that sports and recreation remain promising instruments for promoting citizenship values and for inhibiting social exclusion and anti-social behaviour. Programs for youth-at-risk, in particular, have a role to play here. But the health and social skills of young people from all backgrounds can benefit from involvement in organized sport and recreation.

Therefore, this program area shares many of the same goals of equity and inclusion that underpin the social economy initiatives. Both are described as contributing to the promotion of full citizenship, and both stress governance structures that involve local community involvement, important roles for volunteers and self-governing agencies, and capacity building. Given these shared concerns in the two policy fields, one concerned with work and one with leisure, it is not surprising to see in the paper that equitable access to services is a key theme as well.

Jean Harvey reports current data about the consequences of recent adjustments to state policies that are altering access to sport and recreation programs. Changes in public policy, in particular the reliance on user fees, as well as the commercialization of many sporting activities, have made it more difficult for children and young people from low- and even middle-income families to gain access to the activities in which, in the past, much learning about basic values and leadership training took place.

Moreover, physical activity is key to health. Yet, changes to the Canadian citizenship regime in the 1980s began to identify healthy life styles as a responsibility of the individual, who should eat well, exercise, and avoid addictions to cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs. While such behaviours are obviously important, the emphasis on individual responsibility meant that environmental factors and social determinants faded in importance. The social and distributional dimensions of sport and health were reduced, and less attention went to whether citizens had equal access to the elements of healthy living – adequate food, healthy housing, and sufficient physical activity – as well as knowledge about their importance.

We see in this example, then, that sport and sport policy can serve to build citizenship. However, the link between sport and the dimensions of citizenship depend on choices made about governance and on basic assumptions about citizens’ responsibilities. When citizens are assigned personal responsibility for healthy life-styles with no concomitant guarantee of access to participation, there may actually be little citizenship building and, instead, mounting threats to social cohesion. When access is governed by market mechanisms, the needs of citizens may go unmet. Therefore, the citizenship building potential of sport and recreation are very sensitive to the governance choices about the respective roles of the state, market and community, and about shared responsibility for outcomes.

## *Governance and Citizenship Building via Accommodating Diversity*

Canada's population is diverse and always has been. It includes a large number of ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities that hold a wide range of identities. Living in an immigrant society, implanted in the territories of indigenous peoples, and with a national minority whose presence predates the political hegemony of the English-speaking majority, Canadians have had to struggle find a political expression of respect for diversity. The road to the current policies of multiculturalism (termed interculturalism by the government of Quebec) has not been smooth.

In his paper, Will Kymlicka explores the long, and often dark, history of managing Canada's two kinds of diversity. This country has two national minority groups, the Aboriginal peoples and the Québécois who are the direct and imagined descendants of the *Canadiens* who settled along the St. Lawrence River valley and in the west, before the British gained control of British North America. There are also immigrants from almost every country in the world and their descendants, who create an ethnically and racially diverse population. Moreover, both national minorities, but especially that in Quebec, are also traversed by this ethnic and racial variety.

Given such societal patterns, themselves in large part the result of public policy with respect to immigration and economic development, Kymlicka's principle argument is that it is public policy touching on national, or Canadian, identity which has played a key role in the feelings of belonging that citizens in this country have. The recognition, and denial, of rights of immigration and settlement, of language, and of cultural protection have all helped or hindered the emergence of identities, within ethnocultural groups as well as national minorities.

Observation of policy over time reveals that, prior to the Second World War, policies were proudly and unselfconsciously assimilationist, seeking to promote a single and homogeneous national identity. In the last four decades, in contrast, and frequently under pressure from the human rights movements in the international community, Canada's policies shifted. They became more accommodating of difference, first tolerating and then respecting diversity. Over time, indeed, as mentioned above, the very definition of citizenship became one of a unity that depends on respect for diversity.

This strategy for building Canadian citizenship rested on a notion of rights and responsibilities that recognizes individuals' right to maintain an identity defined in terms of their ethnocultural and national minority origins, if they choose to do so. Although this dimension has sometimes been put into question, it also recognizes the need to spend public funds to make this right more than formal. A substantive right to one's cultural heritage is understood, in other words, to depend on access to and participation in cultural institutions that sustain that heritage.

Kymlicka then inquires into the advantages and limits of these recently developed models of accommodating diversity for citizenship and the social cohesion of Canada. He concludes that these new models have almost certainly improved the exercise of rights and responsibilities and access to services. Both ethnocultural and national minorities have gained new rights in the last decades, as well as improved access to public services.

He finds the consequences for feelings of belonging to be more complex, and harder to judge, however. If policies are considered to remedy historic injustices and to make this a more just society, then they probably strengthen people's belief in the legitimacy of Canada's institutions. They may, in other words, have a feeling of attachment to the political community, even if they do not consider "Canadian" to be their primary or exclusive loyalty or identity.

Given that a pluralism of identities and experiences or histories and circumstances is inevitable in contemporary societies, Canada's balancing act between unity and its explicit rejection of unity via homogeneity may be of interest for other countries struggling to accommodate their own ethnic, religious or national minorities.

## **VI. Are There Lessons from the Canadian Experience?**

Table 1 provides a synthetic overview of the Canadian experience with the three concepts that this project works with – service delivery, governance and citizenship. From the table, we observe that there are indeed some lessons that can be drawn about the interconnections of these elements. The intuition that feelings of belonging can be fostered via the provision of public services is sustained for all four policy realms. Public policies for health care have contributed to feelings of solidarity via the mechanism of shared risk, and therefore have become a cornerstone of Canadian identity. Public policies supporting social economy initiatives can help that sector achieve its potential to reduce social exclusion and foster full citizenship. Lively and varied sports and recreation programs, with sufficient financing, do contribute to the teaching of citizenship and capacity building within communities. Canada's experiments with policies of multiculturalism and interculturalism have helped to build attachments to the political community within ethnocultural communities, while the recognition of national minorities calms more radical demands. Therefore, these case studies do point to the capacity of public services with a variety of governance structures to build citizenship.

However, there are other lessons that also emerge from these studies. In particular, three of the four have identified *new* governance practices of off-loading to not-for-profit agencies and for-profit firms as constituting potential threats to citizenship. In areas as dispersed as health care (which addresses basic needs), the social economy (which addresses employment and income security), and sport (which addresses physical activity), the last several decades have brought the popularization of governance structures that magnify the distributional role of markets and reduce the role of states.

Therefore, Canada has, as many African countries, engaged in decentralization of service delivery, to the private sector as well as to local communities. Moreover, as do many African countries, it faces issues of affordability and sustainability of services. Two lessons emerge from all the case studies that focus on access as a key dimension of citizenship. One is that decentralization of services may have many advantages, but when it is done in a context of cutbacks in financial resources, the consequences for the terms of citizenship tend to be negative. The second lesson is that, important as local mobilization is for fostering engagement of citizens and creating legitimacy of institutions, as well as designing appropriate programs, it cannot relieve the state of the responsibility that it has had since the French Revolution of assuring equality and solidarity as well as liberty.

**Table 1**

**Synthetic Summary of the Lessons of the Current Canadian Experience with Service Provision, Governance Forms, and Citizenship Content in Four Policy Realms**

<b>Policy Realm</b>	<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Governance Forms</b>	<b>Citizenship Content</b>	<b>Lessons and Stress Points</b>
<b>Sport and Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services delivered nationally, via national sports associations supported by governments</li> <li>• Services delivered locally, involving governments and voluntary associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funding, with program requirements to ensure equity of outcomes and to promote community identities</li> <li>• Delivery provided by voluntary associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to foster national identity and feelings of belonging via Canadian participation in international sporting events</li> <li>• Efforts to foster community identities and feelings of belonging via support for community games</li> <li>• Programs can foster citizenship values and promote leadership among young people, especially those at risk; may reduce risks of negative behaviours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much emphasis on national “success” may lead to xenophobia and importing international conflicts into national programs</li> <li>• Sports and recreation can serve as vehicles for building citizenship and leadership skills; however, their capacity to do so depends on maintaining access</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodating Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided publicly, primarily by the federal government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing transparency about goals, and consistency across executive, legislative and judicial institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to accommodate diversity in a diverse society enhances feelings of belonging</li> <li>• Access to services needed as well as formal recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicts over identities are always a threat in a diverse society, but respect for difference may actually protect social cohesion by fostering commitment to the political community capable of providing recognition and accommodation</li> </ul>

**Table 1, continued**

<b>Policy Realm</b>	<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Governance Forms</b>	<b>Citizenship Content</b>	<b>Lessons and Stress Points</b>
<b>Health Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By professionals</li> <li>• Increasing diversity due to lack of federal capacity and within-province moves to regional levels</li> <li>• In publicly funded and controlled institutions, but with pressures from the private for-profit sector for more involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal-provincial negotiations, with little transparency and accountability; much wrangling</li> <li>• Increasing autonomy of provinces, as the federal government withdraws from spending</li> <li>• Mounting confusion about the division of labour between the public and private sectors</li> <li>• Little direct citizen engagement in original models; some efforts to involve citizens in reform processes, but results are mixed and probably limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared risk did foster a sense of solidarity and belonging</li> <li>• Health care did become a high profile right of Canadian citizenship</li> <li>• Universality assures access to the medical services that are covered; private resources determine access to the rest</li> <li>• Regional and local delivery mechanisms could be accommodated within this model, as long as sufficient financial resources are available; scarcity of resources leads to uneven access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A universal public service; providing for basic needs and sharing risks can foster feelings of belonging as well as equality of rights</li> <li>• Diversity of models due to decentralization and pressures for more market-based access generates fears and public debate about the meaning of citizenship</li> </ul>
<b>Social Economy Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services tailored to the needs and capacities of local communities</li> <li>• By activists (employed and volunteers) within social economy firms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private not-for-profit initiatives, but with the support of public and, sometimes, the for-profit sector</li> <li>• Democratic governance of firms, and involvement of employees</li> <li>• Pressures for professional practices and “results” increases the authority of professional managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to facilitate the integration of those at risk of social exclusion because of lack of work and poverty, that is, foster access and feelings of belonging</li> <li>• Works on the margins of society, so the themes of equality are less important than those of inclusion</li> <li>• Access to “rights” are not provided; services are dependent on local initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building the social economy may be a way to foster capacity and social capital in local communities; however, its contribution to citizenship is limited to improving feelings of belonging among the marginalized</li> <li>• Achieving equality of rights, responsibilities and access still requires active involvement of the state</li> </ul>

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**Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN)**

600 – 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1

Tel: (613) 567-7500 Fax: (613) 567-7640

Web Site: <http://www.cprn.org>

**The Role of Sport and Recreation Policy in Fostering  
Citizenship: The Canadian Experience**

By

**Jean Harvey**

Centre de recherche sur le sport dans la société canadienne

École des sciences de l'activité physique

Université d'Ottawa

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## I. Introduction

Physical competitions for the purposes of training in citizenship have their origins in modern democracy. Physical education played a central role in the education of young Greek citizens, who were supposed to become fit – not only for political debate but also for war. The games of antiquity were festivals during which citizens of the various Greek city-states celebrated their identity. At the dawn of industrial capitalism, Paul Lafargue (1978) in 1883 wrote his famous pamphlet calling for the “right to be lazy.” He was one of the first authors to provide a political analysis of inequality of access to recreation in societies where, for the working class, citizenship was still limited to civil rights that were more formal than real. This issue remains important. Indeed it will always be central to the way citizenship develops, given that, as Thériault (1999: 7) points out, modern citizens must continuously ask whether there is any link between the values on which their citizenship is based and the realities of their personal and social lives.

Jean Meynaud wrote the first systematic analysis of the political uses of sport and, in *Sport et politique* (1966), he devotes a chapter to political attitudes and the practice of sport. Meynaud examines, among other things, the nexus of issues involving sport and citizenship. He demonstrates that sport can have either a positive or negative effect on the development of civic virtue, national unity and international understanding, and that, historically, the proponents of sport have attributed many virtues to its practice. Have not the playing fields of British Public Schools been described widely as schools for learning civic virtues, such as fair play? Did not Pierre de Coubertin, the founding father of the modern Olympic Games, view cooperation in sports as “schooling in democracy” (Meynaud, 1966: 223)? Meynaud was much more skeptical about these claims, however. He came to the conclusion, later confirmed by several other authors, that perhaps sport may promote citizenship but that it can also divert citizens away from their civic duties, distract the underprivileged classes, or provide fertile terrain for the spread of chauvinism.

In order to orient our analysis of Canadian public policy for sport and recreation to the question of citizenship, we need to identify the various aspects of citizenship with which sport policies are linked. This involves taking into account the various components of citizenship, as well as the wider policy fields (such as health and education policies) associated with sport policies. This approach assumes, on one hand, that the question of citizenship policy cannot be considered in isolation from other policy sectors and, on the other hand, that each public policy field is guided by its own paradigm, that is, by its own legitimizing principles, political culture and form of governance.

The idea of governance is understood here as a process of leading by means of public policy. It may be viewed as the dominant method for state management at a given time in the state’s development, and in its relations with civil society. It consists of the network of public and private actors who are active on the political scene, and whose interactions create a system for making decisions about and taking actions of concern to public life.

When it comes to definitions of citizenship, the one proposed by Fred Constant (1998: 26) has the virtue of clarity:

On the one hand, citizenship is a legal, political and social reality; a distinctive way to organize and experience membership in a social and political community. On the other hand, it is both an *idea* and an *ideal*: the particular way in which we reflect upon and evaluate this membership... There are at least four dimensions to the idea of citizenship: citizenship as an expression of national identity, citizenship as conferring rights and obligations with regard to a political community, citizenship as a set of specific social roles associated with active participation in the life of the city, and citizenship as a set of moral qualities.

The first component, *citizenship as an expression of national identity*, refers of course to nationality or, more generally, to membership in a political community that confers on its members the right to participate in politics.

Second, *citizenship as a set of rights and obligations* refers to the idea that all the members of a community have a set of rights. Constant recalls the classic classification that recognizes three types of rights: (1) *civil rights*, that is “*rights and freedoms* that protect all who are subject to private law from illegal State interference that infringes on their freedom or affects their property;” (2) *political rights*, that is “*rights and participation* allowing citizens to participate effectively in the democratic process that gives expression to their opinions and demands;” and (3) *social rights*, that “refer to the *right to claim* a guarantee of a minimum income and social security available to beneficiaries of the Welfare State.”

Third, *citizenship as a set of specific roles connected to active participation in public affairs* describes the ideal: citizens will engage in debate and decision-making “whatever their place in the political division of labour.”

Lastly, *citizenship as a set of moral qualities* refers to the idea of citizens’ behaviour in society. Some observers see in these virtues “a sense of responsibility, tolerance, and a concern for collective well-being or solidarity” (Conseil supérieur de l’Éducation du Québec, 1998: 22). For Constant (1998), citizens’ duties include, broadly speaking, voting, serving in the military, paying taxes, educating themselves and, lastly, showing solidarity.

Which public policies are likely to promote citizenship? In a paper on training for citizenship, the Conseil supérieur de l’Éducation du Québec provides guidelines for pursuing an ideal citizenship. It writes: “We want citizens to have access to ‘full citizenship,’ that is, to be in a position to truly exercise their rights, participate actively in society, be completely integrated, and to enjoy material well-being, freedom and equal status whatever their origins, religion, sex and so forth” (Conseil supérieur de l’Éducation du Québec, 1998: 14). Using these guidelines, it is possible to measure the ways in which Canadian sport and recreation policy have promoted citizenship.

For the Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation du Québec (1998: 17), it is a considerable challenge to achieve full citizenship:

What we are currently looking for is a conception of citizenship that links the participation of all to the functioning and development of the political community, and that respects cultural identity. The objective is to preserve democracy and social cohesion, while providing a genuine way of "living together" that goes beyond basic, passive mutual tolerance.

Attaining this ideal requires creating forums for dialogue and participation in decision making. In addition, public policies must create the preconditions for all citizens to claim and gain their rights, particularly those individuals suffering from one form or another of social exclusion. Public policy in Canada has not always achieved these preconditions, as we will see, although it has been designed to advance several of the components of citizenship delineated above.

## **II. Examples of Canadian Public Policy in Sport and Recreation Seeking to Foster Citizenship**

In order to examine the Canadian public policy on the domain of sport and recreation, and to eventually draw some conclusions regarding its possible contribution to "full citizenship," we need first of all to draw up an inventory of relevant Canadian policies and programs. Starting from the dimension of citizenship noted earlier, we can group these policies and programs under three headings:

1. Policies intended to promote identity
2. Policies intended to promote social citizenship, and
3. Policies intended to promote the development or expression of moral qualities.

The scope of this survey is limited and does not pretend to be exhaustive. Boxes 1 and 2, which appear later in this section, summarize the examples, and the text presents a brief survey of the programs that have emerged in Canada. Included in the boxes are public programs as well as non-governmental ones. As we shall see, the Canadian experience involves a vast array of partnerships between the state and civil society. Such partnerships are characteristic of the actions of the Canadian state, which has been less directly interventionist than other states (Harvey, Defrance and Beamish, 1995).

### **Policies to Promote Identity**

For all contemporary states, sports – especially high-performance sports – are treated as an effective way to promote national identity.<sup>1</sup> It was during the Cold War that international meetings such as the Olympic Games became veritable competitions for prestige between East and West. Athletes' victories were portrayed as national victories, thereby boosting national pride and reinforcing national unity.

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1 Political sociology literature is overabundant on this topic. For recent reviews, see Bairner (2001) and Harvey (1999).

Canada has used policies and programs for sport to address this first dimension of citizenship, in partnership with organizations in civil society. The government has also, however, treated sport as an effective mechanism for supporting organizations that seek to maintain and enhance the definition of the country as a bilingual society in which minorities need protection and, therefore, it has provided support to the organizations promoting minority community identities.

### *Sport in the Service of National Unity*

It was concern over national unity that to a significant degree was the driving force behind the adoption in 1961 of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*.<sup>2</sup> The disappointing performances of Canadian athletes in international competition, particularly in hockey (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993), had stirred nationalistic sentiment among federal Members of Parliament, who saw a need for public action at the federal level. The Act provided the framework for establishing a public administration for sport, including a set of support programs for national governing bodies in several fields of sport.

Among the first federal initiatives implemented within the framework of this law were grants awarded to the provinces (Quebec did not participate in this program) and to national sport organizations. The goal was to support, in the case of the provinces, the establishment of administrative structures and supporting programs for amateur sport. In the case of the sport organizations, it was for the development of programs to advance amateur sport nationally and Canadian athletes' capacity to compete internationally (Groupe de travail du Ministre sur la politique fédérale en matière de sport, 1992).

What stood out about these first steps, like several others that would follow during the 1960s, was that they were limited in scope. The government was still playing a secondary role, as it had always done. As a result, the objectives were not met.

Well aware of this state of affairs, Prime Minister Trudeau promoted a policy framework that intentionally sought to utilize sport to foster Canadian unity. As soon as he was elected, Trudeau established a task force on sport. Its report would lead to the adoption in 1969 of *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, a document put forward by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, John Munro.

From that point forward, the federal government intervened more directly in national sport organizations that were involved in amateur sport. National organizations gained access to financial resources, especially to support training that was likely to result in greater achievements for Canadian athletes competing at the international level.

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2 For a detailed analysis of the ins and outs associated with the passage of this Act, especially as it concerns issues of national pride, see Macintosh and Franks (1987). This Act is still the sole piece of legislation shaping federal government action in the field of sport, though a new policy on sport was adopted in April 2001 within the framework of a National Summit on Sport.

Several policies and programs, whose basic thrust is presented in the following pages, are based on the same premise: that public policies must be put in place so that more Canadian athletes win in international competition, thereby stimulating national pride and, consequently, the feeling among citizens that they belong to a community – the Canadian nation.

The challenge of fostering this sense of attachment constantly haunted the federal government, which, during the 1980s and 1990s, set up additional fact-finding reports and committees of enquiry. The government sought to give a boost to a Canadian pride that was “threatened” on one hand by the poor performances of Canadian athletes and, on the other hand, by the centrifugal forces represented by nationalism in Quebec and by resentment in the West regarding federal centralism. Box 1 outlines the federal government’s main programs that aim directly or indirectly to promote national identity through sport.

**Box 1**  
**Examples of Federal Programs Seeking To Foster National Identity**

***Programs for Amateur Sport***

This category includes: Athlete Assistance Program, National Sport Organization Support Program, Multi-Sport/Multi-Service Organization Support Program, and National Sport Centres Program. Together, these programs aim to provide financial support to athletes, coaches and national sport organizations so that Canadian athletes perform as well as possible in international competitions. These programs are administered by Sport Canada, a branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

***Hockey Canada***

This organization is composed of representatives from the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, the Canadian Inter-University Athletic Union and the National Hockey League’s Players Association. It aims to identify and enact strategies leading to teams being composed of the best Canadian hockey players.

***Canada Games***

Launched in 1967 during the Canadian Centennial Year, the goals of these games include providing a place for young people from all parts of Canada to meet. Each province and territory fields a team to represent it at the Games. The program is managed by a private non-profit association, the Canada Games’ Council. The host city also puts an organizing committee into place. The games receive funding from the three levels of governments as well as from sponsors in the private sector.

***Single Sport Hosting Program***

This program supports sport organizations hosting international single-sport events in Canada. Such events affirm Canada’s participation in supra-national communities. Recent examples are support for the *Commonwealth Games* held in Victoria in 1994 and the *Games of La Francophonie* hosted by Ottawa-Hull in 2001.

The structure of the programs identified in Box 1 reveals that the Canadian state actually does not intervene a great deal in the *direct delivery* of recreation and sport programs. This is left to associations in civil society, as well as to other governments and the private sector. Nevertheless, government impact is felt through the budget that it allocates to programs, the choice of associations to whom it grants funding and, lastly, the requirements for obtaining these grants. For example, for the period 1997-2001, to get funding through the National Sport Organizations Support Program, organizations had to sign an Accountability Agreement with Sport Canada that included specific target objectives in the following areas, among others: high performance athletes, sport development, women in sport, athletes with disabilities, and official languages.

No empirical studies have established whether the performance of Canadian athletes in international competition has in fact had a direct impact on citizens' feelings of belonging to the Canadian nation. However, media reaction to the performance of our athletes, both at the last Olympic Games in Sydney and at the International Amateur Athletic Federation World Championships in Athletics in Edmonton, demonstrates that the assessment of these programs can just as easily be negative as positive.

It is also obvious that "competitive" national identities exist in Canada, and that policies and programs in the sport domain can become expressions of that competition, as well as being used to promote alternatives. Quebec governments under the Parti Québécois have made use of sport and recreation to promote Quebec national identity. The party's first government, elected in 1976, carried out a broad exercise to redefine this sector's policies and programs. These were drawn up within the framework of a Green Paper, then a White Paper, both of which clearly oriented the programs toward the promotion of Quebec sovereignty.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Sport in the Promotion of Minority Community Identity***

Investing in sport to promote a single or multiple *national identities* is not the only way that the politics of sport can influence citizens' feelings of belonging and the identity dimensions of citizenship. Canadian experience also provides several examples of programs designed to promote *minority community* identity.

Minority francophone communities in Canada, that is francophone communities outside of Quebec, have provided themselves with tools to promote their identities through the organization of games. These include *les Jeux de l'Acadie* (the Acadian Games), *les Jeux franco-albertains* (the Franco-Albertan Games), *les Jeux franco-ontariens* (the Franco-Ontarian Games), and *les Jeux franco-canadiens* (the Franco-Canadian Games). These meets are not public programs. Rather, the communities themselves initiated and now take charge of them via civil society organizations. Nonetheless, they are financed through federal programs for assistance to Official Language Minority communities. Agreements between the federal government and the language community provide a major portion of the funding. The provinces also help to finance these games, although much less than does the federal government.

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3 On the history of these developments, see Levasseur (1982) and Bellefleur (1997).

For minority francophone communities, such games bring together the community. These events are a tool for fostering community pride among their youth and for entrenching their francophone identity. In a way, the games provide these minority language communities with an educational mechanism for fostering community-based citizenship, and for expressing their collective identities. As some writers have emphasized, the various francophone games within Canada are places where francophone identities are given voice, interact, and are created, recreated and reinvented – albeit all within the context of an unequal power relationship (Dallaire, 1995; Dallaire, sous presse; Dallaire and Denis, 2000).

### **Sport and Social Citizenship**

Social citizenship, as discussed above, is defined as a set of rights to certain services, such as education, health, guaranteed income, and even sport and recreation. Social citizenship is associated with the welfare state, a form of governance that gained strength in Canada following the Second World War.

#### ***Sport and Recreation Policy, and the Evolution of the Canadian Welfare State***

The Canadian welfare state has been characterized by several different “citizenship regimes” (Jenson and Phillips, 1996), by which we mean a dominant definition of the legitimate actions of the state, as well as the relationships the state should maintain with civil society.

The Second World War sounded the death knell for narrow liberalism in Canada. In the field of recreation and sport, municipalities substantially increased their efforts to respond to citizens’ demands for the right to recreation by establishing municipal recreation services that undertook direct delivery of a wide array of recreation and sport services. In so doing, they often took over from non-profit associations (such as the YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and community recreation centres), though these associations did not disappear (Harvey, 1998; Andrew, Harvey and Dawson, 1994).

At least in its objectives, the 1961 *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* discussed above was not intended simply to stimulate Canadian national identity. An essential component of this Act was its resolve to increase access for all to recreation and sport. Funding that was provided to the provinces so that they, in turn, might establish public services in recreation and sport was key to this objective. We can say, then, that from the 1960s, the citizenship regime included a right to recreation.

In consequence of both new thinking about social citizenship and available funds, the various levels of government launched programs intended to increase access to recreation and sport for all citizens. However, it was the provinces and the municipalities who led the way in delivering programs.

In addition, the idea of promoting physical activity as a public health measure increasingly drew the attention and intervention of various levels of government. Examples include the federal government’s ParticipAction program and the Quebec government’s Kino-Québec program.

However, when the welfare state entered into fiscal crisis and lost legitimacy at the start of the 1980s, the very idea of social rights became vulnerable to systematic attack (Harvey and Thibault, 1996). The principle of universality in government services was blamed for excessive spending, inordinate bureaucratization, and diminished freedom of choice. Therefore, access to certain services came to be reserved for those with low incomes and those most “at-risk” but, even then, with increasingly restrictive conditions.

These changes marked the emergence of another citizenship regime (Maxwell, 2001). In it, the poor, the sick, and young lone mothers were depicted as the principal authors of their own fate. Some have described this hegemonic discourse as the ideology of “blaming the victim.” Within such a discourse, individuals are viewed as responsible for their *own* health and fitness. Public education programs financed by governments promote regular physical exercise with the explicit goal of changing high-risk behaviour, that is, lack of exercise, smoking and an inadequate diet. Attention to biological, social and environmental factors underpinning poor health or social exclusion is pushed to the margins, while the accent is placed on individual responsibilities.

Canada is now at a turning point, and perhaps on the verge of another citizenship regime. There is a renewed interest in using the concept of citizenship to orient thinking about the role of the state, as victories are won over deficits and governments rediscover fiscal flexibility. In addition, the social transformations stemming from the New Economy and globalization, mounting rates of and concerns about social exclusion, the rise of poverty and income polarization, and the emphasis on the socioeconomic factors affecting health all become reasons for rethinking the relationship between sport and citizenship goals.

### ***Fighting Social Exclusion and Promoting Equity***

It would be an exaggeration to maintain that the crisis of the welfare state totally halted all government activity in the area of social citizenship. Constant pressure from social movements, such as the women’s movement, kept the question of equity on the political agenda. The consequences were a variety of government initiatives promoting equity in sport, again in partnership with organizations in civil society.

Box 2 provides examples of programs that have been established by various levels of government with a view to promoting social inclusion and fairness of access. In each case, the programs were intended to compensate for existing inequalities.

**Box 2**  
**Examples of Programs to Promote Inclusion and Equity**

***Support for First Nations***

- The *North American Indigenous Games* and the *Arctic Winter Games* are run by an organizing committee, with the goal of offering young people from Aboriginal communities opportunities to participate in competitive sport, from both the European and indigenous traditions. These games are also used to promote the identity of Aboriginal peoples.
- The major role of the federal Government is to provide funding.

***Support for Gender Equity***

- At the federal level, the Multi-Sport/Multi-Service Organization Support Program permits funding for initiatives that promote gender equity for women.
- The government organized and now finances the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, an advocacy group working to achieve gender equity in sport.
- Provincial policy documents underline the need to give special attention to the promotion of women's participation in sport, notably for teenage girls whose current participation rates are low. However, no programs exist.
- At the municipal level, a variety of initiatives exist, such as Women Organizing Activities for Women, which is a coalition of local leisure services, social service agencies, women's groups and researchers working to provide access to leisure for low-income women.

***Support for Persons with Disabilities***

- At the federal level, the Multi-Sport/Multi-Service Organization Support Program makes funding available for programs that develop initiatives for persons with disabilities.
- National associations dedicated to sport for people with disabilities are also eligible under the same program.
- Provinces generally provide financial support to provincial sport associations for persons with disabilities.

***Support for Youth at Risk***

- The crime prevention program "Nights Alive" in British Columbia provides opportunities to participate in recreational activities in 60 communities.
- The Action Plan for Children in Saskatchewan includes leisure and sport programs for youth at-risk.

The function of these initiatives for Aboriginal peoples – and especially for their youth – is to provide access, while fostering their identities and community pride. Access to sport and recreation also provides ways for young members of these communities to avoid inactivity. It provides youth with a way to express and fulfill themselves in activities that they like, and is an effective method for countering their problems.

Far too few Aboriginal communities have enough resources to provide their youth with these services. This is especially true for those who live in cities, where community ties have declined the most, and where racism and social exclusion are the most entrenched. Therefore, public support for such programs helps to fill the gap.

Questions of control and design are absolutely key to success – money is not enough. Vicky Paraschak (1991; 1997; 2000a; 2000b) demonstrates that, given the unequal power relations between the majority of the population and First Nations, initiatives and interventions may be perceived as strategies for assimilating indigenous peoples, rather than as strategies for promoting community identity. Thus, for First Nations, it is crucial that decision-making power on the delivery of recreation and sport services rests in their own hands. The same principle may also be applied of course to any group that experiences social exclusion and seeks to use sport (and other programs) as a means to rebuild community health and foster social inclusion.

### **Policies that Foster Moral Principles and Civic Virtues**

The third category of public programs and policies intended to develop citizenship is of initiatives whose aim is the development and expression of moral principles, and of citizens' responsibilities toward the political community. In its most liberal form, citizenship is above all a status associated not only with a set of rights, but also with responsibilities and moral obligations.

The first forms of Canadian governments' intervention in sport explicitly targeted citizens' responsibilities. The Depression of the 1930s challenged many preconceived notions about the role of government, especially when it came to dealing with the poverty-stricken and unemployed masses that flooded into major Canadian cities. The Pro-Rec program that British Columbia launched in 1934 was one of the first "sport" policies adopted with a view to stemming this calamity. At first, the program's goal was to provide physical fitness classes for the unemployed so as to increase their "employability." The core of the program sought to combat "idleness," thought to be the source of "moral decay." The program later served as a model for agreements under the 1937 *Unemployment and Agricultural Act* and later under the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Program, which was launched in 1939 following the adoption of the *Youth Training Act*.

What we must keep in mind about these initiatives is that they were essentially expressions of the liberal roots of citizenship. They provided *ad hoc* government support to citizens, especially the youngest. The aim was to get citizens to take independent responsibility for themselves, and to train themselves to become responsible and productive. In other words, they were based on a form of governance that assigned few responsibilities to the state and few rights to citizens.

In the vast majority of Canadian municipalities, public policy was based on a similar logic. This underpinned the guiding principle of the *ad hoc* support that municipalities provided to charitable organizations, YMCAs, YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Recreation Committees, all of which sought to use recreation to promote citizenship virtues and responsibilities via recreation programs for the disadvantaged.

In the Second World War further concerns came to the fore. Health and fitness became an issue when large numbers of youth called into active service failed the army's medical examination. The *National Physical Fitness Act* was adopted in 1943 (repealed in 1953). Its goal was to help young people become fit and healthy so that, in part, they would be able to fulfil their civic responsibilities of bearing arms and defending the country.

Then, in the 1970s, there was again an increase in attention to citizenship, responsibility and health. Governments established programs to promote participation in sport and other physical activity for preventive health purposes. For a number of authors, these programs constitute the most recent expression of concern that public policy should (1) encourage citizens to view themselves as responsible for their own health and, consequently, (2) allow the state to partially free itself of its responsibilities toward meeting its citizens' basic needs. These themes have already been noted above, and were inherent to federal programs such as ParticipAction, and provincial programs such as Kino-Québec.

### **III. Some Preliminary Observations on the Canadian Experience**

The various initiatives identified so far enable us to make some preliminary observations. First, the objectives of these programs and initiatives were not formulated solely with citizenship development in mind, nor were they always framed in a citizenship discourse. While certain key aspects of citizenship are in fact present in these programs – with some even referring to rights and to furthering prospects for equity and inclusion – they also promote other goals, some of which make it more difficult to achieve full citizenship.

A second observation is that if there is a predominant and constant theme that runs through sport policies and programs, it is the concern for promoting national identity and the feeling of belonging to a political community. As some observers note, the result is an obsession with high-performance sport, especially at the upper echelons of government. Therefore, with the exception of a few programs promoting access for targeted (at-risk) groups, relatively little attention is paid to promoting sport and recreation for the population at large, that is, for all citizens.

In an earlier era, this focus expressed the Cold War mentality and strategy of expressing political competition in sporting events. Now that globalization is creating a situation in which the sovereignty of states is threatened and in which national states rival each other for prestige in an international environment that is highly competitive, high-performance sport may become a favourite method for exorcising these demons.

There may, however, be danger in exploiting athletes' performance for the purposes of national identity and inter-state competition. Basic values that are key to political citizenship may be sacrificed, for example. The 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin serve as an example of sport used to legitimize non-democratic regimes. More recently, the decision by the International Olympic Committee to select Beijing as the host city for the 2008 Olympic Games raised concerns about how the Chinese government might try to use the games as a tool of legitimation for a form of state that seldom put human rights in the forefront, and about the role that sport organizations such as the International Olympic Committee should play with regard to the promotion of human rights in sport and in the overall society.

Support for high-performance sport may, however, be justified on other grounds that also involve the cultivation of citizenship. Such programs provide support and services to certain categories of citizens – in this case, top athletes – so that they can achieve their full potential. As such, policy proposals for high performance sports largely justify the means deployed to provide this type of service.

But it is not at all clear that these concerns actually drive government action. If they did, the government would implicitly be recognizing rights for athletes. A recent report of the Commissioner of Official Languages (Commissaire aux langues officielles, 2000), points out that francophones in Canada do not enjoy the same level of services as their anglophone counterparts, even though Sport Canada requires that the organizations that receive its subsidies provide adequate service in both official languages.

A third observation reveals a virtual absence of government programs to provide low-income persons and those at risk of social exclusion with access to recreation and sport. Indeed, it is charitable organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, drop-in centres, community recreation centres, and so on, which are financed primarily by fundraising campaigns such as those of the United Way, that pay attention to these citizens' needs. The result is that low-income (and increasingly middle-income) Canadians face a wide variety of systemic, superstructural, infrastructural, and organizational barriers (Donnelly and Harvey, 1996).

The financial and fiscal concerns that have increasingly guided government spending decisions have led to the downloading of responsibilities to the municipal level, an increase in costs, the introduction of user fees, and the privatization of service delivery. In this context, access to services has been increasingly threatened for low-income Canadians. Indeed, in its recent report, *The Progress of Canada's Children 2001*, the Canadian Council on Social Development states that "children's recreation is affected by their family income level. 60% of children from very poor homes 'almost never' participate in supervised sports, compared to 27% of their counterparts from well-off homes" (2001: 6).

A final observation is that there is a lack of programs providing access to sport and recreation for the most disadvantaged youth, especially high-risk youth. Citizens into the next generation are being placed at risk. While governments are not totally inactive in this area (as indicated by Box 2), there are still glaring needs to be met.

For example, there were fewer opportunities to introduce children to sports, because the time allocated to physical education in Canadian schools has been reduced and there have been significant cuts to extra-curricular programs. A recent study by Mahon (2001) finds, among other things, that municipal governments are beginning to feel the need to act. Perhaps, then, some change is on the way.

#### **IV. Sport and Recreation Programs Promoting Full Citizenship – Discussion of Principles**

As stated at the beginning of this paper, “full citizenship” as an ideal implies that citizens “are truly able to exercise their rights, take an active role in society, are fully integrated, and enjoy freedom, equality and material well-being irrespective of their origins, religion, sex, etc.” (Conseil supérieur de l’Éducation, 1998: 14). Thus, government policies and programs to boost full citizenship must be capable of exploiting all of the potential of recreation and sport.

Access to recreation and sport are an integral part of well-being, given the numerous beneficial effects that such activity has for emotional, physical and social development (see, for example, Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 1998). For groups at risk of social exclusion, sports programs may have a positive impact. Indeed, the research results in this area are conclusive.

For example, young people may adopt lifestyles associated with delinquency when they experience one or several of the following situations: low socioeconomic status, lack of family support, interaction with certain types of peer group gangs, poor school results, or living in a neighbourhood with a high level of crime (Wilson and White, 2001: 98). However, where programs provide these young people with access to sport and recreation, which displays certain essential characteristics, there is an appreciable effect in preventing delinquency (Collingwood, 1997; Martineck and Hellison, 1997). When programs “provide youth with positive role models, give youth something constructive to do, offer a sense of community, promote self-confidence and self-esteem and enhance cultural awareness,” positive outcomes follow (Wilson and White, 2001: 74).

Other recent research also shows that physical education at school plays a role in citizen education. Laker (2000), for example, found that a curriculum including physical education made a contribution to moral development in areas such as self-esteem, tolerance, and respect for others. In addition, he argues that involving children in designing and organizing activities can promote their sense of involvement in community life, and that assuming responsibility for programs and activities can foster political literacy. Lastly, he takes care to point out that, according to the research, “citizenship skills” learned as part of physical education and school sports are transferred to other areas of young people’s lives.

Given this, it is possible to identify three main objectives that public policies and programs might follow in order to promote full citizenship:

1. Developing a pluralistic approach to identity formation
2. Promoting recreation and sport as social rights, and
3. Using sport and recreation to fight social exclusion.

Pluralistic nations such as Canada cannot limit themselves to the sort of nationalism that promotes centralization and denies diversity. Canadian experience teaches that citizens may have a wide range of identities that may compete or may complement one another. Therefore, sport and recreation's contribution to fostering full citizenship can be to promote a respect for diversity and difference.

Canada, like many other countries, is a signatory to several international conventions that attest to an international ideal of citizenship explicitly recognizing the right to recreation and sport, especially for youth. These conventions include:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially articles 22 and 24, which establish the right of all persons to meet their social and cultural rights, and the right of all to rest and recreation

- The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (under UNESCO), and
- The International Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>4</sup>
- Each of these envisages access to sport and recreation as foundational to well-being and, therefore, as a social right.

Lastly, full citizenship is not consistent with widespread social exclusion. The very notion of citizenship is one founded on equality and inclusion. Therefore, sport and recreation programs that promote social inclusion also promote full citizenship.

## **V. Principles of Governance for Fostering Full Citizenship<sup>5</sup>**

Pursuing policies that foster full citizenship also implies identifying and practising appropriate forms of governance. Governance is guidance, says Gilles Paquet (1999: 23). It is the way society guides itself and maintains itself on course. Good governance implies adherence to a few central principles. Most important with regard to public policies that foster full citizenship is the promotion of participation in decision-making, given that political rights are one of the core rights of citizenship. Governance must therefore be accountable and open.

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4 For a more in-depth discussion of these aspects, see Donnelly (2000); Kidd and Donnelly (2000).

5 This section is a reworked version of a part of a text already published. See Harvey (2001).

Following these principles would mean that:

1. Governance in the area of recreation and sport policy would be the focus of ongoing public debate, without which democratic decision making is impossible. Partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors would be assessed for their “citizenship effects.”
2. Governance would be designed to avoid risks of discrimination to citizens based, for example, on their religion, sex or age. In other words, accountability is not simply important in the financial sphere. Good governance advances both procedural accountability and results-based accountability.
3. The principle of subsidiarity is also often proposed as a core principle of governance. This implies locating decision-making power at the level of government most appropriate to accomplishing the goals. This may imply at the level closest to citizens, in some cases or to the more centralized levels in other cases.

Now that we have introduced these three basic principles, we must elaborate.

### **Renewing Partnerships and Maintaining Accountability**

The programs that we have discussed reveal that the upper levels of government in Canada have little involvement in the direct delivery of recreation and sport programs. Indeed, the federal government and the provinces depend largely on civil society associations to provide services. During the heyday of the welfare state, governments gradually increased their subsidies to these associations so that they might provide better quality services.

The battle waged against deficits, at its height in the 1980s and 1990s, profoundly affected the sport and recreation sector just as it did all other sectors. Government subsidies to sport associations were subject to deep cuts, while, during the same period, citizens’ demands for effective and equitable services increased. To respond to these two pressures, governments tightened conditions for allocating subsidies. The resulting tensions revealed the limits of such partnerships. For example, when services are provided by volunteers who are accountable to their memberships and who have mandates of their own, how far can the state go in forcing them to achieve *its* goals and commitments? To what extent can national associations and non-profit organizations be compelled to pursue the objectives of equity towards women and francophones, for example?

In addition, as Thibault, Kikulis and Frisby (forthcoming) have demonstrated, the New Public Management ideology, which that has achieved hegemony in the public sectors of the developed world, uses management principles derived from the private sector. These focus on the “client,” rather than on the rights-bearing citizen, on effective management, and on short-term results. In the sport and recreation sector, application of this new form of management has led to partnerships with private firms for delivering services, if supply was not simply privatized altogether. According to these authors, the net result of these practices was not only a decrease in the costs to governments of delivering services, but also a marked deterioration in access to these services by low-income groups.

There are two consequences of the New Public Management for citizenship and governance. The higher costs of the services put them out of reach of many citizens. Also, since programs are designed by firms not governments, the space for citizen involvement and choice is substantially reduced. Citizens have lost the power to influence public policy.

Fostering full citizenship might also involve taking particular care regarding the partnerships between the state and civil society. It may be possible for the government to interact increasingly with organizations outside the world of sport, in order to achieve its goals. For example, governments could consider renewed relationships with mutual aid organizations working with low-income groups, cooperative movements and others. Partnerships developed by the Women Organizing Activities for Women collective with municipal Parks and Recreation Departments, women's support groups and social welfare agencies in British Columbia could serve as a model, for example (Women Organizing Activities for Women 2000a; 2000b).

In this action research initiative, under the leadership of Wendy Frisby, low-income women became equal partners with the researchers and with representatives of local government and agencies, so their voices were heard and recreational opportunities were provided according to their needs (Frisby *et al.*, 2001). This is only one example of a broader set of actions the state might take to foster full citizenship by lowering systemic barriers to access to sport and recreation opportunities (Donnelly and Harvey, 1996).

### **Subsidiarity**

The notion of subsidiarity raises the question of which level of government is the most appropriate for providing recreation and sport programs. Sport policy affects several areas of public policy. Constitutional ambiguities regarding the respective jurisdictions of the various levels of government in the fields of recreation and sport are but one example of the complexity and scope of these fields. Clearly, these kinds of ambiguities do not facilitate attempts to deal with the issue of subsidiarity. If we momentarily avoid taking into account Quebec's wishful thinking in affirming its presence on the international scene (such as by way of the Francophone Games), international sport falls clearly within the sphere of foreign policy. Jurisdiction in this sector, and responsibility for international sport, is thus assigned to the federal level.

The situation is more complex if we examine physical education in the schools, and the promotion of physical activity for the purposes of promoting health. The former belongs to the education sector, while the latter belongs to the health sector. The provinces consider both of these sectors to be their sole responsibility, although for the last four decades at least, the federal government has always played a significant role in health.

Canada has had significant experience with decentralizing responsibility for programs providing access to recreation and sport. First, the vast majority of facilities and most equipment used in sport and recreation belong to local authorities, primarily school boards.

Second, experience with programs that provide access to sport and recreation for low-income groups, such as poor women or youth at risk, teaches us that the effective programs are those in which the citizens targeted are full partners, that is, programs in which they have roles to play in taking decisions on all aspects of these programs. At the same time, these roles develop citizenship skills that are likely to result in full citizenship.

However, it should not be concluded from the above discussion that local administrations alone can be assigned total responsibility for delivering programs promoting full citizenship. The principle of subsidiarity implies that all programs should be evaluated to determine which level of government is most appropriate for delivering the service, and ensuring that the level which must deliver the service has the resources to do so.

## **VI. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Canadian experience in policies and programs that deal with recreation and sport for promoting citizenship teaches us that, even in developed countries, the ideal of full citizenship is difficult to attain. Nonetheless, the approaches presented here appear to be applicable to a variety of countries. In our view, full citizenship is evidence of greater social cohesion, which is just as important in improving the well-being of all.

Since little research has been carried out on this public policy, many questions remain. There is a similar lack of research on youth culture, especially youth at risk. If we carefully examine access barriers to sport and recreation, then it becomes apparent that – as with barriers to other aspects of well-being – we know little about (1) the essential characteristics of effective access to programs in recreation and sport for marginalized populations; (2) the ways in which recreation and sport can be used as tools for reducing risk among youth; and (3) the essential characteristics of effective sport and physical education programs as vehicles for citizenship education.

In addition to recommending research programs to shed light on the questions raised, it is useful to end with the following recommendation. If full citizenship is the ideal, it is of paramount importance that sport and recreation policies adopt a “sport for all” orientation. It follows that a key function of government action in this area should be access to sport and recreation.

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**Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN)**

600 – 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1

Tel: (613) 567-7500 Fax: (613) 567-7640

Web Site: <http://www.cprn.org>

**Multiculturalism and Citizenship-Building in Canada**

By

**Will Kymlicka**

Department of Philosophy

Queen's University

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## I. Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada

Canada has an heterogeneous population – one of the most diverse in the Western world – with a wide range of ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities.<sup>1</sup> The accommodation of ethnocultural differences has been a constant challenge for Canadian politics, and a constant factor underlying Canada’s approach to citizenship. This paper will explore some of the policies adopted to accommodate diversity in Canada, and their implications for citizenship promotion.

To begin with, we need to outline the ethnocultural makeup of Canada. The largest ethnic group are the descendants of the British settlers who colonized Canada. In this respect, Canada resembles other British settler societies such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand. However, while this is the largest group in terms of ethnic origin, it is no longer a majority of the overall population. There are literally hundreds of other ethnocultural groups, each with its own history and identity, making Canada one of the most multicultural countries in the world.

We can divide these groups into two broad categories: (1) the *national minorities* who were here before British colonization, and who had their own laws, institutions and historic territories prior to being subjected to British rule; and (2) the *immigrant ethnic groups* who emigrated here after British colonization, with the expectation of living under British and then Canadian laws and institutions.

Each of these broad categories is quite diverse. When the English began to settle in Canada in the late 1700s, there were already two distinct national groups – the Aboriginal peoples (Indians and Inuit) who had lived here for thousands of years prior to European colonization, and the French, a rival group of colonizing settlers, who had begun to settle in Quebec almost 200 years earlier, in the early 1600s.<sup>2</sup> The historical process by which these groups were brought into a single political community was largely involuntary. Indian homelands were overrun by French settlers, who were then conquered by the English in 1760.

These groups are often called *national minorities* because they see themselves as “nations” in the sociological sense of being complete societies, occupying a historic territory or homeland, and sharing a distinct language and culture. Moreover, they share the desire of most nations around the world to exercise some form of territorial self-government, and adopt the language and rhetoric of nationalism in this pursuit. Since Canada contains more than one nation and nationalist movement, it is not a nation-state but a multination state, and the French and Aboriginal communities form “national minorities,” and mobilize as “minority nationalisms.”

Defining these national groups is complicated. For example, while there are francophones across Canada, the French-speaking nation in Canada is strongly identified with the province of Quebec where most francophones in Canada live, and where they form 80 percent of the population. I use the term “Québécois” to describe to the French-speaking majority in the province of Quebec.

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1 On Canada as a “statistical outlier” in its degree of diversity, see Laczko (1994).

2 On the Plains, a new national group known as the Métis emerged from the extensive intermarriage between Indians and French. The Métis are now defined as one of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples.

The term “Aboriginal” covers three categories of indigenous peoples – the original Indian and Inuit peoples, and also the Métis, who are descendants of mixed-race marriages between French traders and Plains Indians in the Canadian West. The category of ‘Indian’ in turn can be broken down into numerous distinct national groups with their own histories and community identities (e.g., the Cree, the Mohawks). It has been estimated that there are 30 to 60 distinct Aboriginal peoples in Canada, divided into 11 language groups. Altogether, francophones constitute about 25 percent of Canada’s population, while Aboriginals constitute about 2 percent.

In addition to the national minorities, Canada also contains a number of *immigrant groups*. Starting from the 1840s, there have been successive waves of immigration, sponsored first by British colonial authorities, and then by the government of Canada. Large numbers of individuals and families from other countries have been recruited as immigrants, first from Europe, now mainly from Asia and Africa. Indeed, Canada has one of the highest per capita rates of immigration in the world. Around 17 percent of Canadians are foreign-born, and another 30 percent of Canadians are descended from earlier generations of non-British, non-French immigrants. While historically most immigrants were white Europeans, the number of people with African, Asian, Arab or other non-European ancestry (often known as “visible minorities”) is constantly increasing, and is now around 11 percent.

## **II. Historic Strategies for Building Citizenship**

This, then, is a very simplified indication of the depth of diversity of Canada’s population, which includes a range of national/nationalist groups, both Aboriginal and French-Canadian/Québécois,<sup>3</sup> and a range of immigrant groups, both older white European groups and more recent visible minority groups, alongside the historically-dominant British-Canadians. Building a cohesive and stable political community amidst such diversity is obviously a major challenge. There is no natural or ready-made basis for unity. Each of these groups has its own historic language, religion, homeland, myths, customs and cultural traditions to which its members may remain strongly attached. Moreover, each group has its own sense of its historic accomplishments, entitlements or grievances within Canada, the promises made to it (but not always kept) by the Canadian government, and of its legitimate place in the fabric of the Canadian state and society.

The narratives told within each group about its historic roles and rightful expectations are not only different, but often competing and contradictory – one group’s narrative is perceived by other groups as ignoring their grievances, trivializing their accomplishments, appropriating their lands or labour, or breaking their solemn agreements. It is understandable, then, that constructing a sense of shared identity and shared loyalty has been a continuing preoccupation of Canadian governments.

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3 Today, French-Canadian nationalism is almost exclusively localized in Quebec, and identifies itself as “Québécois” nationalism. However, it would be a mistake to assume that this was always or inevitably so. French settlers were found throughout large parts of what is now Canada before and after the Conquest and, under different circumstances, the identity and territory of French-Canadian nationalism could have been very different. The localization of French-Canadian nationalism to Quebec is something to be explained, not assumed in advance. As I discuss below, part of the explanation lies in the policies adopted by the British to contain “the French Fact.”

The formation of Canada as a political community was, in many ways, quite artificial. It was not natural or inevitable that all of the people living in the current territory of Canada would form a single political community. Even relatively modest variations in the 18th century military balance of power, or in 19th century British colonial priorities, or in 20th century immigration policies, would have resulted in a dramatically different set of political communities in this part of the North American continent. Parts of what is now Canada might easily have been part of the United States, or an independent New France, or Indian Territory. Parts of what are now multiethnic but overwhelmingly English-speaking Prairie provinces in Canada might instead have been dominated by Indians, or French, or Americans, or Ukrainians, or have been the Canadian equivalent of “white Australia,” or independent republics.

So if Canadian citizens were to come to share a sense of common identity and loyalty, it could only be constructed through deliberate state policy. State power and state persuasion was needed to construct and maintain Canada as a political community, and to persuade or pressure its citizens into thinking that they belonged together in a single state. It is a commonplace today to emphasize that all national identities are “socially constructed,” not primordial. But we should not let this sociological commonplace obscure the ways in which Canada is much more of a “constructed” nation than, say, Hungary or Portugal, the vast majority of whose residents have for several centuries shared a common language and religion, and exhibited strong feelings of belonging together in a single community. Canadians have been “thrown together” as a political community in a much more radical way (or at least a much more recent way) than Hungarians or Portuguese.

However, the strategies adopted in pursuit of this goal have changed radically over the years. The earliest strategy for dealing with the non-British components of the population was, in effect, to deny them. Canadian identity was defined in terms of a conservative and imperialist conception of Canada as British in culture and political loyalties. Any group that was seen as unable or unwilling to manifest this British loyalty or identity was excluded, assimilated, disempowered or simply ignored. This model was perhaps unavoidable when Canada was still a colony of Britain, prior to Confederation in 1867. But it remained the basis of state policy for many years afterwards, at least until World War II.

This British-centric conception of the Canadian political community was reflected in various policies towards minorities. Immigrants, for example, were expected not only to become citizens, but also over time to shed their distinctive heritage and become virtually indistinguishable from the native-born British majority. This is called the “Anglo-conformity” model of immigrant integration, and was as strong in Canada as in the United States or Australia.

Immigrants in Canada were expected to become indistinguishable from British-Canadians in their speech, clothes, diet, housing, political views, work habits, family size, leisure activities, and general demeanour. Indeed, would-be immigrants who were seen as incapable of this sort of cultural assimilation into the Anglo community were denied entry. Canada adopted racially restrictive admissions, which favoured white Europeans while excluding other groups, particularly Africans, South Asians and East Asians.

There were severe restrictions on the immigration of Chinese and Indians, and those who did manage to come to Canada were denied the franchise until the late 1940s. By contrast, preference was accorded in the immigration selection process to people from Britain.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the challenge of immigrant diversity to the hegemony of the British conception of Canadian identity was defused through a combination of a preference for British immigrants, assimilation of white European immigrants, and exclusion of those termed incapable of assimilation.

National minorities posed more of a challenge to the British-centric model of Canadian identity. There was no possibility of excluding Aboriginals or French-speaking Canadians from Canadian territory, since they were already here, and indeed were here before the British. Moreover, national minorities around the world have proven to be much more resistant to assimilation than immigrants. This should not be surprising since they are previously self-governing groups still living on their traditional homelands but forcibly included in another state, whereas immigrants have chosen to leave their homeland to emigrate to another country, and know in advance that this will require cultural adaptation and the acceptance of the laws and institutions of the new country.

To be sure, the strategy of assimilation was tried in the 19th century, both towards Aboriginals and French-Canadians, but was a complete failure. Attempts in the 1760s to abolish French laws and institutions were quickly abandoned, as were reforms in the 1840s based on Lord Durham's proposals to assimilate the French. Attempts to assimilate the Indians were more tenacious, but were equally a failure. Although the government provided powerful incentives (e.g., acquiring the right to vote) to Indians who renounced their Indian status and simply became "Canadian," only one Indian chose to do so between 1857 and 1876. Even with more coercive attempts at assimilation between 1876 and 1920 (e.g., forcing Indian children into residential schools), only 249 Indians choose to give up Indian status for Canadian citizenship (less than one per year).<sup>5</sup>

Given the failure of assimilationist policies towards national minorities, a different policy was needed to maintain the hegemony of the British-centric model of Canadianness. This was, in effect, a strategy of disempowerment and marginalization, or what Ian Lustick (1979) calls "control." A variety of strategies were used to reduce the power of national minorities, including:

- ***Reducing the territory dominated by national minorities***, typically by promoting massive settlement of British-Canadians or new immigrants into areas traditionally held by national minorities. This is most obvious in the case of Aboriginals, who have been dispossessed of the vast majority of their traditional lands, and gradually forced into smaller and smaller "reserves."

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4 This is a preference that was extended to immigrants from Northwest Europe in 1951 and to Europeans generally in 1957.

5 In the 1920s, the government even attempted to move individual Indians from the list of Status Indians to the list of Canadian citizens, without their consent. The Deputy Minister in charge stated: "Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic" (D.C. Scott, Deputy Minister of Department of Indian Affairs, 1920, quoted in Miller (1991), 207).

Recall Sir John A. Macdonald's comment regarding the Métis that "these impulsive half-breeds ... must be kept down by a strong hand until they are swamped by the influx of settlers").<sup>6</sup> But this strategy was also applied to disempower French-Canadians, who were the first to settle parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the West, and who had well-established French-language institutions in those regions at the time of joining Confederation. Had the Canadian government recruited francophone rather than anglophone immigrants for the settling of the West, or encouraged the more than half-million francophones who moved to the United States to move instead to the West, then these provinces today might have remained predominantly francophone parts of the country. Instead, they were quickly outnumbered by settlers who, once in a majority, voted to strip the francophones of their language rights. As a result, the only place in Canada where francophones remain the dominant group is in Quebec, and in narrow strips adjoining Quebec in Ontario and New Brunswick. The "French Fact," which was once powerful throughout Canada, has been progressively reduced in territory.

- ***Reducing the economic power of national minorities.*** This was achieved either by depriving them of natural resources (in the case of Aboriginals) or by establishing an ethnicized class structure, in which the national minority is concentrated in rural or working-class occupations while the dominant group controls the industrial and commercial economy (in the case of the French-Canadians, prior to the Quiet Revolution).
- ***Reducing the political power of national minorities.*** In the case of Aboriginals, this was done in a very crude way, by denying them citizenship (unless they renounced Indian status), and hence denying them the right to vote. Moreover, their traditional forms of communal self-government were abolished, and replaced with a colonial form of paternalistic rule by the federal government, so that Aboriginals needed the consent of the federal government for even the most minor decisions. While French-Canadians were not denied the vote, and formed an electoral majority within the province of Quebec, the powers of the provincial government were slowly eroded and made subservient to an increasingly centralized federal government dominated by British Canadians.<sup>7</sup>

So the challenge posed by national minorities to British-centric definition of Canada was defused through various strategies of marginalization. While the members of these groups could not, unlike immigrants, be assimilated into the dominant group, they could be disempowered, so that the dominant group retained all the important levers of economic and political power.

All of these strategies of exclusion, assimilation, and disempowerment reflect a deliberate government intention to preserve a Canadian identity defined in terms of British language, culture and institutions. Perhaps the most striking evidence of this British-centric definition of Canadian identity was the complete lack of interest in developing or defining a specifically Canadian citizenship. The first *Canadian Citizenship Act* was only adopted in 1946. Until then, "Canadian nationals" were simply British subjects born or residing in Canada!<sup>8</sup>

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6 MacDonal, quoted in Stanley (1961), 95.

7 For these "control" elements of Canadian politics, see Noël (1993).

8 On the historical origins of the *Citizenship Act*, see Pal (1993), Chapter 4.

This British-centric model of Canadian nationhood was not only state policy, but was also widely endorsed by many Canadians. As well, it underlay the first mass movements of pan-Canadian nationalism, such as the “Canada First” movement, which actively supported these policies to assimilate European immigrants, exclude non-European immigrants, control French-Canadians, and disenfranchise Aboriginal peoples.<sup>9</sup>

### III. A New Approach

This British-centric approach survived until World War II. War has been a crucial factor in the “constructing” of national identities throughout the modern West, and Canada is no exception.<sup>10</sup> The advent of the war set in motion a process of redefining Canadian citizenship and nationhood which eventually led to the abandonment, indeed repudiation, of all of the strategies I have just listed, and their replacement with new models of Canada as a pluralistic and multicultural federation.

In times of war, states are deeply concerned with the loyalty of citizens, and their willingness to contribute to the war effort. The inevitable result of defining Canadian identity in British terms, however, was that there were large numbers of Canadians who felt excluded from the political community. The Canadian state was worried about the loyalty of those Canadians who were unable or unwilling to identify themselves in British terms, and so began a process of reaching out to them. For example, the state reached out to immigrant minorities, and emphasized how important they were to the war effort, and how valuable was their contribution to Canadian society – steps that can be seen as the first seeds of the current multiculturalism program in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

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9 As Sylvia Bashevkin notes, “the voices of this [pan-Canadian] nationalism have been overwhelmingly English Canadian,” and their conceptions of pan-Canadian nationalism have “ignored almost completely” the existence and aspirations of national minorities (1991: 26-27). Even the more progressive left-wing forms of pan-Canadian nationalism which emerged in the 1930s, such as the League for Social Reconstruction and the *Canadian Forum*, were led by English-speaking Canadians who showed no concern for the autonomy of national minorities. For a discussion of the history of pan-Canadian nationalism, see Bashevkin (1991), Chapters 1-2.

10 See Tully (2000) on war and nation building.

11 For the origins of Canadian multiculturalism in World War II, see Pal (1993); and Joshee (1995). War is an extreme example of a more general point about the need of modern states for the active cooperation and support of citizens. As Cairns and Williams note, we need “a fuller, richer and yet more subtle understanding and practice of citizenship,” because “what the state needs from the citizenry cannot be secured by coercion, but only cooperation and self-restraint in the exercise of private power” (1985: 43). In this respect, states today differ from pre-modern or feudal multiethnic empires. In the past, multiethnic empires were often content to let minorities alone, so long as they paid their taxes or tributes, obeyed the laws, and co-existed peacefully with other ethnic groups. Today, however, few states around the world are content with this sort of co-existence. They want minorities to exhibit a stronger sense of loyalty to the state, so that they will actively cooperate in the projects of the state, be they militaristic wars, economic modernization, or social justice. To gain the active support of citizens, states around the world have adopted citizenship-building programs which aim to turn *co-subjects*, bound only loosely to each other by certain common laws and taxes, into *co-nationals*, who share a strong bond in virtue of a common national identity and a common commitment to national projects.

In addition to these top-down policies of outreach to minorities, the war also generated spontaneous popular feelings of solidarity and patriotism, rooted in the shared experience of common sacrifices and resistance to a common enemy – a feeling of shared membership that cut across lines of race, class, language or religion. (Studies suggest that the shared experience of responding to a common external military threat is indeed one of the most important factors in building cohesion in multinational states.<sup>12</sup>)

But perhaps the most important legacy of World War II – and certainly its most distinctive legacy, compared with other wars – was the human rights revolution it spawned. The struggle against Nazism was defended, in part, as a struggle against the ideas of racial superiority and ethnic intolerance that Hitler advocated. The war thoroughly discredited all such racist ideologies, which implied that a “superior” race had the right to disenfranchise, exclude, expel or kill “inferior” minorities within the state, or the right to colonize and rule over “backward” peoples outside the state. To protect against the recurrence of this sort of racist ideology, the international community adopted an extraordinary set of commitments – human rights conventions, which endorsed: (a) principles of equal citizenship and non-discrimination within states; and (b) principles of the equal right of all peoples to self-determination.

To fully gauge the impact of this “rights revolution,” it is necessary to remember how widespread racist ideologies were before World War II. Indeed, they underlay the very structure of the Canadian state itself. It was precisely racist assumptions that had been invoked to justify the colonization of the Americas to begin with, to justify the denial of the vote to East Asians and Aboriginals, and to justify the exclusion of Asians and Africans from admission to Canada.

All of these policies became a source of embarrassment to Canada. The traditional structure of the Canadian state was profoundly at odds with the new model of universal human rights, and a wide range of policies needed rethinking.<sup>13</sup> These changes did not occur overnight. It was not until the early 1970s that the last remnants of the old model were conclusively repudiated and replaced by new models of a pluralist and inclusive Canadian citizenship. I will consider changes regarding immigrant groups first, and then move on to national minorities.

By the 1960s, the policy of racially restrictive immigration was increasingly criticized in international forums, particularly by countries in Asia and Africa. Partly in response to these critiques,<sup>14</sup> the Canadian government shifted to a “points system” for selecting immigrants, based on their skills, education, age, and so on, without regard to their race or ethnicity. This change was formalized in the *Immigration Act* of 1967. As a result, the new immigrants who began arriving in the late 1960s were increasingly non-white (and non-Christian), and these “non-traditional” immigrants now form the majority of Canada’s immigrants.

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12 See Lemco (1991), Chapter 8, on the importance of war in explaining the stability of multinational states.

13 For a sensitive discussion of the impact of the “rights revolution” in Canada, see Ignatieff (2000). For the United States, see Walker (1998).

14 See Hawkins (1989: 13) for the relevance of international criticism.

This shift in the composition of immigration almost inevitably led to a second major shift, namely, the repudiation of the Anglo-conformity model of immigrant assimilation with a new more pluralistic and “multicultural” model of immigrant integration. This new model, formally declared in parliament in 1971, respected the desire of immigrants to cherish and express their ethnic identity. Immigrants are allowed and indeed supported to maintain some of their old customs regarding food, dress, recreation, and religion, and to associate with each other to maintain these practices. This is no longer seen as unpatriotic or “un-Canadian.” Moreover, the state made a commitment to reform public institutions such as schools, hospitals, police, and the media so as to recognize and accommodate this immigrant ethnicity, and to provide public services in culturally sensitive ways.

The relationship between these two changes – the rejection of racial preferences in admissions of immigrants, and the rejection of Anglo-conformity in the integration of immigrants – is complex. On the one hand, the experience of World War II (and subsequently of the Cold War) had shown clearly that Anglo-conformity was simply not necessary to ensure that immigrants became loyal and productive citizens. Even those immigrant groups that had not assimilated had proven themselves to be loyal and patriotic citizens in the fight against Nazism and Communism. So commitment to Anglo-conformity was waning and this, in turn, undermined one of the main arguments for racial preferences, since the original argument for excluding non-whites was their inability to assimilate.

On the other hand, the causal arrow also went in the other direction. The repudiation of racialist ideologies gradually discredited the very idea of racially restrictive admissions policy, and this in turn undermined support for Anglo-conformity, since it was clear that these “non-traditional” immigrants would never become indistinguishable from the British core group. If racial preferences were illegitimate, a new model of integration would be required, one which taught Canadians the need to learn to live with diversity.

In any event, whatever the causal relationship, the combined result was a revolution in social policy. Whereas immigration used to be predominantly about assimilating white Europeans into a society defined in essentially British terms, it is now predominantly about integrating non-white immigrants into a multicultural society.

The policy of multiculturalism, which was initially adopted by the federal government as a guide for its own activities, has subsequently been accepted by other levels of government (provincial and municipal), as well as by many private organizations such as universities or large corporations. The precise meaning of “multiculturalism” varies in these different contexts. The following list of 12 reforms give a fair indication, however, of the types of reforms that have been pursued in Canada under the rubric of “multiculturalism.” This is not a comprehensive list of “multicultural” reforms, but it is a reasonable reflection of the sorts of issues which are raised in the public debate over immigrant multiculturalism, and which have been adopted or at least seriously proposed in Canada.

1. Adopting affirmative action programs, which seek to increase the representation of immigrant groups (or women and the disabled) in major educational and economic institutions

2. Reserving a certain number of seats in the legislature or on government advisory bodies for immigrant groups (or women and the disabled)
3. Revising the history and literature curriculum within public schools to give greater recognition to the historical and cultural contributions of immigrant groups
4. Revising work schedules so as to accommodate the religious holidays of immigrant groups (e.g., some schools schedule Professional Development days on major Jewish or Muslim holidays, and Jewish and Muslim businesses are exempted from Sunday closing legislation)
5. Revising dress codes so as to accommodate the religious beliefs of immigrant groups (e.g., revising the army dress code so that Orthodox Jews can wear skullcaps, or exempting Sikhs from mandatory motorcycle helmet laws or construction site hardhat laws)
6. Adopting anti-racist educational programs
7. Adopting workplace or school harassment codes, which seek to prevent colleagues and students from making racial (or sexist or homophobic) statements
8. Mandating cultural diversity training for the police or health care professionals, so they can recognize individual needs and conflicts within immigrant families
9. Legislating regulatory guidelines about ethnic stereotypes in the media
10. Providing government funding for ethnic cultural festivals and ethnic studies programs
11. Providing certain services to adult immigrants in their mother tongue, rather than requiring them to learn English or French as a precondition for accessing public services, and
12. Providing bilingual education programs for the children of immigrants, so their earliest years of education are conducted partly in their mother tongue, as a transitional phase to secondary and post-secondary education in English or French.

Each of the items on this list raises distinct issues, so it is difficult to summarize their aims or consequences in a single sentence. But it is fair to say that they all have the goal of either: (a) promoting the participation of immigrants in public institutions; or (b) reforming these public institutions to make immigrants feel more welcome. These policies make it easier for immigrants to get in the door of public institutions in Canada, and then make them feel more at home once inside. Or at least this is the goal. Some critics doubt whether the policies have been successful in achieving it. I will discuss these critiques in the next section of the paper. But first, let us look at post-war changes in Canada's approach to national minorities. Here too we see dramatic, even revolutionary, changes.

The historic treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada violated virtually every aspect of the post-1945 norms of human rights. This was most obvious with respect to the denial of the vote, a blatant form of racial discrimination that was finally reversed in 1960, largely due to international pressure. But this by itself did not reflect any acceptance or recognition of the Aboriginal claim that they form "nations within" with rights of self-government.

On the contrary, the fact that Indians were accorded citizenship rights was invoked shortly thereafter precisely as a reason for rejecting any remaining forms of “special status” for Indians, such as respecting land claims and treaty rights. The proposal to terminate Indians’ special legal status was made in a 1969 White Paper. So even after the granting of citizenship to Aboriginals in 1960, the government assumed an inherent conflict between accepting Canadian citizenship and demanding recognition as self-governing Aboriginal nations.<sup>15</sup>

However, this attempt to reduce the legal status of Indians to that of undifferentiated Canadian citizens, while less discriminatory on the surface, was also in violation of new international norms, namely, of the self-determination of peoples. Part of the rejection of racist ideologies was not only the rejection of racial discrimination within states, but also the repudiation of the idea that some (“civilized”) peoples have the right to colonize other (“backward”) peoples. The precise meaning of the international norm of self-determination is hotly contested, and the treatment of indigenous peoples by settler societies is not (yet) held to be governed by the international law of the self-determination of peoples. While European colonial powers were required by post-war international law to allow their *overseas*’ colonized peoples to become independent, there is no similar legal obligation for European settler societies such as Canada to allow their *internally* colonized peoples to become independent.<sup>16</sup>

Yet it is obvious that the underlying principle applies as much to the European colonization of the indigenous peoples within Canada as to the European colonization of indigenous peoples in Africa or Asia. The international law of self-determination may only apply to overseas colonies, but the underlying repudiation of colonial mentalities and institutions supports the demand of indigenous peoples in Canada for their decolonization, and the restoration of their historic self-government. So, from the late 1970s on, we see a clear trend towards the slow but steady recognition of an “inherent right of self-government” for Aboriginal peoples, which has enabled them to seek greater control over a range of issues, including the environment, health, education, policing, criminal justice, child welfare, and economic development. We also see a trend towards the settlement of land claims and treaty rights, which are restoring Aboriginal control over some of their traditional territories and natural resources. Finally, we see the development of new constitutional conventions that guarantee that Aboriginals be consulted on changes that directly affect them, and also proposals for enhanced Aboriginal representation in federal institutions, such as the Senate or the Supreme Court.

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15 The 1960 extension of the vote occurred without the consultation of Indians, and some Aboriginals argued that it “lends symbolic legitimacy to the fiction that Indians have given democratic consent to Canadian sovereignty and citizenship, and that their primary commitment is to the Canadian regime. Thus it undermines Indian claims to ‘peoples’ rights’ under the U.N. Charter” (Boldt, 1993: 83). Indeed, Canada has challenged attempts by Indians to use United Nations’ forums for indigenous peoples on the grounds that Indians are (belated) Canadian citizens (Boldt, 1993: 48).

16 This is known as the “salt-water thesis” in international law. If a colonized people are ruled as an overseas colony, they are entitled to self-determination, but if a colonized people are ruled by settlers who govern from within the same land mass, they are not entitled to self-determination. Needless to say, this is widely criticized as morally arbitrary. The harm of colonization is not lessened (and may even be worsened) if it is done through permanent settlement rather than overseas rule. For this reason, efforts have been made recently to extend the international norm of self-determination to indigenous peoples within settler societies. See Anaya (1996).

There has been, then, a dramatic shift in the status of Aboriginal peoples over the past 40 years, from being denied basic citizenship rights (in 1960), to the status of undifferentiated Canadian citizens (as proposed in 1969), to a new “nation-to-nation” model that views Aboriginals as nations or peoples within Canada, with inherent rights of self-government.<sup>17</sup>

The changes in the status of French-Canadians/Québécois have been equally important. Here, too, we see the influence of the post-war international rhetoric of human rights. These include attempts to define the historic treatment of Québécois in terms of both racial discrimination – “white niggers of America” (hence inconsistent with international norms of non-discrimination), and in terms of colonization (hence inconsistent with international norms of the self-determination of peoples). Appealing to these principles, activists both inside and outside Quebec have fought to repudiate, and indeed to reverse, the historic policies of reducing their territory, economic opportunities and political powers.

Reforms by the Canadian government include the adoption of official bilingualism, so that all public services provided by the federal government are available in both languages, from sea to sea, and so that French is a working language of the federal civil service and parliament. This policy was intended both to promote the viability of francophone minorities outside Quebec, who can now reliably receive public services in their own language, and to make it easier for francophones to participate in the federal government, both in parliament and the bureaucracy. Indeed, after decades of being marginalized within the federal government, francophones today are well-represented in federal institutions – if anything, slightly over-represented in relation to their share of the population.<sup>18</sup>

A second reform concerned the strengthening of provincial autonomy to resist the historic tendency of the federal government to seek greater centralization of power,<sup>19</sup> and to give the Québécois the sense that they are truly self-governing within the Canadian federation. This enhanced provincial power has been used to attack the ethnicized class structure within Quebec, which had largely relegated francophones to working class or rural occupations. Today, French has replaced English as the main language of business in Quebec, and the average income of francophones in Quebec matches that of anglophones in Quebec (or in the rest of Canada).

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17 For an overview of these developments, and the centrality of the larger international context and discourse of decolonization, see Cairns (2000). For the most detailed blueprint of this new “nation-to-nation” model, see Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996).

18 For the importance of official language rights for enabling francophones to participate in, and identify with, the federal government, see Réaume (2000).

19 Efforts by the federal government at centralization prior to the 1930s were often blocked by the Privy Council in Britain, which had final authority over constitutional issues in Canada. But a degree of centralization was unavoidable to deal with emergencies both in the 1930s (the Depression) and the 1940s (World War II), and this continued after the war.

A very important example of this enhanced provincial power is the agreement to share control over immigration, so that Quebec now is able to choose its own immigrants. This is almost unique in the West, but helps to ensure that immigration is a tool for promoting and enriching Québécois society, rather than a tool for swamping or outnumbering francophones, as it has been used historically in Canada.<sup>20</sup>

In short, in both the case of Aboriginals and of French-Canadians/Québécois, older policies of control aimed at reducing their territory, economic resources, and political power have been repudiated. They have been replaced with new policies premised on the strengthening of their self-government, the promotion of their economic well-being, and their increased participation in federal institutions. More generally, it is now accepted that these groups will survive into the indefinite future as nations/nationalist groups, and must be recognized as equal partners in, and constituent members of, the Canadian federation. Their existence and aspirations are as important to the identity and legitimacy of the Canadian federation as the British-Canadians. We can view all of these reforms as steps towards a new model of “multination federalism” for the accommodation of minority nationalism in Canada.<sup>21</sup>

So we have seen revolutionary changes both with respect to immigrant groups and national minorities in Canada. These changes began with World War II, but only fully picked up steam in the turbulent 1960s and early 1970s. All of these changes are now enshrined in the 1982 Canadian Constitution and, while they are still controversial, as I discuss in the next section, it is almost impossible to imagine reversing these historic shifts. Indeed, these changes would have received further constitutional protection under the proposed Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords.

In describing these changes, I have focused exclusively on Canada, and discussed it in isolation from the trends in other countries. But it is important to note that we see precisely the same trends in the other British settler societies (New Zealand, Australia, and the United States). We see a shift from Anglo-conformity to multiculturalism for immigrants in all these countries, and also a shift from colonial paternalism to self-government for indigenous peoples. This is true for the Maori in New Zealand, American Indians in the United States, or Aborigines in Australia.<sup>22</sup> There are few parallels to the situation of the Québécois in these other societies, where a long-settled community of rival European colonizers were conquered by the British. The closest parallel is perhaps the conquest of Puerto Rico by the United States, and here too we find the same shift from “control” to a form of “multination federalism.”<sup>23</sup>

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20 For the crucial importance of control over immigration to national minorities, see Kymlicka (2001), Chapter 15. Immigration can be a tool of nation building if controlled by a national minority, or a tool of nation destroying if controlled by a central government that aims to disempower the national minority.

21 These are just “steps” towards multination federalism, because many people in English-speaking Canada still resist this model. See Kymlicka (1998), Chapters 9-13. For a more general discussion of the idea of multination federalism as a response to the demands of national minorities, see Kymlicka (2001), Chapter 5; and Gagnon and Tully (2001).

22 For a comparative study, see Havemann (1999).

23 There are, in fact, many interesting parallels to be drawn between Quebec and Puerto Rico. See Barreto (1998).

Indeed, these trends towards multiculturalism for immigrant groups and multination federalism for the accommodation of minority nationalism are truly an international phenomenon, and are now almost universal in the Western democracies.<sup>24</sup> This should not be surprising, since most Western democracies were historically implicated in older forms of racialism and colonialism, and all have been deeply influenced by the post-war “rights revolution,” with its principles of equality, non-discrimination, and self-determination. Canada is not at all unique either in its history of assimilation, exclusion, and disempowerment, nor in its newer efforts at inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity.

#### **IV. Evaluating the New Approach**

So far, I have discussed these reforms primarily in terms of their relationship to norms of justice and equality, as reflected in the post-war “rights revolution.” These reforms were demanded in the name of remedying the historic injustices associated with older policies of assimilation, exclusion, and disempowerment, and to help create “the just society” in Canada. We cannot begin to understand these changes unless we understand the sense of injustice underlying them, and how this relates to broader intellectual trends in the post-war era of human rights.

But neither citizens nor states are motivated solely by justice. Even powerful arguments of justice would likely be ignored by the state if they were perceived as threatening to the basic stability or security of the state. This brings us back to concerns about citizenship building. It is one thing to say that multiculturalism, bilingualism, or self-government policies are required by justice, and quite another to explain how such a diverse society can function as a cohesive political community.

So we find in Canada, alongside the rhetoric of human rights and justice invoked in defense of minority rights, another rhetoric about the nature of social cohesion, and the need to construct a strong sense of citizenship to build unity amidst diversity. Many people have concluded there is a tension here – that respect for the just claims of minorities may conflict with the requirements of social cohesion.

The precise nature of this conflict is not always clearly articulated, but the general idea is that minority rights involve the “politicization of ethnicity,” and that any measures which heighten the salience of ethnicity in public life are divisive. Over time they create a spiral of competition, mistrust, and antagonism among ethnic groups. Policies that increase the salience of ethnic identities are said to act “like a corrosive on metal, eating away at the ties of connectedness that bind us together as a nation” (Ward, 1991: 598). These policies emphasize our differences rather than our commonalities. As a result, patriotism and loyalty to the larger society get replaced with in-group egoism, and society becomes “balkanized.”

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24 The main exceptions in the West are France and Greece, although even they are under pressure to change their approaches. There are also attempts being made to promote these models for accommodating minorities in Eastern Europe. Indeed, acceptance of at least modest forms of these models is now a precondition for post-Communist countries to be admitted to the European Union or NATO. For a discussion of this attempt to “export” liberal pluralism to Eastern Europe, see Kymlicka and Opalski (2001).

The strong version of this argument treats minority rights as the first step on the road to Yugoslav-style civil war. A more moderate version states that while minority rights may not lead to civil war, they will erode the ability of citizens to fulfil their responsibilities as democratic citizens – for example, by weakening citizens’ ability to communicate, trust, and feel solidarity across group differences and, thereby, reducing the overall functioning of the state (including its long-term ability to secure justice for all citizens, minority or majority).<sup>25</sup> These sorts of concerns have been raised in Canada with respect to both immigrant multiculturalism and multinational federalism.<sup>26</sup>

Given the fact that most states are preoccupied with issues of stability and security, why have such fears about social cohesion not inhibited Canada from adopting minority rights? One reason, I believe, is that there has been little empirical evidence to support these fears. There has been much armchair speculation on the question of how minority rights impact on social cohesion, but remarkably little evidence, either domestically or internationally. Reliable evidence is needed here, because one could quite plausibly argue the reverse, namely, that it is the *absence* of minority rights which erodes the bonds of civic solidarity. After all, as we have seen, earlier policies excluded minorities, and led them to feel alienated from, and distrustful of, the political process. We could predict, then, that recognizing minority rights would actually strengthen solidarity and promote political stability, by removing the barriers and exclusions that prevent minorities from wholeheartedly embracing political institutions. This hypothesis is surely at least as plausible as the contrary hypothesis that minority rights erode social unity.

We do not have the sort of systematic evidence needed to decisively confirm or refute these competing hypotheses. After all, some of these policy changes are still relatively recent, and it may be too early to make a definitive judgement. However, I would argue that concerns about the destabilizing impact of minority rights are greatly exaggerated, at least in the Canadian context. For example, the evidence suggests that immigrant multiculturalism has not promoted political apathy or instability, or the mutual hostility or intolerance of ethnic groups. On the contrary, we have witnessed dramatic reductions in the level of prejudice, and dramatic increases in the levels of interethnic friendships and intermarriage since 1971, the year that the multiculturalism policy was adopted. Moreover, immigrants participate actively in Canada’s major political parties, and express widespread support for the basic values and procedures of Canadian democracy. More generally, post-1971 immigrants integrate into Canadian public institutions as quickly, if not more quickly, than earlier generations of immigrants to Canada. There is no evidence that the pursuit of fairer terms of integration for immigrants has eroded democratic stability.<sup>27</sup>

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25 This is related to what is often described as the “redistribution versus recognition” debate. Authors who say recognition erodes redistribution include Gitlin (1995); Barry (2001); Harvey 1996; and Wolfe and Lausen (1997). Authors who say recognition supplements redistribution include Fraser (1998; 2000); Phillips (1999); Young (2000); and Banting (2000).

26 For critiques of multiculturalism as promoting group hostility, see Bissoondath (1994); and Gwyn (1995). For the claim that recent policy changes towards Aboriginals threaten to erode solidarity, see Cairns (2000).

27 For the evidence, see Kymlicka (1998), Chapter 2.

The situation regarding the self-government claims of national minorities is more complicated, since these claims enable minorities to use their control over public institutions (such as schools or courts) to reinforce a distinct national identity and, hence, to reinforce the phenomenon of competing nationalism within a single state. Moreover, when these nationalist aspirations are not fulfilled, some Aboriginals and French-Canadians have been willing to put into question the very constitutional structure of Canada, either through acts of civil disobedience and violence (e.g., the Mohawks at Oka) or through support for secessionist political parties (in Quebec). Most commentators think that there are more violent Aboriginal demonstrations and secessionist referenda ahead of us. So the move towards multination federalism has obviously not satisfied everyone, nor eliminated challenges to the basic legal order. Any state would legitimately be concerned with the existence of these threats to social cohesion.

The difficulty, of course, is in determining whether these threats would be greater or lesser had the Canadian government continued to suppress, rather than accommodate, minority nationalism. Would we have seen more or less Aboriginal violence had the Canadian government stuck to its 1969 proposal to abolish the special legal status of Status Indians? Would we see more or less support for secession in Quebec had Canada not adopted official bilingualism, and not negotiated greater powers for Quebec?

It is difficult to prove such counterfactuals. However, if we look around the world, the evidence is clear that recognizing self-government for national minorities assists, rather than threatens, political stability. Surveys of ethnic conflict around the world repeatedly confirm that “early, generous devolution is far more likely to avert than to abet ethnic separatism” (Horowitz, 1991: 224). It is the refusal to grant autonomy to national minorities, or even worse, the decision to retract an already existing autonomy (as in Kosovo) that leads to instability, not the recognition of their minority rights.

The phenomenon of minority nationalism is a difficult one for any state to deal with. However, according self-government rights does not create the phenomenon of competing nationalisms within a single state. That phenomenon exists already in Canada, as in many countries around the world, and the only question is how best to respond to it. Studies show clearly that countries which accommodate minority nationalism through self-government are more likely to be stable (and also more likely to be democratic) than countries which attempt to suppress the self-government aspirations of national minorities.<sup>28</sup>

Much more could be said about the impact of minority rights on social unity and political stability. This relationship will undoubtedly vary from case to case, and so requires fine-grained empirical investigation. But it seems clear that concerns about social cohesion cannot provide any grounds for rejecting minority rights *in general*. There is no reason to assume in advance that there is any inherent contradiction between minority rights and democratic stability.

Why then do so many people assume that there is such a contradiction? This widespread assumption rests on a number of fallacies about the nature of identity and social cohesion.

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28 For the evidence, see the massive survey of 300 ethnocultural conflicts around the world in Gurr (1993; 2000).

First, many people assume there is a zero-sum relationship between identities, so that the more that people are attached to their particular group identity, the less they will identify with the larger state. But this is wrong. Increased pride in one's group often is positively, not negatively, correlated with pride in one's country. Indeed, one reason why people can feel positively attached to a country is that it is the kind of country which allows them to express their group identity.

Second, many people assume that social cohesion not only requires that everyone identify with the larger state, but also that everyone should identify with it *for the same reason*, that they all cherish the country for the same reasons or values. Hence it is considered a problem if some Canadians view their country as essentially a British society, others view it as an American-style nation-state, and yet others view it as a multinational federation. Or it is considered a problem if some people view Canada as their homeland since time immemorial, while others view it as a safe haven in a troubled world.

But social cohesion in a modern society cannot require that everyone share the same political ideology or history, the same foundational myth, or the same hopes for the future. What matters for social cohesion is that most citizens identify with Canada *for some reason or other*, and are willing to cooperate with other Canadians, even if they disagree about what precisely it is they value in Canada. As Jeremy Webber (1994) puts it, what ensures social cohesion in Canada is not that everyone shares the same vision of Canada, but that everyone shares a commitment to maintaining a peaceful and democratic conversation about their different visions of Canada (Tully, 2000). That more modest commitment appears quite strong.

Third, there is a persistent tendency to underestimate the long-term significance of justice to the stability of societies. The idea that there is a conflict between justice and social cohesion may be plausible if we look at isolated policies in a short-term perspective, but is more difficult to sustain if we look at a longer-term perspective. Consider, for example, the view that immigrant multiculturalism promotes justice but reduces unity. This, apparently, is the view of many Canadians. According to a 1996 survey, 65 percent of Canadians thought that multiculturalism produced greater equality of opportunity for people who are neither English nor French, but only 43 percent thought it helped to unite Canada (Canadian Heritage, 1996: 39). We might conclude from this that we face a potential conflict between justice for immigrants and social cohesion.

But surely that is a mistake. For if we asked the same people what they think helps to unite Canada, the answer almost certainly would include respect for principles of justice. The most basic ground for feelings of political legitimacy and political efficacy, I believe, is the belief that one's interests and opinions will receive fair consideration in public institutions. If so, then the adoption of multiculturalism helps confirm the most basic foundation for political legitimacy, namely, the belief that the government will promote justice. The particular details of the multiculturalism policy may not *directly* promote social cohesion (although I personally think it may do this as well), but it almost certainly *indirectly* promotes social cohesion by reinforcing the belief that Canadian public institutions are (more or less) fair, and not systematically biased against particular ethnic, racial, or linguistic groups.

It is important to emphasize that this feeling of basic fairness is widely shared in Canada, certainly amongst immigrants and francophones, as well as British-Canadians, although perhaps less so amongst Aboriginals. It is striking, for example, that while an increasing number of Quebecers give priority to their Québécois identity over their Canadian identity, this has *not* led to any diminution in their basic trust in the fairness of the Canadian state. This is almost certainly one reason why secession was rejected in both the 1980 and 1995 referendums.<sup>29</sup> Many commentators have pointed to the fact that more or more Quebecers identify themselves first and foremost as “Québécois” (rather than Canadian) as evidence of a growing problem, or as evidence that the current approach to accommodating Québécois national aspirations has failed (e.g., McRoberts, 1997). But this need be evidence of a failure if it does not reduce Quebecers’ level of basic trust in Canadian political institutions.

One reason why that trust remains strong, I would argue, is that those institutions have enabled the Québécois to achieve what they view as their just claims (including the claim to use provincial institutions to express and promote their national identity). It is possible that a more repressive approach by the federal government would have reduced the number of people who identify first and foremost as Québécois, but it also would have reduced the number of people who feel that Canada’s public institutions are fair – and the latter is a far more serious threat to social cohesion, I believe, than the former.

This suggests that while we should be sensitive to issues of social cohesion, we should not adopt a myopic view of social cohesion that rests on a dichotomy between “promoting diversity” versus “promoting unity.” Policies that recognize or even accentuate ethnic differences are unlikely to reduce social cohesion in the long-term if those policies are accepted by citizens as just. On the contrary, they are likely to reinforce the public perception of the state’s legitimacy and responsiveness. Conversely, policies that promote feelings of commonality are unlikely to increase social cohesion in the long-term if they are viewed as unjust.<sup>30</sup> Such policies undermine the belief that the state is a fair umpire.

Over the long-term, what matters most for social cohesion is not how passionately people identify with Canada, but how strongly they believe that Canada’s public institutions will respond fairly to their needs and claims.

We can make the same point with respect to official bilingualism. Many critics have argued that support for nationalism within Quebec is evidence that the policy is a failure. But it is only a failure if we assume that the sole or primary point of the policy was to directly attack Quebec nationalism. No doubt that was indeed one of Prime Minister Trudeau’s aims – he hoped that official bilingualism would shift Quebecers’ national identification from Quebec to Ottawa, and undermine the view that they could best achieve their national aspirations through greater provincial autonomy – and no doubt this strategic goal has been a failure.<sup>31</sup>

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29 For the survey evidence on this, see Mendelson (1999).

30 As Bélanger and Pinard note, “ethnic competition leads to ethnic conflict movements if, and only if, the competition is perceived to be unfair” (1991: 448).

31 On the political aims of Trudeau’s constitutional reforms, including bilingualism, see Knopff and Morton (1985); Cairns (1992; 1991: 43-45); Russell (1983; 1994); and McRoberts (1997): Chapters 6-7.

But the main argument for official bilingualism, surely, is that it promotes justice for linguistic minorities. On this score, it is almost certainly a success. Linguistic minorities in Canada are treated more justly today than earlier, and more justly than comparable minorities in most Western democracies. The fact that the government was willing to adopt this policy, and to defend it against critics both within Quebec and in English-speaking Canada, has helped to consolidate its reputation as a defender of justice. Official bilingualism may not have directly promoted Canadian unity in the way Trudeau hoped, but it has surely indirectly promote Canadian unity by strengthening the belief that the government will act fairly.<sup>32</sup>

I think the same argument applies to issues of Aboriginal rights. Alan Cairns argues that the new policy of recognizing Indians as “First Nations” who have a “nation-to-nation” relationship with the Canadian government will erode feelings of solidarity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians (Cairns 2000). But there is no empirical evidence to date for this claim. Support within the larger Canadian population for Aboriginal claims has increased, not decreased, since Aboriginals adopted the rhetoric of Aboriginal nationalism and decolonization in the late 1970s and 1980s. Part of the reason for this support, surely, is that many Canadians can see the justice of these nationalist claims. The recognition of Aboriginal peoples as “peoples” or “nations” helps clarify what exactly was wrong with our older policies, and helps explain why those practices violate emerging international norms of the equality of peoples, and of decolonization.

Here again, the direct result of the policy may be to heighten and institutionalize differences amongst Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, which Cairns assumes will reduce solidarity and cohesion. But so long as Canadians accept the justice of such minority rights, they will continue to trust and support Canadian public institutions as a legitimate framework for negotiating these differences.

In short, the evidence to date about the impact of minority rights on social cohesion in Canada, while limited and preliminary, is encouraging. These new models of accommodating diversity have almost certainly improved at least two of the three basic core elements of citizenship as identified in this CPRN project – the exercise of rights and responsibilities, and access to services. These reforms have made it easier for both immigrant groups and national minorities to exercise their rights and to access public services. Their impact on feelings of belonging is more complex, and harder to gauge, particularly since we do not know how alternative policies would have impacted on feelings of belonging. But insofar as these policies are perceived as remedying historic injustices, and making Canada a more just society, then I think they reinforce people’s belief in the legitimacy of Canada’s institutions, even if they do not view Canada as their primary or exclusive loyalty or identity. People may have multiple, mixed, and conflicting identities, which is probably inevitable in modern societies, but these new approaches have not damaged people’s trust in the fairness of Canada’s public institutions, and may indeed have helped to strengthen it.

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32 For a powerful argument that we should evaluate official bilingualism in terms of justice, rather than a (myopic) view of national unity, see Green and Réaume (1991).

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**Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN)**

600 – 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1

Tel: (613) 567-7500 Fax: (613) 567-7640

Web Site: <http://www.cprn.org>

## **The Citizenship-Building Effects of Policies and Services in Canada's Universal Health Care Regime**

By

**Antonia Maioni**

Institute for the Study of Canada

McGill University

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## I. Introduction

The recognition of a linkage between social policy and citizenship is perhaps one of the hallmarks of 20th century social thought. This derives from T.H. Marshall's argument that rights of citizenship have evolved over time, coming to include not only civil and political rights, but "social rights" as well (Marshall, 1950). The Beveridge Report in Great Britain and the Marsh Report in Canada reinforced the idea that governments were responsible for reconstructing a post-war order that would extend beyond physical defence to an essential role in securing freedom and opportunity through social programs.

This modern liberal ideal is embedded in Canadian health care policies. Health care is regulated as a "public good," and governments, in particular the federal government, have a role to play in ensuring that this good is available to all citizens. Added to this liberal ideal are the social-democratic tenets of equality and solidarity, which assume that, as citizens, we all contribute to financing to the health care system in return for its use when we need it. The design of health care policy in Canada also reflects a commitment to collective responsibility and to the bonds of community in a diverse society.

When Canadians are asked what sets them apart from Americans, a substantial number invariably mention the health care system as a distinctive feature of the Canadian identity (National Forum on Health, 1997). Most Canadians consider health care, in common parlance, a right of citizenship. Even though health care is a provincial responsibility, the presence of the *Canada Health Act* reinforces the symbolic link between being "Canadian" and being a recipient of health care services. Indeed, the principles outlined in the legislation (accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability, public administration, and universality) are considered the "norms" of the health care system. In particular, the emphasis on universal coverage, equal access and portable benefits have come to define the citizenship dimensions of health provision in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

This paper explores the interface between citizenship and health care provision. In the first instance, I look at the development of health policy in Canada, and the way in which health care has come to be considered a right of citizenship. I then turn to issues of jurisdictional and financial decentralization, examining both the tensions in federal-provincial relations in the health care sector, and regionalization of the allocation of health care decision-making and citizen engagement. I also look at the issue of decentralization to the market or, in other words, proposals for privatization in health care. Finally, I turn my attention to "third sector" partnerships and their relevance in health reform debates.

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1 Poll results from 1999 show that fully 89 percent of Canadians feel that *universality* is "very important," 81 percent say the same for *accessibility*, and 79 percent for *portability* (cited in Vail, 2000: 6; see also Maioni and Martin, 2001).

## II. Health Care Provision and Citizenship

Health care represents perhaps the most important example of the way in which service provision by governments can enhance citizenship and state legitimacy. Through its involvement in health care, the modern state takes on a crucial role in social protection in the sense of literally “protecting” its citizens from the effects of ill health. In helping to finance the provision of health care services, governments offset the potentially catastrophic costs associated with illness. In regulating the health care sector, governments shape the rules of the fundamental relationship between providers and patients. In essence, involvement in health care represents a way in which the state can help establish the boundaries of social consensus and mutual rights and responsibilities between citizens.

By the same token, however, the health policy realm places an enormous responsibility on the modern state, one that many governments are finding difficult to sustain. Precisely because health care is one of the most powerful of all state supplied or financed services – the most personal in its impact, and the most frequently used by individuals and families – it is also the service sector in which governments are most vulnerable to the effects of citizen involvement, participation and feedback. As consumers of care, citizens are directly affected by changes in delivery and financing, leading to mobilization against governments that engage in reform.

But because health care is a service provided by highly specialized professionals in increasingly complex technological and administrative settings, the linkage – and accountability – between state and citizen is often less than transparent. Also, because health, in effect, has no real “price” in terms of the supply and demand patterns associated with typical consumer goods, governments are attempting to regulate an industry for which the inflationary potential is practically limitless, thus putting enormous pressure on state treasuries, even in heavily regulated health care systems, and opening avenues for lucrative private-sector alternatives.

The impact of service provision in promoting citizenship regimes and the tensions inherent in sustaining the commitments to such provision are evident in most modern welfare states. The case of Canada, however, is perhaps one of the most intriguing. In the Canadian experience, health care has been heralded as a singular achievement of what states and citizens can do best together: effecting regulation and pooling resources in an effort to ensure universal and comprehensive health care provision based on need rather than ability to pay. Because Canada is a federal polity in which social protection is considered primarily in the purview of sub-national governments, the “success” of health care policy can also be considered an example of how decentralized governance can co-exist with the promotion of a shared sense of national identity.

### III. The Development of Health Policy in Canada

Canada has two governance features that make its health care experience quite unusual. Although Canada is usually classified as a “liberal” welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990), historically dominated by the needs of a market economy, provincial health care systems are imbued with social democratic principles. The Canadian health care system combines elements of a “liberal” ideology (in that doctors and hospitals are independent of direct state control) and a more “social democratic” vision (in that health care services are publicly financed and the state ensures equal access to these services).

The second feature is, of course, federalism. As a political arrangement, federalism is usually considered problematic in the development of social protection. Division of power tends to diffuse responsibility, and decisive action, which allows politicians to fall into “joint decision traps” (Scharpf, 1988) and the opportunity to engage in “blame avoidance” and other strategies to offset accountability (Weaver, 1986).

In effect, a divided and decentralized polity opens up additional sets of “veto points” to concerted state action (Immergut, 1992). But again, the Canadian experience in health care is exceptional in this regard. Provincial experimentation spurred the most significant developments in health policy in Canada, while activist federal governments carved out a fiscal and political policy space to ensure similar health care coverage for Canadian citizens regardless of their province of residence (Tuohy, 1989). In this sense, the federal system of governance in Canada opened “multiple independent action points” useful to health care reformers (Banting, 1995).

Both of these governance features played a role in the development of health policy in Canada. Intergovernmental conflict initially delayed the process of health policy development, but decentralization also encouraged provincial experimentation and led to the innovations that became the basis of public health insurance throughout Canada. A social democratic provincial party, the CCF-NDP in Saskatchewan, inaugurated the first government-sponsored hospital insurance (in 1947) and medical insurance (in 1962) systems in North America. The success of these innovations, combined with the political pressure exerted by the CCF-NDP’s federal wing, were pivotal in spurring activists within the national Liberal party to develop cost-sharing programs for hospital insurance (under the *Hospital and Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act*, 1957) and medical care (under the *Medical Care Insurance Act*, 1966).

Part of the federal government’s rationale for engaging in cost sharing and limiting decentralization was to avoid the development of a “crazy quilt” of provincial health insurance programs by making federal money contingent upon the provinces’ upholding certain principles of universality, comprehensiveness, portability and public funding. The goal was to ensure that Canadian taxpayers’ money would be used to help finance publicly accountable health insurance systems that ensured the *same basic* social protection among Canadian citizens, regardless of their province of residence. An additional idea was implicit in this health care model: that social benefits, including health benefits, contributed to regional equity in Canada and reflected a “common Canadian citizenship” (Banting, 1998).

Since the advent of public hospital and medical insurance in Canada, governance issues in health policy have developed in a seemingly contradictory fashion. Successive federal governments, both Conservative and Liberal, have attempted to unilaterally reduce the federal share of funding the costs of health care. In 1977, the *Established Programs Financing Act* (EPF) replaced cost sharing with block funding (partly cash and partly tax points), based on population and tied to the rate of increase in GNP (Soderstrom, 1978). In so doing, the federal government effectively devolved the responsibility to exercise restraint and control health care expenditures to the provinces, making them “100 percent at risk for cost increases” (Tuohy, 1986). The EPF formula was reduced to GNP minus 2 percent in 1986, and eventually frozen after 1990.

In 1995, the EPF arrangement, along with the existing cost-shared Canada Assistance Plan, was replaced by the Canada Health and Social Transfer. While in the mid-1970s, federal transfers accounted for almost 40 percent of provincial health expenditures, by the mid-1990s, they represented one-third of provincial outlays in health care (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 1999). The CHST substantially reduced the cash portion of federal transfers to the provinces, although a five-year “cash floor” was subsequently introduced in 1998. The 1999 federal budget allocated a further \$28.4 billion to help fund provincial social programs, including health care, but the federal government continues to resist further pressures by provincial Premiers for more cash injections into their health care systems.

In tandem with this fiscal disengagement, however, federal governments, in particular Liberal ones, have worked to expand their political space in the health realm and, in so doing, attempted to reinforce the sense of a direct linkage between citizenship and health care provision. The clearest example of this is the *Canada Health Act*. On paper, this 1984 legislation was a simple act of Parliament amalgamating existing federal hospital and medical insurance legislation and stipulating the principles that provincial health systems should respect in order to avoid financial penalties. The most important addition was that health care services be dispensed on “uniform terms and conditions,” meaning essentially that every citizen had the same ability to access the health care system. In practice, however, the *Canada Health Act* allocates a prominent place for the federal government in the health policy environment and, more important, in Canadians’ perceptions of the health care system.

Another example of this place-setting is the federal government’s role in health promotion. From the Lalonde Report, which focussed on public health in terms of lifestyle and environment, to today’s aggressive anti-tobacco policies, the federal government has taken on a stewardship role to ensure the “healthiness” of Canadians. In addition, the federal government has taken on the moral authority to protect the citizenship aspects of health care provision – public accountability, universal eligibility, comprehensive coverage, equal access to care, and portability of care across provincial boundaries – despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that health care delivery and financing remains the jurisdiction of provincial governments.

#### IV. Challenges of Jurisdictional and Financial Decentralization

Like many European health care systems, health services in Canada are considered universal benefits. In point of fact, however, there is no constitutional requirement for governments in Canada – either provincial or federal – to offer such benefits to citizens. Nor can Canadians be considered, in terms of “rights talk,” the bearers of an entitlement to such benefits. Instead, provincial statutes provide the framework for health care delivery and financing, while the *Canada Health Act* defines the standards by which the federal government participates in helping to finance health care services. These standards are at once more binding and less restrictive than those existing in many other countries. They are explicit in banning certain initiatives, for example, those that impinge on equal access to care, such as user fees or extra-billing. At the same time, however, these principles derive from a federal statute (not a formal constitutional requirement) and, therefore, the federal government is obliged to offer financial incentives (and the threat of financial penalty) to ensure provincial compliance.

Unlike many other countries, provincial health systems do not adhere to a set of *minimum* standards, but rather to a *comprehensive* one. Every legal resident of Canada is considered entitled to health care services regardless of age, income or province of residence. In addition to this, health care benefits are considered portable across provincial boundaries. Hospital coverage, for example, is guaranteed through reciprocity agreements that allow for direct payment at the provincial rates where the patient is treated. Medically insured benefits are subject to reciprocal agreements between the provinces (except Quebec, which has lower reimbursement rates and charges non-Quebecers directly for medical services). Most important, in citizenship terms, is the fact that health care services are also meant to be allocated on the principle of equal access, the sole criterion being medical need, and not ability to pay. Thus, unlike most other health care systems in the industrialized world, insured services are provided on the basis of first-dollar coverage without co-payments or user fees, and extra-billing by doctors is strictly prohibited.

Health care services are delivered in the Canadian provinces through non-profit (voluntary) hospitals, fee-for-service professionals working individually or in a group practice, community clinics, home care, or long-term care facilities. Although providers and institutions are independent of direct state control, they remain dependent on political decisions about the allocation of resources. These decisions are made by provincial ministries, public medical commissions, or regional boards acting under the authority of the provincial government. Hospitals account for about one-third of health care spending and are financed by “global budgets” based on prospective analyses, negotiated with provincial governments. Public funds cover most of their operating costs (including medical supplies and equipment) and salaried employees (such as nurses and technicians staff). Hospitals are obliged to work within the budgets assigned to them for the fiscal year and, in most provinces, hospitals are not permitted to run operating deficits. The provincial ministry of health sets these global budgets, although more recently, allocation decisions have become the responsibility of regional boards with a mix of representation from government, consumers and providers.

In the past decade, as public sector monies have contracted, operating budgets have been substantially reduced, forcing hospitals to create waiting lists for elective procedures and non-emergency in-patient services, and to rely more on out-patient care. In some cases, hospitals have been closed entirely or transformed into another type of health care facility. Bed, laboratory, operating room, and entire hospital closures have been the principal methods of cost control for hospital administrators and provincial health departments (Deber, Mhatre, and Baker, 1994). In some provinces, empty hospital wings and privately funded health care facilities are now used to dispense non-insured benefits. Several well-equipped tertiary care centers are also using excess capacity to treat Americans and other non-Canadians at much higher rates than are charged to provincial residents.

Physician services, which account for about 15 percent of health care spending, are also financed through public funds. For the most part, doctors in Canada work on a fee-for-service basis, with a fee schedule negotiated between provincial governments and provincial medical associations. In Quebec, doctors are represented by formal corporations for specialists and general practitioners. The reimbursement is administered by a public agency responsible to the provincial ministry of health.<sup>2</sup> Although provincial governments do not directly regulate physician practices, they have in recent years attempted to shape physician behaviour in terms of fee structure and the regional distribution of manpower. For example, most provinces now impose billing limits and salary caps on physicians and, in addition, offer differential fees to physicians with new billing numbers on the basis of their practice and residence within the province.

Public responsibility for financing hospitals and reimbursing medical care has become an onerous responsibility for provincial and federal governments.<sup>3</sup> Canada ranks above the OECD average in health expenditures, at 9 percent of GDP. However, this spending-to-GDP ratio has declined consistently since 1992, when total health spending reached its highest level, at 10.2 percent of GDP in Canada. Although hospital operating costs represent the largest share of health care expenditures, these have declined steadily in the past decade, reflecting the extensive rationalization of provincial hospitals and changes in treatment protocols. This is also reflected in the rapid increase in spending on pharmaceuticals, In fact, drug costs now account for slightly more than physician reimbursement.

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2 In Quebec, the principle of public administration is taken one step further through a system of community health and social service centers (known as CLSCs or *Centres locaux de services communautaires*), which are staffed by a team of nurses, social workers and, in some cases, salaried physicians as well.

3 In Canada, provincial governments act as the “single-payer” or “single-tap” through which public money flows into the health care system. The public portion of health care financing (about 70 percent of total health care expenditures in Canada) is derived from general revenues, not a specific health insurance fund or tax. Health care accounts for the largest item in provincial budgets, and most provinces spend at least 30 percent of their total outlays in this sector. All “medically necessary” services are supposed to be covered by public health insurance, including most diagnostics, in-patient hospital care and drugs, as well as all services billed for by physicians, both in and outside the hospital. The private portion of health care spending is concentrated in expenditures for outpatient drugs, home and long-term care, and uninsured services such as some diagnostics (such as MRIs), non “medically necessary” surgery (experimental surgery, eye laser, or IVF, for example), or supplementary services (for example, optometrists, dentists, or chiropractors in some provinces). These uninsured services are paid for by out-of-pocket payment or supplemental private insurance.

## V. Decentralization and Health Care

In discussions of governance and health care provision in Canada, decentralization can mean different things. In one instance, it can refer to changes in the fiscal relationship that binds together federal and provincial governments (see Maino and Maioni, 1999). In this sense, decentralization involves the transfer of authority or diffusion of power in policy-making, from central to sub-national governments (Mills, 1990). Fiscal decentralization engenders political decentralization as well, as conflicts over money spill over into, or are exacerbated by, issues of jurisdictional sovereignty.

The experience of the past decade has shown that federal governments can use decentralization as a way of managing fiscal responsibilities by obliging provincial governments to shoulder an increasing responsibility for health care cost control. At the same time, however, federal governments have preserved important political space for themselves by retaining some measure of control over the health policy-making agenda. Provincial governments, meanwhile, were still responsible for the costs of health care and still bound by federal norms on how to spend health care money, effectively constraining the types of delivery or financing alternatives they could consider. These are powerful constraints because, while the *Canada Health Act* does not dictate how much should be spent in health care, it does condition in what way money should be spent. In addition, popular public sentiment reinforces the federal government's political clout in the health care sector.

Health care has become, in many ways, a lightning rod for discontent about "federal unilateralism" and fertile ground for promoting decentralization as a way to guard jurisdictional sovereignty. This initiative, spurred in the mid-1990s by the Premiers' negative reaction to federal fiscal disengagement, was an attempt to recapture the policy agenda and to ensure more provincial control. The ensuing process, to some extent co-opted by the federal government, led to the signature (minus Quebec) of the *Social Union Framework Agreement* (SUFA) in February 1999 (Noël, 2000).

The provisions of the SUFA also touched upon another facet of decentralization, namely the way in which decisions are made in the health care sector. The Agreement acknowledges the need for more transparency and consultation in intergovernmental policy-making, including dispute resolution. The SUFA also suggests more collaboration between governments in a number of important health care areas such as home-care and long-term care, physician manpower management, improving mobility, commitments to Aboriginal health, and coordinating new initiatives such as capitation arrangements (i.e., physicians are responsible for a fixed number of patient subscribers) or new technologies (Maioni, 2000). The SUFA also suggests that citizens should "monitor" their health care system more effectively, making reference to "public accountability and transparency" and the involvement of Canadians in "developing social priorities."

Such themes echo the idea of citizen engagement, a process by which governments encourage citizen participation in public policy-making. Citizen engagement stands as a *via media* between the broad mandates of Royal Commissions (such as the Hall Commissions on health reform of 1964 and 1980), which act as sounding boards for citizen concerns, and the so-called attempts at “tell-and-sell” consultation (such as the doomed federal discussion paper on social security reform in 1994), which hold limited meaning for involving citizens in effecting real change. Rather, citizen engagement evokes the scenario of selected citizen participation in the definition of feasible alternatives to respond to specific problems in social policy (Abele *et al.*, 1998). In the health sector, proposals have been made to develop “expert panels,” although this raises the question of what political baggage such experts bring to the process and to what extent this truly engages stakeholders in health care, including the non-expert consumers of services.

In a more direct sense, decentralization can also refer to the way in which services are delivered and allocated in the health care system. Most provinces have decentralized decision-making through the creation of *regional health boards* (some elected, others appointed, still others a mix of the two). These initiatives were to devolve power from provincial health ministries to regional or local bodies that would have some measure of discretion in allocating health care resources. This decentralization was generally designed to encourage population-based funding and other allocative efficiencies, such as ensuring the optimal level of resource mix for a particular region (Dorland and Davis, 1996).

Almost all the provinces have instituted regionalization through the creation or reorganization of existing local and regional health boards, so as to increase efficiency. Provincial governments often also saw these initiatives as routes to “community empowerment” in order to harness public support for health care reform, and “conflict containment” in the wake of public sector spending and its consequences (Lomas, Woods, and Veenstra, 1997). Indeed, most regional boards were created or became operative in the mid-1990s, just as provincial governments were faced with tough cost-cutting measures in the public health care sector. In Alberta, for example, the Conservative government’s 1994 *Deficit Reduction Act* mandated the 17 regional health boards to cut \$3 billion from the provincial health care budget over a three year period (Cairney, 1995).

Such experiments have not all been successful in establishing efficiency. Part of the problem is that boards are not always empowered to make important decisions, such as those related to physician fees and drug use. Nor have they achieved community empowerment. Questions have been raised as to just what kinds of decisions such boards are equipped to make – in terms of representation and accountability in the case of non-elected members, and in terms of expertise for elected members. In practice, for example, professionals often outweigh community representatives in terms of their influence on boards.

In sum, these types of decentralization may have the potential to democratize, but they would require significant involvement of citizens in the actual process of influencing decisions about service delivery – including issues of allocation and rationalization. If important decisions are made that affect the delivery and the use of health care for individuals and their families, then citizens in their communities ought to be informed and involved in making and supporting these decisions (Chin-Yee, 1996).

Despite this potential, current modes of decentralization and citizen engagement are problematic for at least three reasons:

1. Specifically, because health care delivery and financing are part of a highly complex system that is difficult for non-experts to decipher
2. More broadly, because effective engagement involves opening up a Pandora's box of new actors in the policy process, which can potentially widen the scope for conflict and make it difficult to achieve consensus, and
3. Hypothetically, because attempts at inclusiveness can raise the potential for blame avoidance by governments and the off-loading of accountability between governments and citizens.

Decentralization and health care are compatible only insofar that a balance can be struck between decision-making and accountability. Without these, there is a real risk that concepts such as citizen engagement and regional boards will become smokescreens for authoritative decisions about cost-control and scarce resources. Of more broad concern is the risk that with a continual downloading of decision-making and accountability, local concerns may be served at the expense of the larger provincial – or even national – community.

## **VI. Decentralization to the Market – Privatization**

In a comparative context, Canada's experience with decentralization to the market is also distinctive. On one hand, the *Canada Health Act* explicitly bans certain initiatives, such as those that impinge on equal access to care or the private financing of "medically necessary" services provided in hospitals or by physicians. These constraints are unique to Canada, for unlike most industrialized countries (including publicly financed health care systems in Europe),<sup>4</sup> medical services covered under provincial health plans cannot be purchased in the private market.

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4 Several OECD countries have turned to market initiatives in an attempt to promote at least micro-efficiency in health care delivery and financing. Australia, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom introduced the most far-reaching competition measures, attempting to devolve responsibility for health care from governments to consumers and providers of care, by encouraging contracting for services and the development of parallel private markets for health care (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1998). In Italy, contracting for services has also begun, and decentralization has been the key element in health care reform as the responsibility for health care financing, and deficits, is transferred from the central government to the regions. In Sweden and Germany, the trend has been the use of internal market mechanisms, including capitation and prospective global budgeting, and some competition between providers and insurance funds (Freeman, 1998).

On the other hand, fully 30 percent of health care spending in Canada is “private” rather than public, reflecting out of pocket payment or employment-based supplementary health insurance plans for auxiliary health care services, home care, dental care, and out-patient pharmaceuticals.

Although the *Canada Health Act* and provincial health care systems as they are presently designed make it difficult to envisage how such types of market mechanisms could be introduced, the Canadian health care system is far from immune to change. In some respects, the building blocks of a parallel private health care alternative are already in place in the form of insurers, entrepreneurs and a substantial number of provider groups that would welcome some form of private health care.

In addition, there already exists a certain mix of public and private medicine in Canada to the extent that medical services are offered on a fee-for-service basis (albeit publicly funded), and that in several areas, health facilities built by public funds are used on a for-profit basis by private companies. In relative terms, however, market incentives are far from widespread in Canada, and the institutional limits to the expansion of private markets are still substantial.

Two trends in market incentives have raised debate in the Canadian context – fostering internal markets, and creating a parallel private market for health care services. Advocates of reform through “internal markets” claim that competition and access are not incompatible goals, and that they can serve as tools for greater efficiency within a publicly-funded system like Canada’s (Jérôme-Forget and Forget, 1995).

The main attempts at creating internal markets have so far focussed on the absence of incentives to increase hospital efficiency and the perverse incentive for fee-for-service providers to inflate their billing practices. An internal market models suggests the solution for Canada lies in the development of “integrated” health care delivery systems through capitation and managed care, to encourage sustained health care delivery (with an emphasis on disease prevention and continuity of care) at lower cost. This could include the introduction of British-style capitation for general practitioners, in combination with incentives for rewarding highly productive physicians (Blomqvist, 1995).

Others suggest managed care through the creation of a network of HMO-style service providers such as a “Targeted Medical Agency” in which physicians in group practice act as agents to purchase medical procedures and diagnostic services (Jérôme-Forget and Forget, 1995). So far, however, concrete attempts at introducing such practices (Ontario’s “Comprehensive Health Organizations,” for example) have had limited success because of the difficulties of recruitment and coordination.

Although such alternatives attempt to build on the entrepreneurship potential of physicians, most Canadian doctors are committed to retaining a fee-for-service payment system. In addition, freedom of choice is considered an important element of the health care system for Canadians. While integrated delivery systems may not contravene the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, limits on the choice of providers may be considered contrary to the “spirit” of the existing health care system.

The introduction of a full-fledged market incentive model would essentially transform the Canadian health-care system into a two-tiered one. In this scenario, doctors could choose to practice in either the public or private system. Allowing doctors to practice in both could be an option although, judging by the British example, “dual allegiance” is difficult to sustain (Richmond, 1996). Supporters claim that a parallel private system could act as an “escape valve” to reduce pressures on the public system – waiting lists for surgery, overcrowded emergency rooms, the drain of money to the United States for those who can afford to pay for care, and the drain of doctors to the United States as well (McArthur, Ramsay, and Walker, 1996).

A variation on this model would be to redefine which “medically necessary” services should be covered by public health care, and to then allow provincial governments to “de-insure” certain procedures. In this scenario, general physician services and relatively straightforward procedures could remain under public provision, while more complicated (and expensive) treatments could be covered by private insurance (Silversides. 1995).

Although neither of these models would necessarily involve replacing the public system, they suggest profound implications for the delivery of and access to health care in Canada. Critics claim that such initiatives would not be effective at cost-control, but would instead pump more money into the system overall, inflating costs for all users. In addition, despite the rhetoric of competition, the public system would potentially have greater difficulty sustaining high-quality providers and facilities. The co-existence of public and private delivery also raises the spectre of saddling the public system with the highest-risk, lowest-payoff patients, leading to a situation similar to that of “cherry-picking and dumping” in the private insurance market. Finally, if the existence of a private alternative ends up siphoning off upper- and middle-class Canadians, the legitimacy of a tax-supported public system may be called into question (Evans, 1997).

## **VII. Health Care Partnerships with the Third Sector**

The concept of a “third sector,” defined as non-profit organizations engaged in service provision, is not new in the health care arena. Indeed, the classic definition of the third sector (Salamon and Anheier, 1992) aptly describes the hospital sector in Canada, in that hospitals are for the most part self-governing, voluntary and non-profit institutions.

The history of hospitals in Canada differs from that of the United States, for example, where the distinction between public charity and private hospital care has always been sharper (Boychuk, 1999). In the 19th century, provincial governments have provided subsidies to help fund local public health initiatives and charity cases in voluntary hospitals. In the 20th century, these subsidies became the basis for extending coverage beyond the poor to form the basis of universal hospital insurance in Canada. As in other countries, the third sector has also been a strong element in public health initiatives and health research in Canada. For example, health promotion has strong roots in community-based groups and networks, from disease prevention organizations to AIDS service organizations (Albert, 2001).

However, the problem in linking third sector initiatives to the health care service provision is that non-profit organizations risk being considered “the receptacle for services which the government no longer desires or is able to provide to citizens” (Brock, 2000). In the Canadian context, health care has never been “provided” by the state, but its provision has been financed through the public purse. A good case in point is the difficulty in linking the process of “de-hospitalizing” services (also referred to as the *virage ambulatoire* in Quebec) with “re-investing” in other types of institutions, as well as building up community capacity to provide better integrated care (Auer *et al.*, 1995). Although these types of measures are often cited in the search for cost-effectiveness and efficiency, they require better resource allocation, not simply closing hospitals and “downloading” responsibility from hospitals to other settings (Hall and Reed, 1999).

What should be kept in mind when exploring third sector options is that health care is fundamentally different than most other social services, for at least two reasons. First, health care is an arena in which private alternatives exist and are championed by powerful interests. Loosening public regulation and shoring up the non-profit sector may undermine the regime, given the presence of a profitable private market for all kinds of health care services.<sup>5</sup>

A second characteristic of the health care sector is that services are provided by highly-trained and (for the most part) highly-paid professionals who may not want to relinquish control and whose skills may not be easily transferable to other settings. The initial and, to some extent, ongoing resistance of physicians to fully embrace the concept of community health and social service centres in Quebec (the CLSC networks) is a good illustration of this dynamic.

## VIII. Conclusions

This paper has raised several issues about the relationship between citizenship, governance and health care provision. Does health care really reflect a “common Canadian citizenship”? Has health policy itself affected the citizenship of Canadians? What emerges in this paper is a paradoxical portrait on several levels.

First, the rhetoric of a Canadian health care “system” belies the fact that health services are provided in the context of distinct provincial and territorial health care administrations. The federal presence in health care looms large in terms of the *Canada Health Act*. In reality, however, it is founded on a spending power that must be *exercised* in order to be effective. When the federal government withdraws its dollars, it also loses its moral authority over treating health care as citizenship right for “all Canadians.”

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5 Social housing offers an interesting lesson in what can happen when non-profits collide with the private market. In the United States’ case, federal disengagement from the housing sector led to enormous pressure on non-profit organizations to become “commercialized,” thereby threatening their ability to hold to standards like affordability and neighborhood control (Koschinsky, 1998). In Canada, comparisons between public housing and “third sector” housing show that the location of the former correlates with need, while the latter – influenced by local control and interests – correlates with socioeconomic status (Skelton, 1996).

Second, while the notion of regional equity infuses the perception of health care provision as a right of citizenship, the reality of regional discrepancies in quality and access to care, even within individual provinces, challenges this ideal.

Third, in recent years, governments have promised to decentralize and democratize health care. Regional health care agencies, with representation of “citizens” as well as experts and providers, have been the chosen format. Initial evidence suggests that there are significant limits to the democratic practices of these agencies. Moreover, a real downside is the risk that “democracy” is offered to compensate for reduced services, and as a mechanism for making and justifying hard choices.

Finally, a rapid overview of the involvement of the third sector in the Canadian health care system reveals both its key historical role and its fragility in the face of pressures for privatization and commercialization. Care must be taken if this sector is to be able to follow its mandates for public service and voluntary action, and not to be driven into behaving simply as a business. In the market for health care, in which consumer decisions are mediated through professional expertise and available resources – and where an individual’s health is essentially priceless – third sector involvement cannot afford to be driven into behaving just as any other business.

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**Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN)**

600 – 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1

Tel: (613) 567-7500 Fax: (613) 567-7640

Web Site: <http://www.cprn.org>

**The Citizenship Building Consequences of  
Quebec's Social Economy**

By

**Eric Shragge**

School of Community and Public Affairs  
Concordia University

**Peter Graefe**

Département de science politique  
Université de Montréal

and

**Jean-Marc Fontan**

Département de sociologie  
Université du Québec à Montréal

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## I. Introduction

Given the breakdown of the post-war Welfare State, coupled with the persistence of unemployment rates well above the post-war norm, questions concerning the future of social rights and of work have preoccupied citizen groups and policy-makers. In the post-1945 period, the combination of near full employment, and the extension of universal social rights that translated into access to education, health care, social assistance, unemployment insurance and housing, meant that most Canadians shared at least partially in the country's growing affluence, and possessed at least some minimal supports (in the sense of a social wage) for participation in their communities and in the political process.

The point is not to paint these years as a time of consensus and equality, but to recognize that relatively full employment and the welfare state provided a context propitious for responding to the demands of individuals and of groups for inclusion within a broadened conception of citizenship, and within consumer society more generally. As these two motors of inclusion have broken down, attention has shifted to finding possible replacements.

One area that has attracted particular attention is the social economy, proposed as a response to job scarcity and poverty that will also provide access to services and foster a more inclusive citizenship. This term, whose definition will be elaborated more fully below, implies a break with the choices of state and market, and instead looks to not-for-profit organizations as potential answers to the problems of unemployment and poverty. These organizations are seen as ideally located to respond to the needs of their local communities, particularly by linking social provision and economic activity. The intent is to mobilize community resources to create jobs and social services that the market will not and the state is unwilling to provide (see Box 1).

As such, the social economy can arguably consolidate and extend citizenship, both by providing social services and creating the links to paid work that so many believe will overcome exclusion. In the European context, Ash Amin and his co-authors point to a growing consensus amongst academics and policy makers that “a locally based ‘social economy’... could and should play a central role in future regeneration and social cohesion strategies.”<sup>1</sup>

Following sections that set out debates over definitions and trace the historical development of the social economy, this report will consider what role the social economy can play in the specific area of “citizenship building.” More concretely, informed by developments in Quebec, particularly over the past half-decade, we consider the social economy's impact on the three elements found in CPRN's definition of citizenship, namely, rights and responsibilities, access to services, and feelings of belonging. In addition, the local practices linked to the social economy may have the potential for creating new forms of social participation for citizens. Overall, however, our view is that the social economy can play a useful role in supporting the expansion of citizenship, but that this role is at best a supportive one. More importantly, trying to force the social economy into a “starring role” is likely to undercut its contribution altogether.

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1 A. Amin, A. Cameron and R. Hudson, “Welfare as Work? The Potential of the UK Social Economy,” *Environment and Planning A* Vol. 31 (1999), 2033.

**Box 1**  
**Examples of Social Economy Initiatives**

***Le Centre de Transition le Sextant:*** Founded in 1982 in Anjou, the centre provides work to the disabled through adapted work conditions. The Centre makes and distributes paper products, and also offers commercial, industrial and institutional cleaning services. The centre employs 200 people, and receives 25 percent of its \$6 million in revenues from government subsidies.

***Atelier du chômeur du Bas-Richelieu:*** Created in the mid-1980s by the region's association of the unemployed, the Atelier is a non-profit organization that mobilizes the unemployed to collect, repair and re-sell (at modest prices) used appliances, furniture and clothes.

***New Dawn Enterprises:*** Created in Sydney (Cape Breton) in 1976 as a not-for-profit corporation, New Dawn is one of Canada's oldest community development corporations. It has attempted to use business-based approaches to respond to community-expressed needs in areas such as housing, seniors' care and health services.

***Coopérative Forestière Fernand Boilleau:*** Founded in 1963, this worker cooperative is involved in both woodcutting and the development of forestry management plans. The cooperative employs 200 people.

## II. Defining the Social Economy

Given the relative novelty of studying the sector, much work remains to be done in determining the boundaries of the social economy. A recent survey by Lévesque and Mendell sets out five different definitions currently in use in academic research (see Box 2). This report is hardly the place to seek to cut through the knot of definitions. For our purposes, it is helpful to step back from these attempts at encompassing definitions and instead take up Ash Amin's suggestion to view the social economy as "centred around the provision of social and welfare services by the not-for-profit sector." In this view, "social economy organizations are understood to represent a break from the 'binary choices' of conventional socioeconomic strategies that present market and state as mutually exclusive spheres of economic growth and social regeneration."<sup>2</sup> This description of the sector underlines the fact that the recent use of the term refers to community organizations that have taken on greater responsibility as providers of a variety of social services as part of state decentralization.<sup>3</sup> The idea of breaking with the binary choices of market and state also suggests that the social economy is similar to the third sector. Indeed most authors treat the terms "third sector" and "social economy" as if they were fairly close in meaning to one another.<sup>4</sup>

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2 Amin *et al.*, "Welfare as Work," 2033.

3 Eric Shragge and Jean-Marc Fontan, "Debating the Social Economy Third Sector in Québec," *Canadian Review of Social Policy* No. 45-46 (2000), 229.

4 This point is made by Yves Vaillancourt. See "Tiers secteur et reconfiguration des politiques sociales: introduction au dossier," *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1999), 25.

**Box 2**  
**Definitions of the Social Economy**

**Definition by Components:** The social economy = cooperatives + mutuals + associations.

**Rules-based Definition:** The social economy combines an association of people with a firm producing goods and services, on the basis of the rules of: equality of members; control of the firm by the members; distribution of profits to members; collective holding of property in perpetuity.

**Definition Stressing the Mixing of Economic Logics:** The social economy is a hybridization of market, non-market (state redistribution) and non-monetary (reciprocity and gift) forms of economic logic.

**Definition based on the Diverse Logics of Action Occurring within Associations:** Here, social economy firms are categorized based on how they coordinate a series of logics (e.g., civic logic, market logic, domestic logic, inspirational logic etc.).

**The Conseil wallon de l'économie sociale's Definition (widely adopted in Quebec):** Social economy activities are those respecting the principles of: service to members or the collectivity as an end; autonomous management; democratic decision making; the primacy of people and labour over capital in dividing surpluses; and participation, empowerment and individual and collective responsibility.

Source: Benoît Lévesque and Marguerite Mendell, "L'économie sociale au Québec: éléments théoriques et empiriques pour le débat et la recherche," *Lien social et Politiques* No. 41 (1999), 107-108.

On the other hand, it is worth expanding Amin *et al.*'s definition beyond "the provision of social and welfare services" to recognize that organizations within the sector are involved in a broader array of economic activities, including goods production and the provision of financial services. It is also worth emphasizing that the social economy is often distinguished by its form of governance. As the definitions in Box 2 illustrate, the sector has been defined in part in reference to democratic participation, self-management, and links between workers and the broader community, which sets it apart from the traditional models of public and private sector governance.

### III. History<sup>5</sup>

The term "social economy" has early historical origins, but its usage in Quebec has, for all intents and purposes, re-emerged from a long hibernation in the wake of the Bread and Roses March Against Poverty, led by the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) in June 1995.

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5 This section draws heavily from Jean-Marc Fontan and Eric Shragge, "Tendencies, Tensions and Visions in the Social Economy," in Eric Shragge and Jean-Marc Fontan, *Social Economy: International Debates and Perspectives* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2000).

The marchers demanded, among other things, that state funding should stabilize and consolidate work and activities in the social economy as a means of fighting poverty and meeting pressing social needs.<sup>6</sup> In the rest of Canada, the term remains less well known than the closely related ones of “third sector” or “non-profit sector.” It appears in the title of Jack Quarter’s 1992 book (*Canada’s Social Economy*), but the first chapter’s first sentence noted that “in Canada, the term *social economy* is seldom used, and when it is applied, it lacks clear definition.”<sup>7</sup>

Looking at what the social economy represented in the past can help us understand what it might mean in the current context. Revisiting this history also enables a preliminary assessment of the link between this sector and the evolution of citizenship.

### ***From its Origins to the Second World War***

In a very broad sense, one could trace the origins of the social economy to very early human societies, and their communal forms of work and consumption. It is perhaps more useful, though, to situate the sector’s origins in the late 18th century with the birth of the national state. It was in the debate and conflict over the principles and roles of the state that new rights emerged, slowly legalizing and legitimizing collective organizations like cooperatives, as well as organizations that defended particular social interests such as trade unions.

From the mid-19th century through to the early 20th century, the territorial expansion of agricultural markets, and the shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial capitalist one, gave rise to experimentation in the social economy. Farmers pioneered on a number of fronts in their efforts to overcome their vulnerability to market forces and to their major suppliers and distributors. Their efforts included numerous cooperatives, which sought to control the marketing of their products and of the basic purchases they required. A famous example in Canada would be the creation of the prairie wheat pools in the early 20th century. Beyond marketing, farmers also applied the cooperative form to the retail trade, and had a hand in creating early forms of mutual insurance against accidents and fires.

The recruitment of labour into early industrial production also gave rise to social economy measures, as the extended family could no longer serve as a unit for pooling risks and resources. Workers created collective services in the fields of insurance, consumption, savings and credit. For instance, Canada’s first credit unions, such as the Caisse populaire Desjardins, grew out of collective efforts to provide banking and credit services to workers and farmers whom the banks ignored.<sup>8</sup>

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6 Françoise David and Line Marcoux, *Du pain et des roses : cahier des revendications et guide d’animation* (Montréal: Marche des femmes contre la pauvreté, February 1995), 5.

7 Jack Quarter, *Canada’s Social Economy: Co-operatives, Non-profits, and Other Community Enterprises* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1992), 1.

8 This paragraph borrows material from Quarter, *Canada’s Social Economy*, Ch. 2.

Another well-known Canadian example is the Antigonish movement in the fishing and farming communities of Nova Scotia in the 1930s. Here, adult education activities through study clubs led to the widespread creation of consumer, marketing, and even housing cooperatives.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout this period, the social economy's relation to citizenship was a complex one. On the one hand, the social economy was a response to severe limitations on citizenship. Industrial workers had no rights to be protected from the social risks of unemployment, sickness, poverty and death. Since they also lacked rights of industrial citizenship (i.e., representation within the workplace through unions and collective bargaining), they sought to develop their own forms of social provision, such as mutual societies and cooperatives.

On the other hand, other associative forms created by workers, namely trade unions and social democratic political parties, would succeed in widening citizenship through the extension of bargaining and representation rights within the workplace, and through the creation of government programs that socialized the risks of industrial society with the extension of social rights and the welfare state more generally. It is tempting to see mutual societies and cooperatives as "citizenship-building" in the sense that they prefigured elements of the welfare state that were to follow. In a sense, then, the social economy acted both as a means of mobilizing those excluded from citizenship to demand a widening of that citizenship, as well as a substitute for it, given the existing limitations of that citizenship. On the one hand was the demand for inclusion, while on the other was a utopian project of creating an alternative, based on decentralized and federated institutions that would replace both capitalist enterprise and the nation state.<sup>10</sup>

The success of reform-minded movements in both the workplace and the political realm vitiated the power of this radical project by turning attention to making economic gains in the workplace and policy gains through the ballot box. Rather than promoting another way of organizing economy and society, attention was turned to carving out an expanded citizenship within the existing order. At the same time, the success of many of the cooperative forms, such as farm marketing cooperatives or credit unions, also served to diminish their creativity. As they became established players in their field, they were increasingly drawn to adopt significant elements of the outlook and strategies of their profit-driven competitors. Democratic oversight and participation became more of a formality as the organizations recruited professionals to look after day-to-day operations, and to supply the technical expertise required to match their for-profit competitors.

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9 Anne Alexander, *The Antigonish Movement: Moses Coady and Adult Education Today* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1997).

10 See Fontan and Shrage, "Tendencies, Tensions and Visions," and Paul Leduc Browne, *Love in a Cold World? The Voluntary Sector in an Age of Cuts* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 1996), 9-13.

### *From the Second World War to the 1970s*

The social economy was pushed further to the margins after the Second World War. The state's commitment to maintaining full employment, to expanding industrial citizenship through collective bargaining, and to recognizing citizens' social rights by constructing the welfare state all served to sideline this sector. Organizations outside of the market and the state had much less reason to look after social provision or economic development since it fell to the state to undertake these tasks. These organizations also lacked the state's capacity to generate universality in programming.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the expansion of the welfare state did not crowd out associative activity. In fact, the decades after the Second World War linked the third sector and the government in a symbiotic relationship of expansion. Associative activity spurred state expansion, and also sprang up in reaction to new state initiatives.<sup>11</sup> For instance, charitable and voluntary organizations providing health and social services to particular clienteles (such as the disabled) demanded state action to meet the needs of their members. Where this action was forthcoming, organizations continued to perform advocacy and lobbying activities.

Meanwhile, the cooperative model was given new life in the form of housing and consumer cooperatives, which flourished starting in the late 1960s. Associative activity in the community sector slowly changed as the earlier emphasis on service provision and charity gave way to organizing that centred around mobilizing people, making demands on the state, and carrying an alternative ideology to capitalism. Where service provision activities persisted, these took on the form of autonomous services defined independently of state oversight.<sup>12</sup>

This period is particularly notable in terms of developing citizenship through engagement in direct action. These organizing activities validated social rights by expanding access to services, provided individuals with greater access to political power, and increased their sense of belonging, or at least their sense of political efficacy. Examples would include the creation of tenant's rights and welfare rights organizations, or the community health clinic movement that would lead the Quebec government to respond by creating a province-wide network of community health and social services centres, the CLSCs (*Centres locaux de services communautaires*).

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11 John Shields and B. Mitchell Evans, *Shrinking the State: Globalization and Public Administration Reform* (Halifax: Fernwood, 1998), 90-93.

12 Eric Shragge, "Looking Backwards to Go Forward: The Quebec Community Movement 30 Years Later," *Intervention* No. 110 (1999), 54.

### *From the 1970s to the Present*

The economic slow-down of the mid-to-late 1970s spelled the end of full employment in Canada, as jobless rates remained well above the 1945-1970 average, even at the end of prolonged economic expansions (such as those of the late 1980s or late 1990s). The welfare state likewise fell into crisis, under the combined assault of citizen dissatisfaction with bureaucratization and difficulties managing public finances (as high real interest rates reduced the ability of governments to carry debt).

The welfare state also fell prey to governments predisposed to restructured social programs that played down universal provision based on need in favour of targeted measures based strongly on encouraging (and even enforcing) labour market participation. These twin crises, of employment and of the welfare state, produced new forms of poverty and exclusion, as individuals could find themselves out of work for extended periods, as well as beyond the reach of a shrunken safety net.

The community sector also underwent a number of changes in the late 1970s and 1980s. The interest in political education and community action gave way to greater emphasis on providing services. This change in emphasis was aided by the interest shown by governments to create “partnerships” with third sector organizations. The idea for governments was to integrate these groups into a service delivery system that could pick up the slack as state services were trimmed back or downloaded.

This change had at least two important effects. First, service-provision demanded new skills, and gave rise to a growing sophistication in and professionalization of the sector. The professionalization of organizations in turn reduced the extent of participatory management and demobilized the active citizenry that often underpinned their creation. This tendency was and is reinforced by the incentive structure of governmental funding which supports service delivery roles but not advocacy and education functions.

In this context, groups became more dependent on state resources in order to maintain their services, and slowly moved into the orbit of existing state services.<sup>13</sup> Second, the social economy moved from taking up projects that neither market nor state could perform effectively to replacing goods and services that had once been provided as *public services* by the state.

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13 Shragge and Fontan, “Debating the Social Economy,” 230; Shragge, “Looking Backwards,” 55; Deena White, “Contradictory Participation: Reflections on Community Action in Quebec,” in Brian Wharf and Michael Clague (eds), *Community Organizing: Canadian Experiences* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 69-72, 81-82; Jane Jenson and Susan D. Phillips, “Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 14 (Fall 1996), 127-128.

These changes in the community sector, in combination with the de-industrialization of working-class neighbourhoods, the rise of unemployment, and cuts to the welfare state, set the stage for a new generation of social economy activities. The community sector was poised to move more firmly onto the economic terrain of local development and employability enhancement, in response to high rates of unemployment that crippled communities and left many workers on the scrap heap.

A whole panoply of new institutions and practices were created in response, ranging from collective kitchens to community restaurants, recycling firms, community loan associations (microcredit), and community economic development organizations. This partial enumeration of practices underlines the diversity of responses, but the common thread was to respond to exclusion from the labour market through innovative combinations of the economic and the social. A community restaurant, for instance, might provide a public space for social interaction, which the poor can afford. At the same time, work at the restaurant allows the excluded to develop their personal and employment capacities.

While these practices initially sprung up as isolated responses to economic dislocation, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, they were evolving into a consolidated and structured partnership with state funders. The emergence of the “social economy” as a hot topic of public debate since 1995 has placed the nature of this partnership under scrutiny. Some see this partnership as part of a neoliberal strategy, whereby social services currently provided by well-paid public servants are subcontracted to a social economy and provided by low-paid workers in precarious jobs. In the process, wealthy and middle-class individuals will likely opt for higher quality private social services, leaving the social economy as a cut-rate welfare state where the poor serve the poor. Here, the social income would serve to accentuate the differential access to citizenship rights based on wealth.

Others do not share this pessimistic vision, and instead believe the social economy may create linkages between the market, the state and the community in a consensus building effort. It is thus an exemplar of a new form of governance, where partnerships between the state and the community sector are employed to deliver social and economic policy. While this social economy is not a panacea, it plays an essential role in empowering communities and individuals left behind by the restructuring of the market and the state.<sup>14</sup> These debates clearly raise the issue of whether the development of the social economy has consolidated and extended citizenship by reducing marginalization, or whether it has done exactly the opposite..

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14 See Shragge and Fontan, “Debating the Social Economy,” 232-33; Peter Graefe, “Repenser l’économie sociale face à l’État,” *Lien social et Politiques* No. 41 (1999), 130-131.

#### **IV. The Social Economy: Building Citizenship?**

Our historical sketch of the social economy suggests that the sector has contributed to the extension of citizenship, but in ways that were often indirect, unintended, or complementary to more significant influences. This section will turn its attention directly to the issue of the citizenship-building consequences of the social economy in Quebec, using the CPRN's three-dimensional definition. CPRN defines citizenship as the "relationship between states and citizens," and considers that it is comprised of the following elements:

- Rights and responsibilities, including rights to services
- Access to services, as well as to political power, and
- Feelings of belonging, especially to the national or civic community.

On each of these dimensions, citizenship can be seen to imply a commitment to equality. Citizens are deemed to have equal access to rights, political power, and the status of belonging. Where this equality is denied in practice, it frequently gives rise to demands that the promised equality of citizenship be fully extended.

We will consider each of these elements in turn. We will first outline the strongest arguments made for the enhancement of a particular dimension of citizenship, drawing especially on arguments made in the documents of the Quebec government. We will then briefly raise some considerations that temper the claims made for the social economy's citizenship-building potential.

##### ***Rights and Responsibilities – From Rights to Services***

One of the arguments frequently invoked in support of the social economy involves its ability to respond to new social needs. The Comité d'orientation et de concertation sur l'économie sociale, struck in response to the 1995 women's march noted that "the objectives sought by the development of the social economy are the creation of stable and high-quality jobs and the development of goods and services of a collective utility which will respond to the social needs of the local and regional community through the use of the milieu's resources."<sup>15</sup> A similar argument was advanced in the discussion document preceding the 1996-98 reform to the social assistance system. Here it was argued that "the social economy seeks to meet social needs expressed by the community, by offering goods and services while encouraging stable jobs protected by labour legislation."<sup>16</sup>

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15 Comité d'orientation et de concertation sur l'économie sociale, *Entre l'espoir et le doute*, May 1996, 2 (our translation).

16 Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu, *The Road to Labour Market Entry, Training and Employment: Consultation Paper* (Quebec: MSR, 1996), 31.

In contrast, a reflection group reporting to the Minister of Health and Social Services presented the social economy as helping maintain existing social rights in a period of welfare state cutbacks. Taking the view that the era of completely free services provided entirely by public service employees with favourable work conditions was now over, the group turned to the social economy as an alternative: “It is the difference between cutting State services and offering nothing in return, and cutting these services but at the same time offering an alternative which protects the essential elements of the populations’ quality of life.”<sup>17</sup> This represents a slippage from viewing the social economy as a tool for meeting needs through *new* initiatives to proposing it as a replacement or substitute to *existing* public services.

All the preceding views share the idea that individuals should have access to services to meet needs related to living in situations of poverty and exclusion. The social economy is considered the best means for providing these services for several reasons. The view of “replacing existing services” exposes one reason why the social economy can increase rights to services while the state cannot – the expense. The Conseil du statut de la femme makes a similar point in noting that provision by the public sector would be costly, and that a social consensus to shoulder these costs is lacking.<sup>18</sup>

The question of affordability raises the issue of whether the savings are simply the result paying lower wages to those delivering the services. The argument from the various governmental reports is that the savings come from the characteristics of the sector, including greater responsiveness to users and more flexibility in identifying needs and tailoring activities to meet them. The costs and the inefficiencies arising from the bureaucratization of state services are thus avoided, such that the social economy ensures “a better use of the financial resources involved in state redistribution.”<sup>19</sup> The ability to solicit contributions of voluntary labour, donations, and user fees also reduces the cost of service provision through social economy organizations. Finally, delivering services through the social economy can enhance the state’s flexibility, since it can withdraw from supporting particular services without having to buy-out employees or be left with redundant facilities.

At least two questions are nevertheless raised by these considerations. The first involves the meaning of rights. It has been argued that supporters of an expanded role for the social economy replace the idea of broad social rights as citizenship rights (which are then given meaning through a variety of specific services) with a much narrower conception of access to services based on needs.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Jean-Pierre Bélanger and Gilles Desrosiers, *Nouvelles orientations des politiques sociales pour une société en mutation* (Quebec: Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 1996), 63-64 (our translation).

18 Conseil du statut de la femme, *L'économie sociale et les femmes: garder l'oeil ouvert* (Quebec: Conseil du statut de la femme, 1996), 12. At the same time, the Conseil notes that for-profit provision of these services is unworkable since they are either unprofitable, or must be priced in a manner that would impede universal access.

19 Groupe de travail sur l'économie sociale, *Osons la solidarité*, October 1996, 7.

20 This is discussed in Louise Boivin and Mark Fortier, “Introduction,” in Louise Boivin and Mark Fortier, *L'économie sociale: L'avenir d'une illusion* (Boucherville: Fides, 1998). Boivin and Fortier note that needs become a central concept, in part because they form the demand to which social economy firms respond by supplying services (p. 17).

Social rights corresponded to a basic set of human needs and were seen as a *quid pro quo* for bearing the enduring and uncontrollable risks of living in society (unemployment, illness, disability, and so on). They were won by struggle, and were both universal and guaranteed. The narrower emphasis on services implies that access relies on the ability to provide them. As such, only those new needs that can be turned into a market for social economy firms seem to give rise to new rights.<sup>21</sup> In other words, citizenship is limited to what *can* be provided by the social economy, rather than being based on what citizens *should* have as a right of citizenship.

Second, to what extent can one speak of “rights” to services if provision is reliant on local initiatives? For instance, can one claim to have a meaningful right to subsidized home care services when there are only about 100 firms province-wide? Filion’s research in community economic development also suggests that relying on local initiatives will tend to accentuate differences across space. Localities that already possess a strong community network have much greater success than those where the social fabric is weak or frayed. Similarly, wealthier localities can shoulder the user fees that may be required to manage certain services provided by the not-for-profit sector, while poorer localities may lack the necessary resources.<sup>22</sup> As a result, to the extent that social economy activities build citizenship in terms of access to services, this citizenship may be highly localized, and highly unequal over space. This is contrary to the commitment to equality implied by the status of citizen.

The replacement of social rights by providing access to services, and the growing unevenness of such rights, are not inevitable. They can be avoided by a renewed state commitment to protecting broad social rights, and by committing significant public resources to reducing inequalities between communities. Such commitments, however, would place the social economy’s contribution to citizenship-building in a far more secondary role.

### ***Access to Political Power***

The arguments for access to political power take place on at least three levels: the organization, the locality, and the polity. At the level of the organizations themselves, it can be argued that these function as schools for democracy, with opportunities for participatory decision-making and informal learning. This dimension has received little attention in the government’s policy documents, and only slightly more in the academic literature. The definition commonly used in Quebec (see above) appears to take it for granted that organizations in the social economy follow democratic management principles and encourage participation. The Groupe de travail sur l’économie sociale, which prepared a report on the social economy’s job creation potential to the October 1996 Summit on the Economy and Employment noted that “basing itself on the involvement of members of the community, [the social economy] contributes to the democratization of society and to a more active citizenship.”<sup>23</sup>

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21 Lucie Lamarche, “L’économie sociale: un modèle de développement au service de l’État désétatisé,” in Louise Boivin and Mark Fortier, *L’économie sociale: L’avenir d’une illusion* (Boucherville: Fides, 1998), 142-43.

22 Pierre Filion, “Potential and Limitations of Community Economic Development: Individual Initiative and Collective Action in a Post-Fordist Context,” *Environment and Planning A* Vol. 30 (1998), 1111, 1115.

23 Groupe de travail sur l’économie sociale, *Osons la solidarité*, 7.

These claims are based on the premise that work relations in the sector are based on democratic principles on two dimensions. First, the forms of management in the sector are argued to be less hierarchical and more participatory. Second, unlike in the public sector, both *workers* and *users* can participate in the elaboration of services and their management, creating democratic forms of governance.<sup>24</sup>

Despite these claims, it is difficult to argue that the social economy is inherently democratic. The organizations within the sector provide spaces for democratic experimentation, but one cannot say that a strong, permanent and successful democratic tradition has been established. Fontan's study of community economic development corporations, for instance, did not reveal significant departures from traditional work relations. Only two of the seven cases examined employed participatory management practices.<sup>25</sup> This is in keeping with our earlier comments about the effects of professionalism. The extent of joint governance of workers and users is also highly variable, as the institutions of the annual membership meeting and community representation on boards of directors are blunt instruments. It is therefore more accurate to say that the social economy has the *potential* to build democratic capacities through participation, but that the realization of that potential depends on the context.

Our historical sketch suggests that an emphasis on service provision, particularly in a context of partnerships with governments seeking to offload responsibilities, tends to increase professionalization and make participation more formalistic. A recent qualitative study of community organizations in Montréal comes to similar conclusions. The shifting of service provision towards the community sector eroded grassroots involvement, limited time for collective activities, increased the expertise needed to sit on the boards of organizations, reduced advocacy activities, and constrained the ability to participate in government consultations and forums.<sup>26</sup>

The question of access to power transcends the context of individual community organizations to pose the question of the influence of social economy firms at the local and national levels. This involves looking at the social economy from a different angle, namely its role in ensuring that the interests of the sector as a whole are represented and advanced in local and provincial decision-making institutions. After all, community action will exist only "as a palliative, a means of countering feelings of powerlessness and exclusion" if "local, regional and even national levels of action become increasingly powerless to take effective control of global economic determination."<sup>27</sup>

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24 Louis Favreau and Benoît Lévesque, *Développement économique communautaire: Économie sociale et intervention* (Ste-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1996), 14.

25 Jean-Marc Fontan, "Le développement économique communautaire québécois: éléments de synthèse et point de vue critique," *Lien social et Politiques*, No. 32 (1994), 121; Fontan and Shragge, "Tendencias, tensiones and visions," 7.

26 Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal, *Their balance leaves us off-balance* (Montréal: RIOCM, 1998), Ch. 7.

27 White, "Contradictory Participation," 79.

At the local level, there is the potential for increasing local capacities to plan and undertake social and economic development, either through community economic development organizations, or through bilateral negotiation and bargaining with the local government.<sup>28</sup> The Quebec government's new regional policy provides some openings along these lines by creating multi-stakeholder organizations at the local level. These Local Development Centres (CLDs) dispose of sums of money earmarked for the social economy, and provide representation to community organizations on their boards. It is perhaps too early to judge the performance of these new institutions. The president of the Chantier de l'économie sociale argues that they have provided collective solutions to questions of local development. There is also some evidence that representation has kept the issues of poverty and exclusion on the local development agenda.<sup>29</sup>

At the level of Quebec as a whole, the ability of the women's movement to place the social economy on the policy agenda has also widened access to policy-making circles. Again, the president of the Chantier de l'économie sociale argues that community actors are increasingly recognized as being full partners in Quebec's economic and social development, placing Quebec ahead of all the OECD countries in terms of recognizing social group representatives as partners in economic development and job creation. The Chantier itself now pulls an important weight as it is seen to carry the demands of the community organizations supporting the social economy.<sup>30</sup>

Despite these achievements in opening decision-making to representatives of the social economy sector, some pressing questions remain. First, to what extent do both the CLDs and involvement in Quebec-level policy networks provide citizens with access to power? The lines of popular accountability in this domain are vague or nonexistent. The boards of the CLDs are not accountable to the populations they serve, although they are chosen by electoral colleges drawn from the membership. The issues of which groups have access to Quebec-level policy networks, and which constituents they can legitimately claim to represent, are even less clearly specified.

Second, to what extent does participation in local or Quebec-wide planning give access to real power? Yvan Comeau and his colleagues, who are highly confident about the social economy's potential, have expressed concern that unions and the associative sector lack sufficient representation in the CLDs to truly influence decisions about development. The result is that many of these Centres have focused on traditional local development initiatives and consider the social economy as something for the poor, and thus of peripheral interest.

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28 Chantier de l'économie sociale, *De nouveau, nous osons: Document de positionnement stratégique* (Montréal: Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2001), 9; Jan Bucek and Brian Smith, "New Approaches to Local Democracy: Direct Democracy, Participation and the 'Third Sector,'" *Environment and Planning C*, Vol. 18 (2000), 12.

29 William A. Ninacs, "Social Economy: A Practitioner's Viewpoint," in Eric Shragge and Jean-Marc Fontan, *Social Economy: International Debates and Perspectives* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2000), 141.

30 Nancy Neamtan, "Le Chantier de l'économie sociale: un bilan," in Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay, *Objectif Plein-Emploi: Le marché, la social-démocratie ou l'économie sociale?* (Ste-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1998), 161; Yves Vaillancourt et al., *Économie sociale, santé et bien-être: la spécificité du modèle québécois au Canada* (Montréal: LAREPPS, February 2000), 7.

A province-wide budgetary envelope of roughly \$10M for social economy initiatives (spread out over more than 100 CLDs) does little to challenge these preconceptions.<sup>31</sup> As well, the fact that the province sets the CLD's mandates and funding greatly limits their potential to innovate. More broadly, although women's organizations have gained some access to the state's policy networks, there is considerable unease with the vision of the social economy adopted by the state, and the policies flowing from this vision. In other words, the ability to get a hearing has not translated into the impression of shaping policy development.<sup>32</sup>

### *Feelings of Belonging, Especially to the National or Civic Community*

The social economy may help build belonging on both a symbolic and a substantive level. On the symbolic level, the Groupe de travail argued that "faced with the hard realities of misery and of exclusion," the creators of social economy projects have "called upon solidarity and daring."<sup>33</sup> The growth of the social economy has also been explained as a response to "the *need for identity* and the *need for a project* to give meaning to living together."<sup>34</sup> The more substantive issues along these lines, however, are those of countering exclusion from employment and social participation.

It is here that one finds the centre of gravity in the government's public policy agenda. The influential Ministry of Finance argues that "it is first of all for their specific contribution to the creation of jobs that are stable and which have a social finality that the government will support the social economy's entrepreneurial approach and expansion."<sup>35</sup> There is a recurrent theme that the social economy can combat unemployment and exclusion. This holds for individuals, but also for communities, since the social economy is felt to empower communities to overcome their underdevelopment by mobilizing *all* their resources (including those outside of the market and the state), and by integrating social and economic goals in innovative ways.<sup>36</sup> Local actions and initiatives are prized in part because they are seen as the most propitious sites for fostering a sense of identification and belonging to a community.<sup>37</sup>

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31 Yvan Comeau, Louis Favreau, Benoît Lévesque, and Marguerite Mendell, *Emploi, économie sociale, développement local: Les nouvelles filières* (Ste-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2001), 43; Martine D'Amours, *Processus d'institutionnalisation de l'économie sociale au Québec* (Montréal: CRISES/LAREPPS, 2000), 20-21, 23. D'Amours presents figures showing that the combined weight of union and community group representation on CLD boards of roughly 25 percent in Montréal, 20 percent in its suburbs, and 14 percent outside of Montréal and Laval.

32 See Martine D'Amours, "Françoise David: une féministe à l'heure du défi mondial. Entrevue avec la présidente de la Fédération des femmes du Québec," *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* Vol. 11, No. 2 (1999); Ninacs, "Social Economy," 143-45.

33 Groupe de travail sur l'économie sociale, *Osons la solidarité*, 46 (our translation).

34 Louis Favreau and Benoît Lévesque, "L'économie sociale et les pouvoirs public: banalisation du «social» ou tremplin pour une transformation sociale," *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1997), 76 (emphasis in original; our translation).

35 Ministère des Finances, Québec objectif emploi -- Vers une économie d'avant-garde: Une stratégie de développement économique créatrice d'emplois (Quebec: Ministère des Finances, March 1998), 159-60 (our translation).

36 Conseil de la santé et du bien-être, *L'harmonisation des politiques de lutte contre l'exclusion* (Quebec: Conseil de la santé et du bien-être, 1996), 23-27. See also Ministère de la Sécurité du revenu, *The road*, 32; and Ministère des Régions, *Conjuguer l'économie et le social* (Quebec: Ministère des Régions, 1998), 1.

37 Chantier de l'économie sociale, *De nouveau, nous osons*, 9.

These arguments nevertheless raise some questions. First, in terms of belonging, the shift to a service-provision footing can reduce the sector's capacity to foster participation and involvement. Many community organizations were created by people and for people, and demanded a commitment from users to contribute to the organization's ongoing functioning and development. Unintentionally, to the extent that individuals treat the services provided by these groups as a *right* (getting back to the first dimension of citizenship), they are less likely to recognize a reciprocal obligation.<sup>38</sup> As such, the sector's development along a service-provision angle is likely to foster professionalization rather than participation and belonging.

The arguments concerning social cohesion also raise some perplexing questions. This uncertainty primarily relates to four possible impacts of the policies on the labour market. First, a key concern for many observers is the possibility of a displacement effect, where social economy firms undercut better paid and protected public sector jobs. In this view, the social economy acts as a downsizing policy that destroys as many jobs as it creates, since it simply substitutes state employment with community employment. The aggregate effect is to erode pay and working conditions in the sectors in which it operates, since the community sector jobs are generally less stable and less well paid.

This has a particular gender effect, as it is the public sector that threatens to be hardest hit, precisely where women have been most successful in making labour market gains. While a conclusive study has yet to be completed on this question, there are suggestions that public sector work that has been cut in the downsizing of health and social services has been replaced by social economy initiatives.<sup>39</sup>

Second, it is not clear that the social economy offers an escape from a polarized society, given the low wages it offers. The Quebec government has argued that the minimum wage is an acceptable one for work in the sector, even if it guarantees an income below recognized low-income cut-offs. Even the women's movement's demand of \$8.30 per hour provides a relatively stingy annual income of \$15,000 per year (assuming permanent, full-year work at 35 hours per week). In practice, wages are slightly higher. A recent survey found an average production wage of \$11.20 per hour for women and \$10.73 per hour for men, although home care pay for both men and women sits at \$8.70 per hour.<sup>40</sup>

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38 See Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal, *Their balance leaves us off-balance*, 120-122.

39 Diane Lamoureux, "La panacée de l'économie sociale: un placebo pour les femmes," in Louise Boivin and Marc Fortier, *L'économie sociale: L'avenir d'une illusion* (Boucherville: Fides, 1998); Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale, *Who Will be Responsible for Providing Care? The Impact of the Shift to Ambulatory Care and of Social Economy Policies on Quebec Women* (Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 1998). The Chantier de l'économie sociale contests these claims by noting that, in the job categories in CLSCs where a displacement effect is possible, the number of employees actually increased since 1992-1993 (*De nouveau, nous osons*, 14). Given that these years saw an ambulatory health reform seeking to enhance the role of CLSCs relative to hospitals, we believe a broader accounting of employment change is required to settle the question.

40 Comeau et al., *Emploi, économie sociale, développement local*, 125-27.

Moving people from the unemployment and social assistance rolls into low-paid work reduces welfare “dependency,” although wage subsidies and stipends to organizations taking placements cancel out savings to the public purse. It may also open lasting employment opportunities to some excluded individuals, although the Quebec experience shows that many social assistance recipients placed in community organizations are not retained once their placement ends.

At the same time, integration into the community sector does little to combat exclusion if the net result is to swell the ranks of the working poor. This is especially relevant if individuals remain trapped for extended periods at the low end of the labour market – as women often are.<sup>41</sup>

There is also a third possibility of degrading the low end of the labour market, by creating a body of jobs that are not subject to the norms of conventional employment relationships, and which stigmatize their holders. In France, public policies using the social economy to insert the excluded into economic and social activities have caused a proliferation of atypical jobs and the institutionalization of a secondary labour market made up of internships, insertion measures, and personal services schemes. Youth participants in certain insertion measures have been shown to be more likely to be subsequently unemployed than non-participants.

There is a danger, however, that this situation may lead to a growing pool of excluded individuals stuck in the cycle of these low-paid measures, which in turn may reduce incentives to create more stable and institutionalized jobs in the social economy.<sup>42</sup> Similar critiques have been made in Quebec, although recent policy initiatives dealing with the social economy have not emphasized the placement of social assistance recipients as the primary program goal.

Finally, the social economy will be hard pressed to increase social cohesion when the broader labour market trends are so dispiriting. The social economy’s relative share of economic activity and employment is very modest, and its impact is likely to be swamped by broader labour market trends. Quebec’s persistently high unemployment rates (despite labour force participation rates below the Canadian average), its growing rates of nonstandard work, and widening inequality in the distribution of working time, all point to the dearth of good jobs. This lack of sustaining employment must rank as the major factor in Quebec’s high rates of poverty.<sup>43</sup>

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41 For a brief discussion of labour market issues, see Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay, “Synthèse critique: L’économie sociale, l’avenir d’une illusion,” *Politique et sociétés*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1999), 137-39. On the placement of social assistance recipients, see White, “Contradictory Participation,” 73-78.

42 Alain Caillé and Jean-Louis Laville, “Pour ne pas entrer à reculons dans le XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Le Débat* No. 89 (1996), 81-83; Bernard Hofman, “Les associations sanitaires et sociales: Évolution et recomposition du travail et de l’emploi,” *Produire les solidarités: La part des associations* (Paris: Fondation de France, 1997), 218-219.

43 For details, see Quebec, *Le Marché du Travail*, Vol. 19, No. 5 supplement, pp. 17, 22, 87-88; Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Update* (Catalogue No. 71-005, Summer 1997), Table 25; and Statistics Canada, *Incidence of Low Income Among Populations Living in Private Households* (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/pgda/people/families/famil60a.htm>).

While social economy initiatives provide a mild palliative by meeting the needs of those living under various forms of labour market exclusion or instability, and while such initiatives do manage to create some stable, quality jobs (without forgetting the data on pay noted above), the sector is too small to counteract these heavy tendencies. In the face of high unemployment and precarious work, the social economy is largely a band-aid solution to a problem requiring a concerted public policy response. The crises of work and of the welfare state touch all of society. A meaningful response must therefore be far reaching, rather than simply targeting those on the margins. There are a number of promising ideas along these lines that deserve serious debate, including the reduction of working time and the guaranteed annual income.

## V. Conclusion

The social economy *can* make a number of beneficial contributions to the development of society. It *can* provide spaces for learning, for experimentation in democratic administration, for planning local economic and social development, and for mobilizing demands on the state. The organization of social and economic activity outside of the strictures of state and market *can* also serve to satisfy unmet needs in particular communities, and point to innovative strategies for countering unemployment and poverty. Under the right conditions, these elements contribute to building citizenship by enhancing political engagement, informal learning, sharing, and feelings of belonging.

When the social economy is asked to play a leading role in social provision, a number of pressures are introduced that undermine these citizenship-building elements. In these situations, there is a tendency to reduce educational and advocacy activities, and to shift from participatory practices to professional ones. The consolidation of social rights is also poorly served, since the local nature of service provision precludes the establishment of generalizable rights, and available services will likely vary widely between localities. The citizenship-building potential is vitiated in the process.

What this suggests is that it is not the social economy's *product* that counts when it comes to citizenship, but the social and democratic experimentation that surrounds its *production* and its processes. As with the farmer and worker cooperatives of the 19th and early 20th century, the products may act as important and necessary palliatives to life's pitfalls, particularly for those left unprotected at the margins of citizenship. But they do not in themselves widen the rights of citizens or their access to power.

In this light, envisioning social economy organizations as key service delivery agents under a new form of governance will have doubtful citizenship consequences. Community organizations may well increase their production, but at the expense of the citizenship-building activities of informal learning, organization and advocacy. If citizenship concerns the relationship between states and citizens, the social economy's role in this respect does not involve delivering state-contracted services, so much as preparing citizens to demand expanded rights and greater access to power.

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