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## **CPRN Discussion Paper**

# **The “Canadian Diversity Model”: A Repertoire in Search of a Framework**

By

Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon

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## Foreword

On September 17, 2001, six days after the terrible events in New York and Washington, CPRN convened a long-planned Roundtable to discuss this paper on the Canadian Diversity Model. For those who came from outside Ottawa, many were taking their first flight since air travel resumed. We had much to share as we gathered around the table, and all the issues raised in the paper had an urgency and poignancy that far surpassed anything we could have imagined as we began the work a year earlier.

CPRN had been working with the Canadian Identity division of Canadian Heritage to explore the complex issues that surround the Canadian diversity model. In addition to Canadian and international commitments to human rights, this model rests on three key pillars: linguistic duality, recognition of Aboriginal peoples' rights, and multiculturalism. The object of the paper and the Roundtable are to help Canadians debate and decide *how* to respect such cultural diversity while maintaining the cohesion necessary to sustain Canada into the 21st century.

September 11th clearly adds new challenges to social cohesion, for the diversity model itself is forged out of the tensions among *competing values*.

The need to take into account a range of values makes well-functioning and inclusive democratic institutions absolutely key to the success of the Canadian diversity model. Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon describe the Canadian diversity model as a series of choices made along four dimensions of competing values: uniformity–heterogeneity; individual rights–group rights; symmetry–asymmetry; and economic freedom–economic security. They place the accent on the rules of choice that are used, as well as the actual choices made. These rules include the practices of electoral democracy and responsible government as key decision rules for governance. But they also include other forms of engagement and involvement by citizens and groups, as Canadians encounter each other in everyday exchanges as well as in their political mobilizations. The authors therefore describe the repertoire of responses that shapes practices in civil society.

The dimensions of the Canadian diversity model are not independent of each other. Because they all touch on equality and inclusion, there are links among them. Acceptance of the value of heterogeneity, for example, will influence the willingness to rely on the notion of group-based rights and to work out asymmetrical arrangements to protect diversity, as well as to attempt to assure economic security. Because of these interconnections, Canadians do not have the option of addressing only one dimension at a time, nor of treating one as hierarchically more important than another. The challenge for the Canadian diversity model is to reach a balance that respects fundamental values and is accepted by most Canadian citizens.

As the Canadian diversity model evolves in the face of the changing global, political, and social environment, its success will depend upon the extent to which Canadians can collectively choose the mix between heterogeneity and uniformity; between individual and group rights; between the expectations of institutional equality and the necessity of a certain degree of asymmetry; and between market freedoms and assuring economic security.

A key message that emerges from this argument is that a strong and healthy public sphere is essential. The Canadian diversity model requires a space of deliberation where political leaders, representative of various groups in society, and individual citizens discuss issues and influence decisions together, a space where conflicts over the nature and boundaries of the political community are constantly negotiated and debated. In a highly diverse society, such deliberation is essential for minorities' inclusion in the broad citizenry. It reinforces the legitimacy of public institutions and policies for groups that feel excluded from the classic democratic process, where the rule of the majority tends to obscure their voice.

Canada's diversity model is based on such an ongoing dialogue. This means that we must pay particular attention to democratic spaces, their inclusiveness, and their capacity to provide an adequate structure for state-society discussions. The public sphere is also where competing claims and views about society are expressed and discussed. Conflict is inevitable, and support for mediating institutions such as advocacy groups and voluntary organizations remains essential. Here, too, is the opportunity for public institutions to exercise leadership, as well as to represent. That dialogue began in Ottawa on September 17, 2001, which brought together policy experts from government, academia and the advocacy community who are concerned with diversity and democracy. We, as citizens and governments, have much to do to adapt and sustain the strengths of this model in the months and years ahead.

I want to thank Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon for helping us to think more deeply about the dimensions of the Canadian diversity model and explaining it in a way that brings its subtleties and complexities to light. I also thank Canadian Heritage for its investment of time and money in this project, as well as CPRN's other funders. Together, they have made this timely piece of research possible.

Judith Maxwell  
November 2001

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## The “Canadian Diversity Model”: A Repertoire in Search of a Framework

*Is there one Canadian people or are there many Canadian peoples? Who are we? Whence do we come? Whither shall we go? Are we a rope of many strands, or are we solidified into a nation by a pure and durable cement? Survey Canada and what do you discern between sea and sea? Where the Atlantic rolls upon Canadian shores there is as great variation in the Canadians as there is between the tides which, in the Bay of Fundy, sometimes rise and fall ten feet an hour, and on the other side of the peninsula do not exceed ten feet a day.*

Arthur Hawkes, *The Birthright. A Search for the Canadian and the Larger Loyalty*  
(Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1919, p. 47)

*Canada is a miniature world. It has problems of geography, climate, resources, language and religion. Yet out of a diversity of racial groups scattered over half a continent, the builders of Canada have moulded a nation with a spirit strong and distinctly its own. But Canadianism is a blend – the very diversity has softened, and at the same time broadened it, but not detracted from its inherent worth.*

W. J. Lindal, *Canadian Citizenship and Our Wider Loyalties*  
(Winnipeg: The Press Club, 1947, pp. 78-79)

*[Canada] contains the globe within its borders, and Canadians have learned that their two international languages and their diversity are a comparative advantage and a source of continuing creativity and innovation.*

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien  
(Berlin, June 2000)

Canadians have worried about national identity and maintaining unity in a context of cultural diversity for all of the country’s history. At the core of these concerns has been the conviction that Canadianism could never be built by seeking simply to eliminate difference. The myth of a single and undifferentiated national identity has never been a viable option. It was rejected when Lord Durham proposed it in the first half of the 19th century, again when the Fathers of Confederation chose federal institutions as a means of recognizing and protecting cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and throughout the 20th century.

To say that standardization was rejected does not mean that living with diversity has been easy. Nor has it been universally valued. In Canada, as everywhere else, xenophobia and other forms of exclusiveness have been, and are at present, shaping actions in civil society and the state.

Such expressions of intolerance are not the subject of this paper, destructive as they are and persistent as they seem. Rather, our description focuses on the tensions that arise because of the coexistence of fully legitimate, real concerns about how to *balance competing values*. In Canada, respect for cultural diversity has come to exist and to rest on three key pillars: linguistic duality, recognition of Aboriginal peoples’ rights, and multiculturalism. We must still, however, debate and decide *how* to respect such cultural diversity while maintaining the cohesion necessary to sustain Canada into the 21st century.

While the country is founded on principles derived from its European heritage, it also recognizes the legitimacy of Aboriginal peoples' cultural differences and the resulting diversity in social practices, lifestyles, conceptions of justice, and governance. We must still choose how to translate such recognition into practice, however. Canada is also a country of successful immigrants for whom inclusion into both a pluralistic society and market institutions have generally been accompanied by significant economic and social success. Ensuring social justice for the most recent waves of new Canadians may require more than opening doors, however.

These vying concerns demand – and have evoked – a way of responding that can be termed an active *search for balance*, that is, for compromise.<sup>1</sup> New conditions are always a challenge to previous compromises across legitimate value differences. Because the values are legitimate, albeit competing, the institutions in which the search is conducted are very important. The need to take into account a range of values makes *democracy*, and therefore well-functioning and inclusive democratic institutions, absolutely key to the success of the Canadian way.

While much is done in civil society through cultural practices, religious institutions and labour markets, the state in Canada has also played a key role by establishing some boundary conditions and by promoting certain practices allowing for greater inclusion in a highly diverse society. The state, then, is a major player within the repertoire of what we might call the “Canadian diversity model,” itself a key foundation of the Canadian citizenship regime.<sup>2</sup>

The objective of this paper is to provide an analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of this diversity model. As such, we do not propose a new theory of diversity and unity. Rather, by building on the work of many other scholars, we propose an *approach* to understanding existing practices. We call this the *repertoire* of the diversity model. This repertoire has emerged in response to Canada's long-standing sociological diversity, and comprises both content and process, that is, several dimensions of difference and the practices for locating collective choices about diversity.

*Caveat:* This paper does not seek to provide a *critical history* of this model and repertoire. In the past as in the present, neither the existence of such a model nor a commitment to it could or did guarantee that inequities, inequalities, discrimination and intolerance were banished from Canadian society. Blind spots need to be identified, perverse and unintended results addressed, and improvements incorporated. The model can – and should – be critically assessed and its consequences, failures and successful outcomes tracked by scholars and policy communities alike. Indeed, this work is ongoing in several places.

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<sup>1</sup> On the forms of balance in values and attitudes to diversity, see Margaret Adsett, and Michael Willmott, “Attitudes towards Diversity in Canada in the Context of Social Cohesion,” unpublished paper, Canadian Heritage, 8 June 1999. For a recent discussion of the history of the policy, see Richard Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> On diversity as one of the challenges confronted within the Canadian citizenship regime, see Jane Jenson, and Martin Papillon, “The Changing Boundaries of Citizenship: A Review and Research Agenda,” in Canadian Centre for Management Development, *Modernizing Governance: A Preliminary Exploration* (Ottawa: CCMD, 2000), which is also available at [http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/research/longterm\\_e.html](http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/research/longterm_e.html)



Our goal is more limited than to write such a critical history. It is simply to describe the intersecting dimensions that we consider constitute the model, as well as the place of democratic practices within it. Then we provide a “reading” of one policy, that of the federal government’s Multiculturalism policies that have been in place since the early 1970s, to assess how and if they continue to meet the needs of the Canadian diversity model.

## I. Thinking About the “Canadian Diversity Model”

In his speech to the other 15 heads of state invited to Berlin by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in June 2000, Prime Minister Chrétien told his colleagues that a Canadian Way exists. It involves:

Accommodation of cultures. Recognition of diversity. A partnership between citizens and state. A balance that promotes individual freedom and economic prosperity while at the same time sharing risks and benefits. An understanding that government can be an instrument of collective action – a means of serving the broader public interest.<sup>3</sup>

Taking the Prime Minister at his word, we will work with this notion of a Canadian Way, by focussing on the manner by which it provides a foundation for our object of principal interest, the definition and workings of what we are calling the “Canadian diversity model.”

This model is made up of a set of public and private practices – that is, a repertoire – that guide conflict resolution and choices about economic, social and cultural differences. We call it a repertoire because the practices are both interrelated and involve choice. This repertoire is played out in civil society and by state actors.

In the world of the theatre, repertoires define the boundaries of what an actor or a company can do.<sup>4</sup> The repertoire sets limits, at the same time as it offers a range of possibilities. Choices about which roles or which play to put on are made in light of actors’ and companies’ preferences to be sure, but also within the constraints of audiences’ interests, critics’ comments, backers’ financial support, and so on. As well, additions to the repertoire are possible – with sufficient effort.

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<sup>3</sup> Jean Chrétien, “The Canadian Way in the 21st Century,” p. 2. Available at <http://www.pm.gc.ca>.

<sup>4</sup> The notion of *repertoire* derives from several sources. One is from the metaphor of the theatre. Another is from Jane Jenson, “All the World’s a Stage: Space and Time in Canadian Political Economy,” *Studies in Political Economy* No. 36, 1991. A third is from the literature on collective action and the work of Charles Tilly. In discussing the repertoires of social movements, he describes them as “a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choices. Repertoires are learned cultural creations.” See his “Contentious Repertoires in Great Britain, 1758-1834,” in M. Traugott (ed.), *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 26.

This metaphor is useful because it helps us depict a Canadian society that has developed a range of responses to the diversity that has always characterized it. These responses have resulted in the embedding of values in institutions – for example, recognition of cultural and social differences in the institutions of federalism, of individual and group rights in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and of economic freedom and choice in market institutions. These historical legacies are not immutable, to be sure, but neither can they be abandoned from one day to the next.

At the same time, these values do not lead directly to a single action, nor do institutions generate a sole outcome. Decisions always have to be made about *how* to confront diversity, and choices among alternatives always have to be made. As Arthur Hawkes wrote in 1919, when Canada – on the brink of sovereignty – was defining a national identity separate from that of “Britishness,” the country could either choose to be “a rope of many strands” *or* attempt to be “solidified into a nation by a pure and durable cement.”

Such uncertainty, inherent in the very enterprise we would say, has often led more to questions about than definitions of a Canadian model. For example, the report on a recent roundtable on Canadian diversity and institutions states:

It is worth considering whether there might be a ‘Canadian Model’ for understanding and embodying diversity in national institutions. In arriving at a description of the Canadian model, it will be necessary to resolve some specific tensions. Does the Canadian model refer to the resolution of the forces and influences of our past, describe present realities, or embody a direction for the future? It is evident that different communities of Canadians have a different perception of the nature of the country: is accommodation of these differences the essence of the Canadian model?<sup>5</sup>

Given the relevance of these questions, a response is necessary.

### **A Repertoire – Process as Well as Content**

To answer these questions we use the concept of repertoire, because it puts the accent on *both* choices made *and* the rules of choice. As the Prime Minister reminds us in his speech in Berlin, one of the defining characteristics of this country is the “understanding that government can be an instrument of collective action.” Because Canada has been committed to liberal democracy since the 19th century, key decision rules for governance are those of electoral democracy and responsible government. But a democratic process includes more than the rules of liberal democracy and these additional practices are also key components of the Canadian model.

Therefore, the Canadian diversity model has two major components that will be described in the subsequent sections of this paper.

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<sup>5</sup> Frances Abele, Katherine Graham, and Joan Murphy, *Canadian Diversity and Changes in the Major Institutions of Canadian Society: Discussion Report and Further Thoughts* (Ottawa: Carleton University SPA, November 1999), p. 4.

They are:

- Its content, which is a series of choices made along four dimensions of competing values, and
- The decisions rules and practices of democracy needed to locate the points of choice on the four dimensions.

In other words, the model is one involving *process* as much as *content*.

Concerns about matters of process as well as content have been with us for a long time, as W.J. Lindal, writing of Canada's innovative 1946 *Citizenship Act* appreciated. Indeed, they have been defined as a source of the country's strength.

The starting point for cataloguing these practices is a notion that unity and diversity are not mutually exclusive concepts. Rather, we will treat them as interdependent. However, tension between the two is also possible.

Rather than seeing diversity as the enemy of unity, our position asserts that in Canada, diversity can be a strength, something that will enhance unity, and is therefore often in a relationship of interdependence. This somewhat remarkable position – at least in the eyes of much of the world<sup>6</sup> – is not simply a pious assertion of good intent or even a sort of whistling in the dark to banish fears of catastrophe, however. It is also conceivable and not difficult to imagine that tensions may exist in attempting to value unity and diversity concurrently.

Understanding that tensions exist because a society seeks to promote two values simultaneously is not a new idea. Indeed, at a general level, Canada faces one of the challenges common to all liberal democracies. This is to strike the right mix between a fundamental value of liberalism – that is, individual freedom – and the necessity of creating the conditions for the exercise of democracy through the achievement of another fundamental principle – that of equality.<sup>7</sup>

In a pluralistic society, where cultures and values are increasingly diverse, the attainment of such a judicious mix is even more challenging. Notions of equality may vary between majorities and minorities, as well as within each, and groups may appeal to public institutions in a variety of ways. Differing definitions of freedom held by cultural or socioeconomic minorities may give rise to diverging notions of the role of the state. Responding to these claims is, to a great extent, the key challenge of contemporary liberal democracies.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, in a recent interview Robert Putnam notes that the diversity of US society is a major challenge and one of the factors making the regeneration of social capital difficult. See "Robert Putnam" in the *Financial Times*, 14 April 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Paul Bernard has eloquently argued the need to find an equilibrium point among three values. See his "La cohésion sociale : critique dialectique d'un quasi-concept," *Lien social et Politiques* No. 41, 1999. This has been translated and published as *Social Cohesion – A Critique*, CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|09 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1999).

The responses *generally considered legitimate* to such challenges constitute any society's repertoire for handling conflict, including conflict over cultural, social, and economic diversity. It is important, however, to note the place of "legitimacy" in this argument. A repertoire does not cover *all imaginable responses*. A definition is part of the repertoire only when it has legitimacy within the particular society, although it does not have to have achieved consensus.

For example, linguistic homogeneity has long been considered a legitimate foundation for achieving equality among French citizens,<sup>8</sup> while it has been much less so in Canada. Canadians have generally been asked, in contrast, about how to achieve harmony in a linguistically and culturally diverse society and, therefore, about how much recognition of difference is "enough" and how much is "too much" in order to ensure equality among citizens.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Canadian Diversity Model – Its Four Dimensions**

Observation leads us to identify four dimensions of difference underpinning the Canadian model. We have arrived at these dimensions inductively, via historical and sociological analysis. The four dimensions identified are thus more ideal-typical than philosophical categories. They help in understanding how the tensions are deployed in the political arena and how the discourse about diversity in Canada is structured. Our attempt at making sense of the model is, by no intent, a final say in where and how conflict about diversity and equality arises. While we do take as universal the existence of tensions among concurrently important values within liberal democracies, we do not propose that the particular tensions to be managed are necessarily universal. Therefore, these dimensions should not "shock" Canadian readers. Rather, they should "make sense" since they are part of the everyday universe of political discourse in this country.

Each dimension in Box 1 identifies two end points, *both* of which are present within the range of values held by Canadians as a whole. Some individuals or groups may position themselves at one end and reject the other, but the majority prefers somewhere in between. In addition, at any moment in history, the balance point may be closer to one end rather than other. There has been no time over the last 140 years, however, when each of the end points could not be said to have had some support in the universe of political discourse, and therefore been taken into account in democratic politics.

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<sup>8</sup> Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> There has, of course, always been a small minority of Canadians who never accepted "sea to sea" bilingualism. Support for bilingualism is weaker in western provinces (43 percent in Alberta, 39 percent in British Columbia versus 57 percent in Ontario and 64 percent in Quebec according to Ekos Research Associates, *Rethinking Government, 1998*, Final Data Tables, Ottawa).

**Box 1**  
**The Canadian Diversity Model:**  
**Its Four Dimensions**

Uniformity ..... Heterogeneity  
Individual Rights ..... Group Rights  
Symmetry ..... Asymmetry  
Economic Freedom ..... Economic Security

Each of these dimensions involves tension among values that lead to questions of the following sort:

- How homogenous should the political community be? Must everyone share the same political identity and values, or can the community recognize the many ways its members are diverse in their feelings of belonging and values. Is it necessary to share common social and cultural values or simply to commit to a set of political values?
- How do individual rights and the principles of liberalism co-exist with the recognition of rights available to specific groups or communities?
- Should institutional arrangements be symmetrical, to reflect the principle of universal individualized citizenship, or they should they recognize and reflect diversity via a certain degree of institutional asymmetry?
- Finally, the last two hundred years of economic and social politics in capitalist democracies have asked where to locate the “saw-off” between the liberty of market behaviour and the need to address the inequalities and inequities that are inherent within it. How can we ensure economic and social security? To what extent does being “different” hinder individuals’ inclusion? To what extent can respect for and recognition of diversity foster economic and social security?

The four dimensions and the value tensions they provoke can be understood as four concrete expressions of the fundamental debate about equality in liberal democracies, and the closely related question of the best way to integrate and achieve cohesion in a diverse society.

At one end of the spectrum lies the classic procedural, or formal, conception of *individual equality*, where everyone must be treated the same so as to achieve inclusion and cohesion. This view is rivalled by another, which asserts the need to take into account historical differences as well as acknowledging the importance of community.

As Melissa Williams describes this argument, “the central flaw of a procedural equality might best be called ‘history’: individuals do not, in fact, arrive at life’s many starting lines with equal resources.”<sup>10</sup> A commitment to equality, in this perspective, entails some recognition that differences based on culture, gender, race and many other human characteristics do matter, and that the value of community needs recognition as well.

This general problem of *equality of individuals* and *acknowledgement of community* exists in a variety of “locations.” Put otherwise, it provokes a range of specific responses within the social architecture and citizenship regime, directly related to the four dimensions of Box 1.

These are located in:

- Practices that acknowledge, or not, diversity of political and social identities (uniformity–heterogeneity)
- Rights guaranteed to provide equal protection to groups as well as citizens (individual–group rights)
- Practices of the state that institutionalize the differential representation of communities (symmetrical–asymmetrical treatment), and
- Institutional forms and practices to achieve socioeconomic equity and substantive equality (economic freedom–economic security).

The classical liberal conception is at the left end of the spectrum of each of the dimensions in Box 1. However, in a society that acknowledges the value of diversity, we have no choice but to move further to the right on the dimensions, seeking institutions and practices that are more cognizant of differences. The question for Canada has been “how far” can we move without jeopardizing the values of equal treatment and liberal freedoms as well as the shared sense of belonging essential for the cohesion of the political community? The answer to such a fundamental question is arrived at by collective choice in democratic institutions of all sorts, that is via the democratic process and practices that are a key component of the model itself.

### **The Canadian Diversity Model – Its Process**

The “Canadian diversity model” also incorporates, then, this country’s practices for balancing the tensions inherent in *acknowledging* rival values. Such tensions are inherent to the specific context of “deep diversity,”<sup>11</sup> and arise because Canada is an immigrant society open to new arrivals from a huge range of places and cultures. The choices made generate what we call Canada’s repertoire for a diverse society.

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<sup>10</sup> Melissa S. Williams, *Voice, Trust and Memory: Marginalized Groups and the Failings of Liberal Representation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> This term refers to Charles Taylor’s description of the fundamental divide resulting from the presence of several national communities within the borders of the country. See Amy Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

In handling and addressing the tensions inherent to as well as across each of the four dimensions described above, Canadian society and institutions have developed an array of responses. While inspired by liberal values and rooted in democratic traditions, they are based on a case-by-case approach, sensitive to historic specificity.

The resulting repertoire shapes practices in civil society, as Canadians encounter each other in everyday exchanges as well as in their political mobilizations. It also provides direction to debates among institutions of representation and within the state.

### **Summary – Thinking About the “Canadian Diversity Model”**

The result of this history is a Canadian diversity model constructed on commitments to *practice*, based on the following notions:

- There is *no absolute contradiction* between a commitment to equal treatment and liberal freedoms *and* the recognition of difference and particular treatment when necessary to enhance equality.
- Working toward inclusion involves a constant balance between the principle of equal and uniform treatment and the need to provide *special treatment* – and, therefore, different treatment – of certain categories.
- These tensions are manageable, within a *range* of possible choices, and choices are not fixed once and for all.
- *Electoral politics* and other institutions of collective decision-making provide the mechanisms for identifying the choice on each dimension.

Of course, the dimensions of the Canadian diversity model are not independent of each other. Because they all touch on equality and inclusion, there are links among them. Acceptance of the value of heterogeneity, for example, will influence the willingness to rely on the notion of group-based rights and to work out asymmetrical arrangements to protect diversity, as well as to attempt to assure economic security.

Because of these interconnections, Canadians do not have the option – some might say the luxury – of addressing only one dimension at a time, or of treating one as hierarchically more important than another. While they can be distinguished for purposes of analysis, the actual “on the ground” situation is that the dimensions are entwined, implicated in hot-button debates of everything from intergovernmental relations and federalism to social policy benefit levels. The challenge for the Canadian diversity model is to reach a balance, one that would be accepted by most Canadian citizens.

This ongoing task has been rendered more difficult in recent decades by social and economic changes that generate new challenges. Previous choices on each dimension, arrived at through democratic debate and politics in the past, have been called into question. Existing political compromises have been de-stabilized by shifting patterns of immigration, economic restructuring affecting the ways we think about and deliver expressions of social solidarity, and a significant increase in the ideology of neo-liberalism. In addition, the mobilization of groups making a range of identity claims, which had received much less attention in earlier repertoires, puts past compromises into question.

## II. Rival Values and Locations of Compromise

In this section we will briefly discuss the two end points of each dimension, and the forms that the tension inherent in them has taken. In doing so, we will locate the “saw-offs” that characterize the contemporary Canadian diversity model, as well as several unresolved issues that are very likely to shape the universe of political discourse in the future.

### Dimension 1. Uniformity–Heterogeneity

The first, and basic, dimension of the Canadian diversity model involves the recognition and valuing of diversity itself. Any society is composed of citizens who are differentiated socially and by gender, as well as frequently by religion and ethnic or national origin. All societies, however, do not explicitly identify such heterogeneity as a legitimate – indeed valued – topic in democratic conversation. For some, such differences are simply ignored, excluded from public discussion in the name of unity. For others, some cleavages – ethnic or religious, for example – structure all of political life.

Canada’s stance has long been to acknowledge a certain degree of heterogeneity, adapting its categories to social and economic change, while also seeking a commitment to the notion of being “Canadian” as the grounding for some basic degree of commonality. Political choices made in the 18th and 19th centuries and embedded in the basic political institutions – federalism, public education, law and the courts, and so on – made a purely homogenous conception of citizenship impossible in Canada. More recent decisions reflect a continued commitment to those choices. The tension between a homogenous and a more heterogeneous model of citizenship remains important however.

The linguistic and religious differences between the two European peoples who founded modern Canada were explicitly accepted and recognized in institutions, first by the British Crown and then in the 1867 Constitution, which set up new rules for democratic decision-making. Formal recognition of the relevance of cultural differences through the attribution to provinces of jurisdiction over education, language, justice in private matters and culture was a “non-negotiable condition in return for Quebec’s acceptance of a federal Parliament where the French-speaking Canadians would be a permanent minority.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> J. Smith (1993), quoted in Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 118.



Other groups immigrated to Canada in its early days with the explicit guarantee that their specific culture and religion would be exempt from the general requirements of integration. One can think of the Mennonites, the Doukhobors and the Hutterites, who were exempted from certain laws regarding education, land ownership and military service.<sup>13</sup> Once again, such historical cases provide examples of an approach where a high level of heterogeneity was formally accepted.<sup>14</sup>

Achieving the goal of building a country from sea to sea to sea and building a cohesive political community north of the 49th parallel required, in other words, establishing a set of institutions and launching a set of practices that placed acceptance of cultural and religious diversity at the heart of Canadian society. The legacy was, as we well know, an ongoing debate about the inevitable tension between the degree of heterogeneity Canadian society could accept, while still maintaining some cohesion.

There are in fact two aspects to the matter. First, one may ask “how much” diversity is possible or desirable. Demographic transformations in most liberal democratic states have triggered a fundamental debate on the consequences of diversity for social cohesion. Some authors have argued that too much diversity may lead to fragmentation, economic inequalities and erosion of social capital.<sup>15</sup> Canadian immigration policies have sometimes reflected this preoccupation. For example, restrictions on non-European immigration clearly revealed a commitment to greater homogeneity. Current calls for a reduction of immigration quotas also partly express a preoccupation with the consequences of greater diversity. While cultural heterogeneity is generally valued in Canadian society, there are also voices calling for limits on public policies favouring diversity.<sup>16</sup>

If many Canadians are committed to fostering multiculturalism or interculturalism, the question still remains as to the ways of dealing with this diversity. Is the best method one that accepts and even celebrates the multiple identities of a plural society, permitting their expression in a range of “equivalent” choices? Or should the accent be simply on providing basic protections against discrimination, while insisting on a high degree of conformity to “community standards”? Everything from public schools to marriage laws is affected by the choice of where to locate oneself on this dimension. As we will discuss below, the recognition of culture-based group rights is an important part of the Canadian repertoire. They exist in recognition of the inherent value of heterogeneity.

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<sup>13</sup> They were promised such exemption if they settled in western Canada. See William Janzen, *Limits of Liberty: The Experiences of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Later years often brought high levels of discrimination, however. The Doukhobors, in particular (but not exclusively), were subjected to discrimination, even imprisonment, for insisting on maintaining their differences.

<sup>15</sup> For example, in thinking about the United States, Robert Putnam, author of the much-ballyhooed *Bowling Alone*, said: “...the largest single issue coming up is ethnic mix and immigration. I don’t want to sound like some academic Enoch Powell: this is not a forecast of rivers of blood. ... [but] ... We have just done a very large survey of social capital, working with community groups across the country. It’s by far the largest of its kind done in US cities. And it is very disturbing. In very crude terms, it shows that where there is greatest diversity of race, here is the least social capital.” Interview, *The Financial Times*, 14 April 2001.

<sup>16</sup> For example, the platform of the Canadian Alliance says: “While cherishing our diversity, we believe that multiculturalism is a personal choice and should not be publicly funded.” On line at [www.canadianalliance.ca](http://www.canadianalliance.ca).

The second aspect of this dimension relates more explicitly to the relation between political unity and diversity. The question here is “what kind” of diversity should be acknowledged. In Canada, the debate on national unity is strongly associated with the question of public recognition of differences. While ethnocultural, or multicultural, differences are generally accepted, the recognition of Canada as a multinational state is still controversial.<sup>17</sup>

Is there one, albeit culturally heterogeneous, nation in Canada, or many? The questions raised in this context are about the “ties that bind” and the kind of identity and attachment (if any) we must share in order to guarantee cohesion and reciprocity. The language of nationhood used by national minorities has been interpreted by some as a threat to a pan-Canadian nation. Many ask whether it is possible to have plural national allegiances. Canadian history for several decades has obviously been marked by the difficulty of finding a place on the continuum that might recognize Quebec as a distinct national unit within Canada, without it being a threat to Canada itself. In recent years, the national claims of Aboriginal peoples have begun to provoke similar concerns.<sup>18</sup> We are, in other words, in a period in which the location of a position on this first dimension remains particularly troubling. This, as the following discussion shows, has a repercussion on the debates, claims and institutional responses defined in the subsequent dimensions.

## **Dimension 2. Individual Rights–Group Rights**

Profoundly influenced both by British traditions of civil rights and by French conceptions of equality, it is hardly surprising that Canada has long exhibited the most basic characteristics of a liberal society. Well before 1982 and the entrenching of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in the Constitution, Canadians enjoyed certain fundamental individual freedoms protected by the law and courts, and a commitment to political equality.

Given the country’s cultural diversity, which was already recognized by the response to the uniformity–heterogeneity issue, Canada has not followed the standard model of liberal republicanism. With respect to the second dimension, this latter model would settle at the left end of the dimension, granting each citizen a uniform set of individual rights based on a common citizenship. Rather than adhering to this standard model – where rights are treated as if they were “neutral” or “blind” in relation to specific social conditions – Canadians have always chosen some measure of protection and differentiated treatment for certain groups in society, and therefore *group-based* rights.

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<sup>17</sup> Will Kymlicka suggests this fundamental distinction between polyethnic minorities and national minorities, based on the former’s voluntary adhesion to the political community through immigration and the latter’s existence as geographically and linguistically distinct nations included *post facto* in the broad political community. The latter include Aboriginal peoples and Quebecers (or French-Canadians more broadly). This distinction is also made by Avigail Eisenberg in her comparison between federalism and multiculturalism as distinct responses to two different types of pluralism: “Two Types of Pluralism in Canada” in H. Lazar and T. McIntosh (eds.), *Canada: The State of the Federation 1998/1999* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> This matter is the object of a number of analyses in Canada. For example, in his recent critique of the nation-based model of Aboriginal self-government, Alan Cairns suggests the creation of such “parallel societies” will undermine the capacity for reciprocity. See his *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

We can easily see that a supposedly “neutral” and context-blind conception of purely individual rights would have been in stark contradiction with the principles at the origin of the federation, as discussed above. The compromises that were institutionalized in the 19th century required protections for language (French–English) and for religious communities (Catholic–Protestant). In the 20th century, human rights commitments, institutionalized in Canada’s signature of international covenants as well as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and human rights commissions, have extended protections against discrimination and the possible resort to affirmative action to a range of groups.

Group-based rights may be exercised either individually or collectively. This means that group-based rights are not necessarily collective in the fullest sense; many are exercised individually rather than by the group as a whole. For example, anti-discrimination measures are *individual* protections based on group membership. However, others may be both individual and collective. As such, the distinction between group-based and individual rights, rather than being a substantive one about the rights themselves, is rather a question of how the rights are articulated in claims for recognition and how their institutional responses are framed. This is why Canada’s recognition of group-based rights, whether extended to collectivities or individuals falling within a certain category, is not necessarily in contradiction with liberal principles, once we recognize the inherent value of culture for individual well-being and freedom.<sup>19</sup>

Linguistic rights are both individual guarantees (official bilingualism for example) and collective ones (support for official language minority communities; education rights), while self-government rights are clearly exercised collectively. As such, a simple distinction between individual and collective rights is confusing when we discuss the spectrum of protections and guarantees offered to minorities.<sup>20</sup> But our goal here is not to engage in a debate about collective rights. It is rather to distinguish between “culture blind” visions of rights and those which provide some group recognition. On this count, these examples show a commitment to a rich conception of equality based on the *context*, rather than a strict *procedural* conception.

The *British North America Act* and then the *Constitution Act, 1982* have recognized a range of group-based rights. For example, educational rights for religious minorities were a fundamental part of the *BNA Act*.<sup>21</sup> Minority language educational rights were also entrenched in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982.<sup>22</sup> Those rights are held by individuals, but exercised collectively through institutional arrangements granting the minority the right to public funding for their schools in some provinces.

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<sup>19</sup> Kymlicka discusses the link between liberal principles and group-based rights in Chapter 3 of *Multicultural Citizenship*.

<sup>20</sup> The interpretation of what constitutes an individual, a group-based or a collective right, or even whether this is a relevant distinction, is a complex debate. Canada’s approach to diversity certainly reflects this ambiguity. For the purpose of our analysis, we suggest that the axis of the debate is between individual “culture-blind” rights and “culture-specific” group-based rights that can be exercised either individually or collectively. While Canada explicitly recognizes certain group-based rights, the exact nature of such rights and how they should be exercised (collectively or not) is an ongoing debate.

<sup>21</sup> Section 93(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* granted Catholic and Protestant minorities in Quebec and Ontario the right to manage their own schools. Following a constitutional amendment in 1997, this section is no longer applicable in Quebec. Education rights are now considered on a *linguistic* rather than *religious* basis in that province.

<sup>22</sup> Section 23, *Constitution Act, 1982*.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* brought an extension to the original group-based protections already present in human rights legislation and covenants, by establishing mechanisms to translate formal equality rights and protection into reality. Section 15 of the *Charter* (and Section 28 for women and men) signal an acceptance that procedural equality, that is treating everyone the same without distinction based on race, language, sex, religion or other characteristics, is not sufficient to guarantee equality in practice. While altering the *mechanisms* by which individual equality might be achieved, and in particular by “constitutionalizing” the legitimacy of affirmative action to overcome past discriminatory treatment, these sections remain well within the tradition of liberal recognition and protection of individual rights.<sup>23</sup>

Equality seekers making claims under Section 15 are striving to become citizens with the *same rights* as others, hence the emphasis on *access* – to marriage, non-traditional jobs, equal pay, employment equity, and so on. They do not seek differentiated citizenship status but rather full inclusion into the citizenship regime.

The government of Quebec has also emphasized group-specific rights, held collectively. Language legislation is meant to provide protection to the French language, considered a cultural good for all members of the community. Thus, in a contest between the right of an individual to advertise in the language of his or her choice or to choose the language of education of his or her children, and the right of the French-language community to guarantee the future of its language, language law comes down squarely on the side of the community. Several court cases and other appeals to Canadian and international law demonstrate precisely our point – that, in practice, the solution often sought is a balance. “Inside/outside” rules and access to English-language schools by children whose parents were educated in Canada in English are only two examples of the policy juggling that this particular tension between individual and group rights can involve.

An important addition to the list of constitutionally defined group-based rights came in 1982 with Sections 25 and 35, providing a specific set of protections for the group rights of Aboriginal peoples living in Canada. The courts had already been moving in this direction in the 1970s, with a set of important decisions about Aboriginal hunting and fishing rights, and so on. The courts have played a significant role since 1982, as well, with interpretations seeking a balance between the group rights of Aboriginal peoples and the guarantee of individual rights to all Canadians.

Language and educational rights, as well as Aboriginal rights, are constitutional dispositions giving some groups particular recognition and, hence, differential treatment. So too are the exemptions and rights granted to some immigrant groups, mentioned above. These group-based rights, some held by individuals and others collectively, are in contradiction with a strict interpretation of the principle of universal and equal citizenship founded on a liberal republican model of individual rights.

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<sup>23</sup> These rights, although based on group characteristics, are attributed to *individuals*, not groups.

But as a growing number of political theorists argue, a *contextual* approach informed by a rich conception of equality that goes beyond the simple *procedural* conception can bring much better results in a diverse society.<sup>24</sup> Such an approach, sensitive to the reality and specificity of each case, has been and is still a key component of Canada's repertoire for managing the tensions arising from cultural diversity.

### **Dimension 3. Symmetry–Asymmetry**

Another form of tension around which the Canadian model is shaped and defined lies in the nature of institutional arrangements that make room for diversity. This tension is of course closely related to the questions of group-based rights and heterogeneity. Here again, it is the conception of equality among citizens that is at issue, but with a specific focus on institutional arrangements to provide some level of political autonomy for specific groups on the basis of their distinct cultural identity and history. Such arrangements conflict with the standard liberal conception of universal citizenship. If everyone is to be treated the same, all citizens should share the same political institutions, with no distinction based on cultural, linguistic or ethnic criteria of spatial location.

The institutions of federalism are traditionally the place where this tension is played out. For national minorities, their participation in the Canadian federation is mediated by the existence of another level of societal allegiance, and they often claim recognition of this duality in the Canadian citizenship regime. What they seek is institutional acknowledgement that they are different from other minorities, *in ways that go beyond group-based rights protected by a single government*. They strive to maintain their distinctiveness through a certain degree of political autonomy. As such, in the debate over symmetry and asymmetry, the main source of tension is the definition of Canada as a single-nation state or a multinational state with *institutional* recognition of national minorities.

Since the 19th century, Canadians have lived within political institutions that are asymmetrical. Created as a federal country, its government institutions recognized that territorially based cultural diversity existed. For its part, the *British North America Act* of 1867 gave provinces responsibility for what were viewed in the mid-19th century as the key cultural areas: education, local government, and so on.

From the beginning of its history as an autonomous state, therefore, Canada has recognized that federalism serves a cultural purpose. Its federal system was not founded on the notion of subsidiarity, in which policy responsibility would go to the level of government best able to deal with it. Nor was it founded on a concern for maintaining checks and balances, by dividing governmental competencies so as to avoid creating a too powerful government.

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<sup>24</sup> On the merits of a contextual approach in political theory, see Joseph Carens, *Culture, Citizenship and Community: A Contextual Exploration of Justice as Evenhandedness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). On the need to take history into account, see Melissa S. Williams, *Voice, Trust and Memory*; as well as Charles Taylor (in Gutmann, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*).

Setting up federal institutions in 1867 was seen by contemporaries of the time as a way of recognizing cultural diversity and its territorial expression through the creation of a province with a French-speaking majority.<sup>25</sup> This notion of asymmetry, then, is an element of the Canadian diversity model important for addressing the place of national minorities within the country.

In recognition of this commitment to protecting cultural diversity, the *British North America Act* allowed for asymmetries in the powers or the character of the provinces. Quebec retained its Civil Code and control in areas where cultural differences were important because of the role of the Catholic Church. In recognition that the provincial government would most likely be concerned about protecting the majority, the province was constitutionally required to protect its internal minority by, for example, providing education to both cultural communities.

The entry of other provinces into Confederation also involved constitutionalized asymmetries in federal institutions. The experience with religious schools in Newfoundland is only one example of the ways in which the particular cultural needs and situations of governments were recognized and treated asymmetrically. Therefore, asymmetry is nothing unusual in such situations. Canada, as many other countries, has lived with it for years. In the last decades, however, the notion has been explicitly rejected by a discourse of “equality,” which names all provinces as equal and suggests that they should all have the same relationship to Ottawa and to each other.

The symmetry principle is reflected in the conception of the federation as a single-nation state composed of 10 equal territorially (and not ethnically) defined provinces. Equality among the 10 provinces has been a core federal principle in the imagination of many Canadians in the Trudeau and post-Trudeau era, promoted as a counter to Quebec nationalism and reinforced by the equality language of the *Charter*.

This conception is in tension with the alternative definition of Canada as a “compact” between national groups.<sup>26</sup> In this version, the presence of a strong French-speaking national minority is a fundamental reason why Canada is a federation rather than a unitary state. The division of powers reflects the need for the French-speaking minority concentrated in Quebec to manage its own institutions in order to guarantee its survival as a community on a continent dominated by English.

The result of past disputes over these matters produced a Canadian Constitution that is already asymmetrical in its arrangements. It is a territorial federation, with a uniform division of power, but simultaneously granting some level of self-government to the French-speaking minority by creating a political jurisdiction in which that minority could live as a majority.

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<sup>25</sup> The Canadian federation, like those of Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and the quasi-federation of the post-1998 United Kingdom, created its institutions in part to recognize the existence of a national minority, and to provide that minority with the governmental powers necessary to exercise some measure of cultural autonomy. These constitutions also permit asymmetrical relations.

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion, see Jeremy Webber, *Reimagining Canada: Language, Culture, Community and the Canadian Constitution* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994); Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Guy Laforest, *Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

In addition, particular policy decisions (in areas such as pensions, immigration, and international relations, for example) recognize that the government of Quebec may use certain prerogatives that the other provinces choose not to exercise. However, recent discussions in Alberta, for instance, indicate that the other provinces may be moving towards claiming such rights too.

Another case of asymmetrical arrangement is obviously the current process of negotiating self-government agreements with Aboriginal peoples. The negotiation of self-government agreements is the result of thirty years of mobilization by Aboriginal peoples who gained significant recognition of their historical rights through court challenges and negotiations. The current federal government policy is to associate self-government agreements with land claim settlements to provide Aboriginal peoples with tools for ensuring their socioeconomic and cultural development. Self-government is also a recognition of territorial rights resulting from Aboriginal presence in Canada prior to European colonization. As such, self-government agreements have both a cultural dimension and a territorial one.

The nature of the asymmetrical arrangement may vary greatly in nature and significance, depending on the group's claims and socioeconomic and political position.<sup>27</sup> For example, Inuit have opted for the creation of a new territory with a public form of government, in which they expect to be a majority for many years, rather than an Aboriginal-only government. In the case of First Nations, self-government agreements may involve devolution of administrative powers (in Manitoba, for example) or constitutionally protected jurisdiction in a number of areas (in the case of Nisga'a).<sup>28</sup>

Such arrangements are examples of institutional asymmetries explicitly constructed around cultural groupings.<sup>29</sup> Aboriginal peoples are Canadian citizens but with a fundamentally different relationship to the common institutions defined in the Constitution. Such arrangements have raised a debate about the opportunity and consequences of creating systematic asymmetries. Opposition is based on the fear of creating "independent units" separate from Canada<sup>30</sup> or different "categories of citizens" based on ethnic criteria. The connection with the uniformity–heterogeneity debate is obvious here again.

This is one area where the Canadian model has not achieved a satisfactory balance. There is a need for a clear debate about asymmetry, about its impacts (positive and negative) on the cohesion of the country, and about its feasibility, and the forms of collective choice appropriate for resolving differences.

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<sup>27</sup> The name "Aboriginal peoples" in fact covers a great variety of groups, including 40 to 60 "First Nations," Inuit and Métis, each with a specific sociocultural context and historical relationship with the Crown.

<sup>28</sup> Jurisdiction over culture, economic development, and education was transferred to the self-governing authority. See *The Nisga'a Final Agreement in Brief*, (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Government of Canada, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> An obvious exception is the creation of Nunavut, as discussed.

<sup>30</sup> See Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus*.

#### Dimension 4. Economic Freedom–Economic Security

Many Canadians point with pride to a commitment to social justice embedded in public policy. Moreover, as we have seen with respect to the three dimensions of the diversity model already discussed, concerns about the relationships between economic and social conditions and culture are frequent. Self-government for First Nations is, as just described, often justified as a way of achieving economic security and social well-being after centuries of poverty and ill-health. Discrimination on the basis of race or ethnocultural background is understood to have consequences for social inclusion and, therefore, economic security.

In essence, when values of social justice are celebrated and concerns about protecting them expressed, Canadians are saying that the choices they have made are more to their liking than those adopted by some other countries. When Canada is lined up in a large-scale comparison with other countries, it appears as one that has promoted a mix of liberal values and social-democratic ones.<sup>31</sup> In previous decades, market relations were contained in the name of social justice, without threatening the basic commitment to the principles of capitalism and of economic liberalism.

Central to an earlier citizenship regime were social programs that expressed a notion of the collective good, being a representation of what Canadians owed to each other. These commitments were most visible in two types of public action.

One was the willingness to share the costs of unevenly distributed *life risks*, both those associated with moments of the life-cycle (childhood, youth, maternity and parenting, old age) and those associated with the “bad luck” of illness, disability, poverty and job loss.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, from the 1940s to the end of the 1960s, Canadian governments created the social infrastructure of the citizenship regime. These were the now-familiar social programs of unemployment insurance, pensions, family allowances, post-secondary education, maternity and parental leaves, and universal health care, as well social assistance for those living in poverty.

Another type of public action, in place by the mid-1950s, involved smoothing out the effects of geography and unequal resource distribution. Equalization that redistributes income *from* those areas luckily endowed by nature or history *to* the less lucky, was also part of the pledge to share risk. By 1957, governments had made a commitment to a mechanism for expressions of solidarity across space. The equalization transfers would allow “have-not” provincial governments to match the educational, social and health services available to Canadians living in the “have” provinces.

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<sup>31</sup> Robert E. Goodin, *et al.*, *The Real Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Chapter 1.

<sup>32</sup> As Gøsta Esping-Andersen reminds us, “The welfare state is one among three sources of managing social risks, the other two being family and market,” *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 33. We add a fourth – the community – through private redistribution. This addition creates the *welfare diamond* proposed by Adalbert Evers, Marja Pilj, and Clare Ungerson (eds.), *Payments for Care* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1994).



The result was again a mixed pattern. Canada *never* went as far as many other smaller European countries, which were building generous welfare states to protect citizens from many of the effects of market society. Canadians chose to define the social rights of citizenship as *safety nets* in most cases, rather than seeking to promote greater equality of condition or actively structure labour markets.<sup>33</sup> Universal programs were limited to education, health care, family allowances and pensions.

Nonetheless, these decisions again located Canada in between the end point of the dimension. Canada chose a universal and publicly financed health care system later than many European countries, but at the same moment that its neighbour was choosing public support only for the poor and the elderly through Medicaid and Medicare. Canada chose to finance the explosion of post-secondary secondary education in the 1960s with a public – albeit not free – system, while the United States continued along the road of requiring families to absorb the high costs of a prestigious university education.

The commitment to these ways of doing is on the table again in the present era of globalization, *and* the issue of whether we still wish to maintain them is on the political agenda.<sup>34</sup> In essence, we are again confronted with the question of how much diversity in socioeconomic conditions we are willing to tolerate because it is the product of market freedom. Will we accept a two-thirds/one-third society? Will we accept an hourglass society? Or will we seek to maintain the “bulging middle” that characterized earlier socioeconomic structures?

Additionally, there is the question of whether dimensions of social and cultural diversity increasingly correlate with economic position, such that certain groups are at risk of exclusion from the mainstream of Canadian society for reasons of race, ethnicity, gender, and so on. Integration into the mainstream may not be working as efficiently as in the past. Patterns of social and economic inequalities may be solidifying. Ethnocultural and religious groups display significant and menacing variations in their rates of economic success.

A recent report on Metropolitan Toronto (1991 census data) found, for example, that residents of non-European origin had unemployment rates far above the average, reaching one in five for many groups. Young people’s rates of unemployment are even higher. They reached 30 percent for some major groups, particularly those whose origins are the Caribbean, Africa, and Latin America. Even more distressing for the future was the fact that child poverty was endemic, reaching well beyond the 50 percent level among First Nations people and those whose origins are Africa, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, an Arab country, West Asia, Mexico and Central America.

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<sup>33</sup> For example, the Nordic countries were innovators in active labour market policy, with unions and employers agreeing to smooth out the effects of industry restructuring and retraining, well before the OECD began to promote this for everyone.

<sup>34</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Judith Maxwell, *Toward a Common Citizenship: Canada’s Social and Economic Choices*, CPRN Reflexion No. 4 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2001). Public opinion data collected and reported by EKOS shows a significant gap between the preferences of elites and ordinary Canadians.

Assuring economic security for all may involve, in other words, overcoming blockages to *real access* to markets – and therefore, for example, to jobs and goods – experienced by some groups such as Aboriginal peoples, ethnocultural minorities, racialized groups, women, and young people. Previous waves of immigrants could hope to achieve economic well-being by finding jobs in the industrial economy, protected by labour laws covering large firms. Contemporary service and information economies demand certain kinds of employees and skills. They also leave openings for discretion about the “kind” of person who can do the job, who will appeal to clients, and who can represent the firm. Racism and other forms of discrimination may creep in through such openings. Educational credentials may go unrecognized. Newcomers may not have the networks upon which employment depends. Therefore, vigilance to prevent discrimination and efforts to promote inclusion are even more necessary if Canada is to become a learning society – and one that values diversity of all sorts.

### **III. Process in the Canadian Diversity Model: Democracy at its Core**

The healthy functioning of the Canadian diversity model requires a profoundly democratic repertoire. In a pluralistic society, where cultures and values are increasingly varied, identifying the country’s position on the four diverging value dimensions of diversity is a challenging task. It is one that must fall to democratic processes, in the broadest sense of the word. Accordingly, in this repertoire, *process becomes as important as content*. Choices about the balance point on each dimension are now the product of democratic, collective choice. Therefore, this section will examine the democratic institutions available for sustaining and improving the Canadian diversity model.

Understandings of democratic rules and practices, and of modes of representation are as various and contested in Canada as elsewhere in the world. In this section, we explore such questions with an explicit commitment to an open and fair process based on mutually agreed rules. As such, the essence of this section is that, as we have argued, the model is as much a commitment to fair practices as to specific outcomes, based on the “ways of doing” described in Section I.

In Canada’s diversity model, the appeal to first principles is rarely possible. There is no “one right way” to work with the model that can be identified simply by appeal to foundational law (such as a Constitution), important and legitimate as appeals to law and to judges are.

There will always be a range of possible choices. The diversity model itself depends on simultaneously seeking equal treatment and recognizing difference. It also depends on acknowledging the need for active intervention to achieve real equality; formal equality may not suffice. Therefore, a decision rule is needed. Choices must be made.

Again, the decision rule might be to allow tribunals to determine outcomes, leaving the choice to the judicial branch. While courts are important institutions for confirming societal choices, policy-makers, judges and ordinary citizens are also all aware that hard choices are often better decided in the political rather than the judicial realm. This means that the decision rule, and one open to an inclusive dialogue, will be democratic.

Democratic institutions, when their practices are functioning well, provide institutions for dealing with *conflict* – over values, ideas, and interests. For the rules to operate well, citizens do not have to come to a consensus about values. However, they must develop the capacity to consider, assess, tolerate and then respect the value positions defended by their fellow citizens. Such democratic deliberation, well conducted, leads to decisions that are sustainable and that can anchor good policy.

The task, then, is to find new and democratic practices to manage conflicts over legitimate differences and arrive at choices that are fair, reasonable and acceptable within the model. Doing so requires that Canadians recognize that:

- Their fellow citizens are justified in holding value positions different from their own
- Choices among legitimate alternatives must be made, and
- They have the capacity, by using their institutions, to make such choices.

In adopting this position, we join those who identify a need for a sea change in existing practices of Canadian democracy. These need to become more inclusive, more capable of resolving conflict and fostering democratic deliberation, as well as being transparent.

As we will argue below, making this change will affect all routes to representation. In identifying the need for truly democratic debate and for transparent practices as anchors for the proper functioning of the Canadian polity, we are explicitly rejecting an alternative that was until recently in place, and for decades. Sometimes explicitly and more often implicitly, an *elite accommodation model* served as the mechanism for identifying the balance points on the various dimensions of the diversity model. The resolution of conflicts emerging from regional, cultural, linguistic and religious differences was managed by a small group of leaders representing the diverse communities, especially the two linguistic ones.

In this model, the citizen's role was to be deferential, while the elite's task was to identify the points of compromise on the various dimensions. Popular participation was often feared as a hindrance to compromise and accommodation between conflicting identities, cultures and conceptions of the political community.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, there was so much fear of conflict arising from diversity that many political scientists, as well as politicians, celebrated political practices that limited public debate rather than fostered democratic involvement.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> For an historical overview and critique of this model, see Peter Russell, *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

<sup>36</sup> This position prompted a response and alternative position. This second option was termed "creative politics" in the 1960s. See, for example, Gad Horowitz' careful critiques of the myths and undemocratic nature of Canadian parties (and political science) in his "Toward the Democratic Class Struggle," in Trevor Lloyd and Jack McLeod (eds.), *Agenda 1970: Proposals for a Creative Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), especially pp. 249ff. John Porter's *Vertical Mosaic* also contained a call for "creative politics" (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966). For a critique of the fear of diversity deeply embedded in certain (structural-functionalist) approaches to Canadian politics, see Jane Jenson, "The Dangers of Political Elitism," in C.E.S. Franks, *et al.* (eds.), *Canada's Century: Governance in a Maturing Society* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

As we will see below, this vision of limited democracy as the appropriate institutional foundation for the Canadian diversity model is inadequate to the realities of the present. Elite accommodation has been found wanting, and rejected. Citizens display less trust in politicians, at the same time as making claims for and being optimistic about democratic participation.<sup>37</sup> They no longer accept that conflicts and compromises be hidden away or veiled by disputes over secondary issues.

In essence, the challenge facing a diverse society harbouring national minorities as well as a wide range of ethnocultural and religious groups is to develop an inclusive political culture. Such a culture does not simply *permit*, but *encourages and supports* participation and access to decision-making, so that the full range of views can be adequately represented and democratic practices learned in actions.

History and past experience teaches that a goodly portion of that capacity can only be fostered by practices and institutions designed as spaces for democratic choice.

Our most general argument is, then, that attention to democratic practices is necessary not only for reasons of democratic theory, but also because an active and engaged civil society is key to the proper functioning of the Canadian diversity model. Founded on a constant search for balance, it requires healthy and inclusive institutions, both public and private, inside which participation can occur and through which routes to representation are opened.

Finding the practices and institutions that will enable democratic choices is never easy, however. There have always been a number of possible routes to representation and engagement in democratic politics, a number of arrangements for governance.

The conventional practices of liberal democracy, such as *elections and party politics*, are indispensable. But so too are other practices that permit citizens to come together to express their needs and find common ground in community groups, ethnic associations, lobbies, professional associations, social movements, faith-based organizations, and so on. These *institutions of interest intermediation* are essential to democratic dialogue and decisions. As well, there are the various strategies and arrangements for involving and *engaging citizens* beyond elections and group representation.

This section examines all three of these routes to representation, to assess the ways in which enhancement of the Canadian diversity model is helped or hindered. It ends with a consideration of possible new forms of democratic practice that might further support the Canadian diversity model.

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<sup>37</sup> Numerous analyses of public opinion polls uncover high levels of skepticism about politicians. However, Suzanne Peters' study of Canadian values also identified a continuing belief in and optimism about democratic politics. See *Exploring Canadian Values: A Synthesis Report* (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1995), p. v and *passim*. We see below that such coincidences in findings of skepticism and deep hopes have provided the grounding for calls for greater citizen engagement.

## Choosing Alternatives and Recognizing Difference – Electoral and Party Politics

Electoral and party politics are significant sites for acknowledging diversity and working out the compromises needed for the Canadian diversity model to function. This section examines four different issues for electoral democracy: (1) political parties' inclusion of ethnocultural groups as candidates; (2) parties' capacity for managing the "balancing act" upon which the Canadian diversity model depends, via their contributions to the universe of political discourse; (3) the capacity of the system to reflect the diversity of voices in a pluralist and diverse society; and (4) city governments' experience with representing diversity and resolving conflict in the urban areas in which many ethnocultural and religious groups of recent immigration are concentrated.

Political parties, especially in North America, have always assumed a heavy responsibility for *incorporating immigrant and ethnic communities* into mainstream electoral politics and for "brokering" their interests. Throughout the 20th century, various ethnic communities have found an affinity with one or more of the major political parties.

Particularly in recent years, individuals who are naturalized or second-generation citizens have begun to stand as candidates, thereby altering the "face" of legislatures and Cabinets across the country. In a new century in which Ujjal Dosanjh became Premier of British Columbia and Adrienne Clarkson is Governor General of Canada, it is worth remembering that as recently as 1957, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's non-French and non-British ancestry was a "first" for Canadian electoral politics.

As late as 1991, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (RCERPF) still had to write: "Our public hearings and research revealed that many ethnocultural groups have profound feelings of alienation in both their access to the vote and their participation in political parties and elected office."<sup>38</sup> This led the Commission to recommend a number of procedures to improve recruitment of candidates and to facilitate participation.

This kind of inclusion is in part symbolic, because it allows groups to recognize themselves in their representatives. But such politics make a significant contribution to the legitimacy of the democratic process. Because political participation, both as voters and candidates, is the most visible sign of citizenship, parties' capacity to represent diversity within their ranks is key to citizenship practices. It can serve as one indicator that the political culture is truly inclusive, by providing access to all and enabling the institutions of representation to become a location for dialogue across diverse groups.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> RCERPF, *Reforming Electoral Democracy* Vol. 1 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1991), p. 99.

<sup>39</sup> The actual contribution that is made by such participation is difficult to assess, because we have relatively few studies of the participation of racialized minorities and ethnocultural groups in politics. Yasmeeen Abu-Laban and Tim Nieguth, "Reconsidering the Constitution, Minorities and Politics in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 (September 2000), p. 469.

Nonetheless, access of individuals is not sufficient. The Canadian diversity model can achieve its potential only if the *political discourse* of electoral politics and parliamentary decision-making is also inclusive and respects the principles of the model. Here, there is still learning to be done, and a better understanding to be developed. It is also here that the challenges of transparency and fostering dialogue are so crucial, as we move away from elite accommodation.

We have described the diversity model as inherently – and, therefore, inevitably – a site of conflict. Therefore, a political stance or style of debate that denigrates or otherwise dismisses the values and positions held by others as *illegitimate* actually calls into question the foundation of the diversity model and helps to undermine citizens' faith in the democratic institutions upon which it depends.

Good practices for *conflict management* are needed. Such practices will recognize that differences over value positions are normal and to be respected, even as a point of compromise is sought. Political leadership is essential to helping Canadian citizens to participate in creating a clear understanding of where disputes within the diversity model lie, and realizing that balancing values is key to sustaining the model into the future.

Canadian electoral politics does not have a great deal of experience with resolving conflict over values in transparent ways, however. Its history has been of two basically similar parties adopting positions closely related to each other and often trading policy stances. These parties, termed “brokerage parties,” have most often sought to smooth over or even ignore value differences, rather than shining the light of public debate upon them.<sup>40</sup> After 1945, political choice increasingly focused on differences among leadership teams, and even individual leaders, rather than on disagreements about points of principle.

This strategy for conflict management worked well for decades, and indeed has been described by some as the strength of the Canadian system.<sup>41</sup>

No matter the merits of parties comfortable with enacting each other's policies, the practice is much more difficult now, and this form of political discourse less easy to sustain. In recent years, the Canadian party systems have been transformed by the appearance of several parties that adhere more to principles than to brokering behaviour. In federal elections, both the Bloc Québécois and the Reform/Alliance have been less willing than the three older parties to moderate their policy differences and slip towards the positions of their competitors. As unattractive as their political principles have been for the majority of Canadians, it nonetheless remains the case that they have insisted on putting first principles onto the political agenda.

The result has been a challenge for the functioning of the Canadian diversity model. If it depends, as we claim, on democratic decision rules, then these will achieve their best outcomes only if *political discourse is respectful of different value positions*. Elections have been unfortunately marred by incidents of intolerance.

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<sup>40</sup> See, *inter alia*, A-G Gagnon and Brian Tanguay, *Canadian Parties in Transition* (Toronto: Nelson, 1996), Introduction.

<sup>41</sup> Concerns about political stability led structural functionalists to heap approval on brokerage politics. For a discussion, see Jenson, “The Dangers of Political Elitism.”

The new parties have tried to expand the range of options, but have sometimes failed to treat their opponents and their positions with respect. At the same time, the older parties have sometimes sought to label an opponent's position as illegitimate and dismiss it, rather than treating it as one within a range of acceptable value differences, albeit neither the majority nor an attractive position. The harm of these naming strategies may be long-term, as the notion of give-and-take in identifying choices on the dimensions gives way to labeling some positions as not "Canadian," and creating a reduced willingness to respect diversity in value positions.

The discussion above leads to a fundamental question about the capacity of our current electoral system to represent the plurality of the Canadian electorate. A growing number of critics argue that the single-member district plurality system inherited from the British tradition of responsible government may exacerbate rather than reduce tensions in a diverse society such as Canada. For one thing, the focus on territorial-based, as opposed to interest-based, representation may systematically exclude minority groups without a significant territorial base. A further, and familiar, consequence of simple majority electoral systems is that they tend to result in overrepresentation of the majority party, or regionally concentrated parties, when votes are translated into seats.

This has led, in recent years, to renewed calls to reform Canada's electoral system to include some degree of proportional representation. Proportional representation (PR) models are varied and serve diverse objectives, but a central claim of their proponents is that PR allows for a better representation of interests and cleavages in society. If more representative, the democratic process might then be seen as more legitimate. Some countries have tried to address the loss of legitimacy of parliamentary institutions by reforming the electoral law. For example, New Zealand has adopted a mixed system similar to Germany's which allows some elected members to have a territorial base and others to be selected from party lists which can be constructed – if the parties so choose – to better represent social and cultural diversity. Calls for PR have arisen also when a party with no more than a plurality of votes takes a majority of seats, thereby enfeebling the opposition. If both the number of parties competing in federal elections continues to stay high and regional concentration remains strong, one can only expect more such arguments to be heard.

The fourth issue addressed in this section is that of urban governments and their roles with respect to the Canadian diversity model. Since the time of the Greeks, cities have been the spaces in which citizenship and new forms of citizenship have emerged. If, for the last two centuries, national states have been the gatekeepers of citizen rights, the modern city remains the space "where the very meaning, content and extent of citizenship are being made and re-made."<sup>42</sup>

Yet, a number of studies have found that immigrants and recently arrived ethnocultural groups have not always had the same access to municipal politics that others enjoy. For example, their participation in municipal elections has been limited, at least in metropolitan Toronto (the catchment area for the greatest number of immigrants in Canada).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Engin F. Isin, and Myer Siemiatycki, "Fate and Faith: Claiming Urban Citizenship in Immigrant Toronto" (Toronto: CERIS/The Metropolis Project, 1999). Available at <http://ceris.metropolis.net>.

<sup>43</sup> Myer Siemiatycki, and Engin F. Isin, "Immigration, Diversity and Urban Citizenship in Toronto," *Canadian Journal of Regional Science* (Fall 1998).

One consequence is that municipal councils have yet to up-date their practices for recognizing their changing constituencies. Some ethnocultural or religious groups within Canada's diverse society have had difficulty in gaining equal recognition and equal treatment from city and urban governments. Access to services is not unrelated to democracy. As Edgington, *et al.* put it, "by making services more accessible and equitable, this [municipal] level of government opens up possibilities for citizen participation in the democratic processes, as well as ensuring that all constituents are able to use the services provided for them."<sup>44</sup>

We are familiar with conflicts that occur over issues and services such as policing (treatment of visible minorities by the police, for example) and education. Increasingly, too there is evidence that land use is becoming an important area in which issues of recognition arise in democratic politics. Isin and Siemiatycki trace the history of a zoning change in East York that, after a long protracted struggle, saw the council finally approve a mosque in 1996. The controversy revealed a council that may have been more zealous in its application of the letter of the law to a request for a zoning exemption by an Islamic group than to those coming from Protestant churches. It also revealed mobilization around "land use conflicts that are simultaneously about space, identity, faith and fate."<sup>45</sup>

This said, it is disturbing to find, as David Edgington and his colleagues did, that municipal governments in Vancouver – the metropolitan area second only to Toronto in rate of immigrant settlement – lagged behind those of Sydney (Australia) on a wide range of measures of sensitivity to multiculturalism and to democratic equity. In 1997 in metropolitan Sydney, 30 of 47 municipal councils had an official multiculturalism policy, whereas the comparable numbers in metropolitan Vancouver were 7 of 22. On all five measures of initiatives to accommodate cultural diversity, Vancouver lagged behind Sydney.<sup>46</sup>

Such findings confirm Yasmeen Abu-Laban's more general conclusion that there has been a systematic neglect of diversity and its impact at the local level.<sup>47</sup> In our terms, democratic institutions supportive of the Canadian diversity model need to exist at all three levels of government. Indeed, they may be most crucial in urban areas, precisely because that is where many new citizens and recent immigrants may first experiment with Canadian democracy, through electoral as well as extra-electoral politics.

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<sup>44</sup> David W. Edgington, *et al.*, "Urban Governance, Multiculturalism and Citizenship in Sydney and Vancouver" (Toronto: CERIS/The Metropolis Project, 2001). Available at <http://ceris.metropolis.net>.

<sup>45</sup> Isin and Siemiatycki, "Fate and Faith," p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> The five measures are: (1) use of interpreting and translation services, (2) use of a range of sites and organizations in the community for policy delivery, (3) consultation and participation programs, (4) targeting of specific groups' needs, and (5) contact with cultural advocacy groups. Survey data were collected from municipalities in the two metropolitan areas in the late 1990s. For full results, see Edgington, *et al.*, "Urban Governance, Multiculturalism and Citizenship," pp. 11ff.

<sup>47</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "Ethnic Politics in a Globalizing Metropolis: The Case of Vancouver," in Timothy Thomas (ed.), *The Politics of the City: A Canadian Perspective* (Toronto: Nelson, 1997).



## Practising Citizenship – Civil Society and Interest Intermediation

As liberal democracy moved toward universal suffrage, and participation in self-government became a responsibility of all adult citizens, there was simultaneously a recognition that individual action, especially by the citizens less well-endowed with financial and other resources, was insufficient. Identification of both the power of numbers and the need for collective action to gain access to citizenship rights is a fundamental principle of Canada's liberal democratic institutions.

Indeed, for German political theorist Jurgen Habermas, the politicization of associational life moves claims making from the "private" sphere of religious, family, or community life into the public sphere. As such, it is the hallmark of participatory democratic practice.<sup>48</sup>

Since the 19th century, political parties and trade unions have been identified and have served as key institutions for equitable access to the political process. Since the 1960s, it has been understood that if democratic politics were to function properly and fairness to be ensured, some attention to the rules of the game would be needed. By the 1970s, federal elections were regulated by legislation for setting expenditure limits, organizing access to communications media, and ensuring transparency in contributions – all in the name of equity.

Beyond that, there has also long been an awareness of the contribution to democratic practice that all manner of other associations in civil society can make. By the 1970s, practices of elite accommodation were already giving way to the understanding that intermediary associations had to be recognized as vital aspects of the citizenship regime because, by organizing more marginal groups, they reinforced a fledgling national identity and built loyalty to it. By the 1970s, they were accepted as important for helping citizens construct diverse identities, advocate for social rights, and enhance the fairness of the democratic process by giving a voice to disadvantaged segments of the population. This understanding of the importance of interest intermediation gave rise to the programs providing funding for ethnocultural groups, Aboriginal peoples and official language minorities.<sup>49</sup>

Such notions have been menaced in recent years by other visions of the role of civil society, however. The recognition of the importance of intermediary institutions and a healthy tissue of *group life* in civil society virtually disappeared in the 1990s. Governments significantly reduced their financial support for organizations whose primary mandate was to represent and advocate in the name of their constituency. Core funding was eliminated and project-based funding was made more difficult to obtain. Advocacy groups representing everyone from Canadians with disabilities to environmental activists were instructed to prove their worth by demonstrating their ability to raise funds. Moreover, the institutions of civil society are called upon to play an ever-increasing role in delivering services. Governments seek partners for everything from labour market training to parental training.

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<sup>48</sup> See Jurgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> For a critical history of such funding, see Leslie Pal, *The Interests of State* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

Studies find two consequences for democracy. One is that groups find it harder to sustain themselves and to maintain a consistent presence through time so that they can be a reliable voice for their constituents. Groups come and go with the issues that are fundable. Second, they are transformed in their work, being less able to serve a democratic function as they lose autonomy from government, become vendors of services in search of funding, or become over-professionalized because of the pressures coming from the demands for accounting for partnership funds.<sup>50</sup>

The complexity of such relationships, and their consequences for democratic politics, have been documented by Gillian Creese for immigrant and refugee settlement organizations in Vancouver. While the study found many of the difficulties the literature on “partnerships” leads one to expect, it also demonstrated the ingenuity of workers and advocates in such organizations in juggling their service delivery responsibilities with advocacy and representation of their communities.<sup>51</sup>

Such findings teach that active fostering of intermediary institutions of representation help ensure equitable participation. But the need for support of these associations and groups in civil society go beyond ensuring strong voices for advocates and self-government, important as that is. These associations also provide a means of fostering inclusion, including into democratic citizenship. Such reasoning previously informed the activities of the citizenship branch of the now-defunct Secretary of State (and precursor to the Department of Canadian Heritage). As Bernard Ostry, former Assistant Under-Secretary in charge of citizenship said, the goal of the branch was to “develop and strengthen a sense of Canadian citizenship, chiefly through programs that would aid participation and assuage feelings of social injustice.”<sup>52</sup>

Valuing cultural diversity requires ensuring that marginalization does not occur and that inclusion – in civil society and through democratic practices – is as complete as possible. Analyses of exclusion, on social as well as economic dimensions, all reveal the importance of empowering people who are at risk of marginalization. When they can aspire to involvement, and when they believe that their contributions will be recognized, groups who have suffered from exclusion are more likely to make progress.

More concretely, this means that, in order to overcome systematic blockages to inclusion, practices may have to reach beyond formal guarantees, such as protection against discrimination and racism. It may be necessary to think about positive actions to foster involvement, including community development, which will allow those at risk of not achieving inclusion to improve their chances.

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<sup>50</sup> These issues are raised in detail in, *inter alia*, Lester Salamon, “Of Market Failure, Voluntary Failure, and Third-Party Government: Toward a Theory of Government–NonProfit Relations in the Modern Welfare State,” in Susan Ostrander and Stuart Langton (eds.), *Shifting the Debate: Public/Private Sector Relations in the Modern Welfare State* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987).

<sup>51</sup> Gillian Creese, “Government Restructuring and Immigrant/Refugee Settlement Work: Bringing Advocacy Back In” (Toronto: CERIS/The Metropolis Project, 1998). Available at <http://ceris.metropolis.net>.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Leslie Pal, *The Interests of State*, p. 109.

Again, this argues for the need to understand the individual's location in a community, including a community of disadvantage, and to build up efforts to turn the group in the direction of participation. The need for such support for participation may be experienced by Aboriginal peoples, who are a national minority, as well as by ethnocultural minorities and new immigrants.

The case of Aboriginal peoples is particularly important given the current negotiation process of numerous self-government agreements with First Nations. Support for participation and collective representation of various views and interests within Aboriginal communities becomes fundamental if self-government initiatives are to succeed. Increased representation for Aboriginal individuals living in cities, many of whom fall outside the realm of self-government initiatives, also becomes essential in order to avoid further marginalization.<sup>53</sup>

### **Engaging Citizens in Hard Choices and in the Policy Process**

Since the rejection of the Charlottetown Accord by a majority of Canadians in the 1992 referendum, interest has increased in new forms of democratic participation in political (that is, collective) choices. These range from the "high politics" of constitutional reform, to more everyday matters of policy development. In both cases, arguments have multiplied that good outcomes depend upon greater engagement with and of citizens.

It is worth noting that the Charlottetown Accord, in particular the so-called Canada Clause of the Preamble, was, *inter alia*, an attempt to insert the framework of the diversity model into the Constitution. The failure of the Accord to gain sufficient support – and the wide-ranging debates that preceded the referendum vote – brought to the forefront the question of the capacity of Canadians, to reach agreement on how to recognize in fundamental law the diverse nature of political community.

A first reaction to the 1992 vote was to blame popular consultation as an inadequate means for addressing the delicate and often highly emotional questions raised by conflicts over identity and citizenship.<sup>54</sup> At times, "too much" democracy was fingered as the reason for the failure.<sup>55</sup> Nostalgia for elite accommodation sometimes prevailed.

Soon, however, another reaction took hold. This was to search for new forms of conflict resolution that would involve citizens more directly in substantial debates. Strong arguments for the advantages of greater public engagement began to emerge.

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<sup>53</sup> More than 50 percent of the total Aboriginal population in Canada lives "off reserve." Little attention has been dedicated to their situation in the context of self-government.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Michael Atkinson, "What Kind of Democracy Do Canadians Want?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 717-745; and Janet Ajzenstat, "Constitution Making and the Myth of the People," in Curtis Cook (ed.), *Constitutional Predicament: Canada after the Referendum of 1992* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

<sup>55</sup> For a detailed overview and assessment of this kind of argument, see Leslie A. Pal and F. Leslie Seidle, "Constitutional Politics 1990-92: The Paradox of Participation," in Susan D. Phillips (ed.), *How Ottawa Spends 1993-94: A More Democratic Canada ...?* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).

As Matthew Mendelsohn and John McLean suggest in a recent paper, fundamental conflicts, such as those over basic rights and constitutions, can only be solved through dialogue and mutual understanding among citizens. In other words, a large part of the reason we have consistently failed to reach a common constitutional agreement is precisely because of the *lack of involvement of citizens* in the process.<sup>56</sup> Traditional processes of consultation, such as legislative committee hearings or Royal Commissions, may not be sufficient. More direct ways of involving citizens should thus be developed, according to these authors.

The challenge is to find models of participation allowing for greater popular, and significant, participation, while at the same time avoiding polarization and marginalization of minorities. Several proposals have been advanced that would increase the level of citizen involvement at moments of choice.

Referendums are the most common means to involve citizens directly in the decision-making process. Quebec, for example, has a well-developed tradition of using referendums for fundamental choices about the future of federalism. Other provinces also require popular consultations when constitutional change is the agenda. Beyond this are those advocates of direct democracy, such as the Canadian Alliance, who suggest that a greater use of referendums would help close the gap between elected officials and citizens by ensuring more accountability and responsiveness in the ordinary policy process.

Referendums, however, have limits as choice mechanisms and institutions of engagement. For one thing, citizens are asked to choose between two options, without consideration for the possible points of compromise between the proposal as put forward and its simple rejection. Obviously, this is problematic in the Canadian context, where the diversity model requires constant negotiation and dialogue, rather than reference to fixed principles.

Referendums have another fundamental flaw from the perspective of the diversity model, in that they tend to reduce and not increase the possibility for minorities to be heard. Unless there is some form of weighted majority rule, minorities are dissolved in the mass of individual citizens. As such, a referendum can be highly divisive and further marginalize, rather than integrate, minorities. Finally, referendums are limited to being mechanisms to permit popular endorsement of already defined policies.

There are obviously limits to the use of referendums in order to consolidate the Canadian diversity model. Public participation can take other, more substantive, forms, however. Instead of limiting public involvement to prior consultations and *post facto* ratification, it is possible to maintain a dialogue with citizens throughout the process of choice, in order to increase the legitimacy of the process itself, as well as to help identify points of shared values and possible compromise.

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<sup>56</sup> Matthew Mendelsohn, and John McLean, "Reconcilable Differences: Public Participation and Intergovernmentalism in Canada," paper presented to a conference on *The Changing Nature of Democracy and Federalism in Canada*, Winnipeg, 14 April 2000.

Certain theories democracy suggest ways to involve citizens in constructive debates and mechanisms for conflict resolution.<sup>57</sup> Reasonable and constructive debate can occur as long as the conditions for it are respected. That is:

- The goals are clearly stated to avoid creating false expectations
- There is a genuine commitment from all parties, and
- Equality of participants and mutual respect for diverging views are the central values guiding the process.

The objective of such a process is neither to avoid conflict nor to solve all disagreements. Political decision-making is inherently conflictual and structured by power relations. Yet, constructive debate is possible and can result in a more legitimate and satisfactory solution. Successful examples of broad public involvement in constitution-making in highly divided societies, such as South Africa and Northern Ireland, confirm the feasibility of such projects.<sup>58</sup>

In more mundane matters, there has been an intensification in recent years of calls for supplements to the traditional institutions for representing citizens and for gathering information for the policy process.<sup>59</sup> Many people have sought to add an additional route to representation, to feed individual citizens' claims and knowledge into the process of making policy across a wide range of domains.

They propose to involve *individual citizens* directly in one or more stages of the policy process. Sometimes the goal is to make the process more democratic and sometimes the justification is in terms of effectiveness and better information flows. On occasion, the purpose is both. There are manifold reasons why such calls are multiplying, ranging from the dismaying state of electoral politics to the expectations about participation and access that accompany higher rates of post-secondary education. One important source is government itself, which has for a number of years promised to improve its relations with citizens.

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<sup>57</sup> The theoretical foundations of "deliberative democracy" can be found in the work of German political philosopher Jurgen Habermas. For a theoretical overview, see Simone Chambers, "Contract or Conversation? Theoretical Lessons for the Canadian Constitutional Crisis," *Politics and Society* Vol. 26, No. 1 (March 1998), pp. 143-172.

<sup>58</sup> For a good overview of the appropriate conditions for significant and positive citizen engagement, see Janice Stein, Richard Simeon, and David Cameron, "Citizen Engagement in Conflict Resolution: Lessons for Canada in International Experiences," in David Cameron (ed.), *The Referendum Papers: Essays on Secession and National Unity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> Attention to forms of public involvement is not new. Such discussions have tracked the history of popular democracy, generating concerns about how to represent and how to get information from civil society. See, for example, Sharon M. Stroick, *Public Involvement and Community Planning: The Redesign of Services for Children and Families in Southwestern Alberta* (University of Calgary, Ph.D. diss., 1998), Chapter 3.

Citizen engagement in the policy process can take various forms but this is not the place to review them. In brief, several models of citizen engagement are provided in a 1998 CPRN study on the social union.<sup>60</sup> There can be discussions groups, study circles, citizen juries, phone-in lines, electronic consultations, and so on. Citizens can also be involved in various stages of a policy process – the agenda-setting stage, the decision-making stage, as well as the implementation and evaluation stages.<sup>61</sup> Thus, there is a vast array of possibilities for a more direct dialogue between policy-makers and citizens.

For the Canadian diversity model to succeed, full access and equitable participation must be among the conditions. The use of a “diversity lens” in evaluating citizen engagement initiatives within government is one concrete step in this direction, by focusing attention on the extent to which such initiatives are sensitive to Canada’s diversity, in terms of their representativeness as well as in the content discussed.

Enhanced support to the voluntary sector, with an emphasis on organizations playing an intermediary role in the representation of culturally or socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, is another concrete initiative that might contribute to making citizen engagement truly representative. In fact, the promotion of greater “diversity sensitive” citizen engagement and the strengthening of mediating organizations often go hand in hand.

Such forms of involvement require a change of culture within government structures. They work when officials “let go” of the process and enter into a partnership with non-governmental actors in the definition of priorities and goals.<sup>62</sup> They function when citizens are involved in the process, rather than simply serving as a caution for government initiatives. This involves an important commitment from government officials. The policy process is necessarily slower, more open to criticisms and resource consuming. It involves greater planning, explicit definition of objectives prior to the process, and special attention to the conditions of the exercise (what kind of consultation, under what circumstances, who should be the participants, and so on). Otherwise, citizen engagement can become a burden rather than a significant advance in linking citizens to the state. It can also have the counterproductive effect of further alienating citizens, if it becomes simply an exercise in public relations with no real impact on policy development.<sup>63</sup>

It is not surprising that it has been in the realm of intergovernmental relations that engagement models have raised the most interest in Canada. Federal-provincial forums remain an increasingly important space where decisions are made on broad policy agendas. As with constitutional debates, the executive federalism model of policy-making, where federal-provincial agreements are negotiated “behind closed doors,” have been frequently condemned and indeed became the focus of opposition for many critics, especially of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords.

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<sup>60</sup> Kathy O’Hara, with Sara Cox, *Securing the Social Union*, CPRN Study No. CPRN|02 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1998), p. 90. See also Stein, *et al.*, “Citizen Engagement in Conflict Resolution”; and F. Leslie Seidle, *Executive Federalism and Public Involvement: Integrating Citizens’ Voices*, presentation to a conference on “The Changing Nature of Democracy and Federalism in Canada,” Winnipeg, 14 April 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Mendelsohn and McLean provide a typology of various forms of public participation in policy-making in “Reconcilable Differences,” p. 31.

<sup>62</sup> O’Hara, *Securing the Social Union*, p. 79.

<sup>63</sup> Stroick, *Public Involvement and Community Planning*, pp. 292-294.

It is in part as a response to such criticism that the 1999 *Social Union Framework Agreement* (SUFA) included a provision for enhanced public participation in future processes related to social policies. SUFA commits governments “to build mechanisms for Canadians to participate in developing social priorities.” In the same spirit, a number of federal-provincial negotiation processes have involved certain forms of citizen engagement in recent years.<sup>64</sup> It remains unclear, however, as to the extent of citizen engagement that will become a necessary dimension of federal-provincial relations.

Vigilance is also warranted here. There is a danger that citizen involvement in discussions over social policies may serve to bypass the constitutional arrangements and division of powers between federal and provincial governments. As we have seen above, the federal principle is central to the diversity model (the dimension of symmetry–asymmetry) and any attempt to overcome the burden “of negotiating among 11 partners” through direct input from “ordinary citizens” might be counterproductive in getting to agreement.

A similar problem could also emerge in the context of Aboriginal self-government. Negotiations and agreements between federal, provincial and Aboriginal governments, if they do not involve some form of popular participation, can further alienate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Self-government must be thought of as a democratic enterprise to be legitimate.

The dissatisfaction with the Nisga’a treaty in British Columbia confirms the danger of an “executive-based” approach to such negotiations. As with the Meech Lake and Charlottetown experiences, many opponents did not necessarily reject the *content* of the treaty itself, but they were frustrated by the lack of consultation during the *process* leading to the tripartite agreement.<sup>65</sup> While lessons can be drawn from that experience, one should be careful about the form public participation would take in such intergovernmental relations, where one of the partners is representing a minority seeking further recognition and autonomy. Greater public involvement cannot be achieved at the cost of undermining the rights of the minority, in this case, an Aboriginal nation.

As such, citizen engagement, in its various forms, is certainly an important tool for locating choice points on the several dimensions of the diversity model. It is, however, no panacea. In particular, it can never replace all other forms of public involvement or all other routes to representation. Nor can it become simply a matter of individuals. Public deliberation, to be significant, must be conducted both at the individual level and through group representation. Participation of the voluntary sector and organized advocacy groups is also essential to allow an articulation of group-based interests in the process, as well as to ensure equitable access to those less well endowed with the resources needed for participation – time, education and money.

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<sup>64</sup> F. Leslie Seidle looks in detail at three recent experiences: National Forum on Health, Canada Pension Plan Review, and the Calgary Declaration. See *Executive Federalism and Public Involvement*.

<sup>65</sup> See Frances Abele, Katherine Graham, and Allan Maslove, “Negotiating Canada: Changes in Aboriginal Policy over the Last Thirty Years,” in Leslie A. Pal (ed.), *How Ottawa Spends 1999-2000: Shape Shifting: Canadian Governance Towards the 21st Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Countries that have experienced extensive public engagement in discussions of policy have found individual citizen engagement and group-based consultation to be complementary. In Scotland, for example, the Scottish Civic Forum was designed to simultaneously increase direct individual involvement of citizens and create an official space for a greater participation of the voluntary sector in the policy-making process. A similar approach was adopted for the Irish Forum.<sup>66</sup> Both examples featured a large role for organized groups, as part of a broader attempt to make sustainable choices.

We share the conclusion of Mendelsohn and McLean, that a process integrating both direct participation of citizens and a more representative mode through organizations is the best way to guarantee a process where minorities are sufficiently represented and their interests taken into account. This is why Canada's diversity model depends upon an approach that takes seriously all the routes to democratic participation – parties and elections, mediating institutions, and direct citizen engagement.

The question remains as to what routes to representation are appropriate for addressing specific dimensions and forms of diversity. For example, systematic use of mechanisms such as search committees for party nominations (as recommended by the RCERPF) may be the best way to enhance participation of minorities in electoral politics, while direct democracy models may not be the most appropriate in negotiating group-based rights. A referendum can be an effective way of legitimizing asymmetrical institutional changes within a minority community, but it is difficult to expand the practice to the broader citizenry, where the votes of the minority will be “drowned” by the majority. The example of the Nisga'a Final Agreement is a case point here.

A referendum was organized among Nisga'a to provide such legitimacy but, as discussed above, it was not followed by a province-wide consultation. This example is similar to the controversy about how to involve “all Canadians” in a decision about the constitutional future of Quebec. Can public dialogue contribute to better policy-making, if decisions do not flow directly from the expressed choices of the population, and must be balanced against the knowledge of experts? Or do such democratic mechanisms create more disappointment than positive effects? Appropriate recognition of diversity requires a difficult balancing of a range of democratic practices depending on the context. This is an area where more thinking is needed to explore further what form of democratic practices are more suited to the choices about where to strike the balance on the various dimensions of the Canadian diversity model.

Let us now turn to a *single* policy area, that of multiculturalism, and examine the workings of the Canadian diversity model in this area, as it relates to the needs of Canadians of diverse ethnic and religious origins. Multiculturalism is not, of course, an *all-encompassing* policy for addressing diversity. The rights and claims of official language minorities and national minorities fall into other policy realms of diversity.

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<sup>66</sup> Mendelsohn and McLean, “Reconcilable Differences,” p. 20.



#### IV. Working with the Model: The Example of Multiculturalism in a Democratic Canada

The idea of a multicultural society where all citizens, no matter their origins, can find a place for their own cultural practices, traditions and values, while at the same time being integrated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the country, is now very much a part of who we are as Canadians.<sup>67</sup> Despite its numerous critics and the ongoing debate about the results of almost 30 years of multicultural policies in Canada, this is certainly an area where the Canadian diversity model can be said to have succeeded in striking a balance between unity and diversity, using democratic choice mechanisms to get there. Several countries have followed the Canadian example, adopting similar policies in order to facilitate the inclusion of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities into public life and ensure their full participation.

Multiculturalism has been official public policy in Canada since 1971. It is, however, much more than a policy. It is a sociological reality. It can also be understood as a set of social values integral to the Canadian citizenship regime. The principles governing the practices of multiculturalism can be summarized as:

- A belief in the relevance of cultural identities to individuals, as a context for *choice*, thus enhancing freedom, as well as for *solidarity*, thus enhancing equality
- An understanding of the inherent value of cultural diversity as a source of knowledge and dynamism in society (as the Prime Minister's speech in Berlin illustrates)
- An understanding of economic and social inclusion, which recognizes ethnic, "racial," religious and cultural differences as a potential source of socioeconomic exclusion, and
- A clear rejection of any form of discrimination based on cultural, ethnic, "racial," religious or cultural distinctions.

Multiculturalism policy was originally designed to ensure Canadians from all cultural backgrounds could contribute fully to Canadian society. The above values were translated into a policy focusing first on the recognition of the legitimacy of *individuals'* identities, including potentially multiple identities, and their right to be protected both from discrimination and in the expression of those multiple identities. The second principle resulting from such underlying values is the need to support *communities* so that they can effectively sustain diversity and represent difference.

The policy of multiculturalism in Canada is based on the notion that beyond the commitment to certain basic values of Canadian society and politics, individuals' may also choose to identify with and participate in the life of the cultural group from which they originate. As such, it is not a vision that organizes citizenship through group membership, as in the communitarian conception.

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<sup>67</sup> See Adsett and Willmott, "Attitudes towards Diversity."

While the policy recognizes and supports the right of each ethnocultural community to maintain its distinctiveness, it also fully accepts the right of individuals to choose whether or not to value this difference and to maintain their ties to this community. Nor does the policy condone cultural practices that would infringe on individual rights as protected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* or excuse anyone from adhering to a basic set of practices necessary to ensure the rule of law and liberal democracy. Although the policy seeks to encourage the expression and respect of diverse cultural practices, no cultural group can impose restrictions on its members in the name of multiculturalism.

As such, the policy of multiculturalism can be understood as a democratic approach to diversity, an approach for which participation *with* differences – rather than *despite* differences – is promoted. The underlying logic is that inclusion and real participation can be achieved only if people feel fully accepted and their particular collective identity recognized. There is thus an underlying belief in the value of heterogeneity, while stressing the importance of inclusion of everyone into the polity as well as society.

Multiculturalism is thus a good example of a democratically arrived at choice about how to traverse the *various dimensions of diversity to locate a point of balance between uniformity and heterogeneity, individual and group rights, and economic freedom and collective welfare*. It is not an uncontested compromise, however, and it frequently reappears in democratic debate.

Criticisms of the politics of multiculturalism come from a variety of sources. Some representatives of ethnic minorities have questioned the focus on funding cultural practices, while leaving aside the issue of representation and public participation. Access to political power and to the empowerment necessary to full inclusion is left to individuals or to political parties seeking to integrate them for electoral ends. Little non-partisan attention has gone to the capacity of all groups to make their voices heard in the full range of political practices, both in civil society and in state politics.

Many early critics also underlined the failure of the policy in addressing racism and intolerance. The policy is sometimes criticized for enhancing rather than reducing discrimination and promoting the “ghettoization” of ethnic minorities, rather than their full inclusion through the active promotion of equality and anti-discrimination measures.<sup>68</sup> Protection against discrimination as well as social development initiatives may be more important for facing up to the exclusion experienced by some visible minorities. In focussing on cultural integration, the policy paid much less attention to the fundamental matter of economic security and equity in the practices of everyday life.

Others are concerned that there has been too much distancing from the left end of the various diversity dimensions, that is from the model of universal, uniform liberal citizenship. Multiculturalism is said to promote an understanding of society as composed of multiple “parallel” cultural groups. It is thus an instrument for fragmentation, rather than integration.

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<sup>68</sup> This critique is most often associated with Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin, 1994), but he is by no means the only person to have made it.

Both left and right accuse multiculturalism of weakening the common identity of all Canadians, allowing immigrants to maintain a stronger tie with their country of origin than with the new country, and even into the next generations. Advocates of a more unitary and homogenous conception of Canadian identity, based on individual rights rather than collective recognition, have found an important voice in politics among those who fear the creation of “hyphenated Canadians” will lead to further exclusions and divisions among citizens.<sup>69</sup> The Reform Party, now the Canadian Alliance, is the first federal party in recent years to advocate the termination of the policy and its replacement with the promotion of “colour blind” individual rights and freedoms as the best means to integrate immigrants.

Critics of multiculturalism, fearing that it induces division and promotes rather than reduces discrimination, tend to downplay the extent to which discrimination is rooted in historical and social forces broader than a single state policy. A policy of multiculturalism obviously did not create racism and discrimination.

On a similar vein, it is worth noting that given its association with a rejection of a bi-cultural (and bi-national) conception of Canada, official multiculturalism is often perceived negatively in Quebec. As the Bloc Québécois wrote in 1997, for some people multiculturalism can be seen as “an attempt to blend Quebec’s distinctive culture and history into the great melting pot of a pan-Canadian identity.”<sup>70</sup> However, there is broad recognition in Quebec that cultural diversity must be addressed through policies that recognize immigrants’ right to maintain their ethnocultural identity if they choose to do so. As such, it is less the values associated with multiculturalism that are questioned in Quebec than the symbolic role played by the policy, in what is perceived to be a rejection of Canada’s dual cultural origin.<sup>71</sup>

There is, indeed, still much confusion as to whether multiculturalism constitutes an alternative to the “two- or three-nations” model for defining Canada. It should be clear by now, however, that the Canadian repertoire is composed of more than one approach to diversity. Different cultural claims require different responses. Thus multiculturalism should not be seen as an all-encompassing model against which Aboriginal peoples, official language minorities, or Quebec’s own claims should be measured.

There is a need, then, to clarify the place that a policy of multiculturalism will occupy in the broad spectrum of responses to diversity. Current demographic and political realities create challenges to the “fit” between existing categories and current practice. While acceptance of heterogeneity and protection of individual rights is important, more is needed in order to ensure that the collective dimensions of identity, founded on membership in a community, are not neglected.

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<sup>69</sup> For a review of the “three moments” of multiculturalism,” see François Houle, “Citoyenneté, espace public et multiculturalisme : la politique canadienne de multiculturalisme,” *Sociologie et sociétés* Vol. XXXI, No. 2 (1999).

<sup>70</sup> Bloc Québécois, *Electoral Platform 1997*, available at <http://blocquebecois.org>.

<sup>71</sup> It is interesting to note that Quebec’s own integration policies are strikingly similar to those of the federal government. As Marie McAndrew clearly demonstrates in *Pluralisme, citoyenneté et éducation* (Montreal: l’Harmattan, 1996), not only are Quebec policies based on multicultural principles, but a significant number of programs that are perceived as distinctly “Québécois” are, in fact, funded by the federal government and common to all provinces.

This is why further attention to the promotion of civic participation of minorities is essential. It is through participation in civic life that identities are strengthened and collective recognition is achieved. Supporters of multiculturalism have often voiced criticisms of the lack of support for collective representation for minorities. The support for cultural activities and anti-discrimination education should go hand in hand with a support for intermediary organizations that are representing the plurality of views stemming from a multicultural society.

## **V. Conclusion: Making the Canadian Diversity Model Work**

We have defined the Canadian diversity model as a repertoire of practices in civil society as well as in government policies, a model that involves an ongoing search for balance among competing conceptions of the political community. These we have identified as four dyads or dimensions. Both ends of the dimension represent value preferences garnering support from some Canadians. Therefore, the need to choose where to locate a choice is a constant tension, one that can be resolved only through democratic practices.

Describing the lines of tension in terms of four dimensions helps in understanding the directions that debates take, as well as the specific expressions of conflict about diversity in Canada. There is a common denominator, of course. The Canadian approach has long depended on a commitment to equality in liberal democracy. As such, the inclusion and participation of all citizens in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the community is a necessary starting point for successful management of diversity, as much as it is an end in itself. Debate about each of the dimensions, and collective choices about the mix between uniformity and diversity, are crucial to the functioning of the model. Creating the conditions for doing so – in civil society in the broadest sense as well as in everyday politics – has to be the fundamental objective in a diverse and pluralistic society like Canada.

The model evolves in the face of a changing environment. It will succeed to the extent that Canadians can collectively choose the mix between heterogeneity and uniformity, between individual and group rights, between the expectations of institutional equality and the necessity of a certain degree of asymmetry, and between market freedoms and assuring economic security.

Theoretical work on participatory democracy highlights the importance of a strong public sphere, a space of deliberation where political leaders, representative of various groups in society, and individual citizens discuss issues and influence decisions together. In a highly diverse society, such deliberation is essential for minorities' inclusion in the broad citizenry. It reinforces the legitimacy of public institutions and policies for groups that feel excluded from the classic democratic process, where the rule of the majority tends to obscure their voice. A strong and healthy public sphere is thus essential in a polity such as Canada, where conflicts over the nature and boundaries of the political community are constantly negotiated and debated. Canada's diversity model, as we have seen, is based on such an ongoing dialogue. A commitment to this model necessarily entails a particular attention to democratic spaces such as Parliament and government consultation processes, their inclusiveness, and their capacity to provide an adequate structure for state-society discussions.

We must remain vigilant however. The public sphere can be a space for dialogue, but it is also a sphere where competing claims and views about society are expressed and discussed and conflict is therefore inevitable. Citizens from all sectors of society and all backgrounds need resources to play a significant role. Nor can increased participation by individual citizens in the political process justify a marginalization of groups and representatives of citizens who have fewer resources and less capacity to engage. Support for mediating institutions such as advocacy groups and voluntary organizations remains essential. Finally, there is a role for public institutions to exercise leadership, as well as to represent.

## **Postscript – The Canadian Diversity Model after 11 September 2001**

Work on this paper was completed several months before the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington. It does not, therefore, provide any direct reflection on those terrifying events and the subsequent mobilization for war. Much of what has occurred since that date does, however, demand of Canadians that they reflect on the fundamental principles identified in the Canadian diversity model.

Indeed, hasty reactions both in the United States and sometimes within Canada laid some of the blame for these attacks at the door of Canada's practices with respect to immigration, treatment of refugee complaints, policing of the borders, and so on. Despite the fact that only the weakest, if any, link has as yet been uncovered between the terrorists who hijacked four American airliners and Canada, loud voices still proclaim that Canada must change. It must reform its practices because they supposedly allow terrorists to transit through this country, if not to prepare their attacks here.

Too often lost in such fear mongering have been two observations. One is the fact that all the terrorists were admitted to the United States and were legally living in the United States, successfully concealing their beliefs and goals from their American neighbours and communities as well as security forces. The second observation is that many people promoting such a retrenchment of the Canadian diversity model are simply prolonging their long-standing opposition to the current approaches regarding immigration and recognition of diversity. Such a critical position has, in other words, always been on the spectrum of views along the four axes we identified in our discussion. As such, would be wrong to see such positions as only the result of recent events.

Are there, then, any useful lessons about the Canadian diversity model that we can draw from these horrific events? Is this the time to shut it down, and to adopt a more republican and integrationist approach to diversity, to move to the left on the four dimensions identified in this paper? Is this the time to strengthen public security, even if it means reducing spaces for democratic politics and cross-cultural discourse? Does a "war on terrorism" require limiting civil liberties and institutionalizing suspicion of Canadians as well as immigrants whose origins are in certain regions of the world or who practise certain religions?

The lessons of the past do not encourage us to answer these questions in the affirmative. In the Second World War, for example, after the declaration of war on Japan, Canadians of Japanese origin as well as immigrants were summarily stripped of their property and other resources, deprived of all basic civil and citizenship rights, and interned in camps for the duration of the war. It then took Canadian society more than four decades to face up to these injustices and then to provide some measure of restorative justice to compensate for this horrifying incident in Canadian history.

Previous deployments of the *War Measures Act* provide other examples of the long-term costs of restricting democratic practices as well as civil rights. This law allows the government to suspend certain civil liberties and democratic practices in the name of public security. Therefore, its several uses allow us to assess what happens when democratic institutions are hobbled in the name of public security, and thereby to understand better the key role that healthy democratic institutions might play in managing difficult times.

The *War Measures Act* was invoked in both world wars, but probably its most famous use came in peacetime. In 1970, domestic terrorists held two individuals and the whole of Quebec in their grip. The decision to use the Act to fight the terrorism of the *Front de la libération du Québec* (FLQ) was a difficult one to make. However, once imposed, it resulted in a plethora of injustices, ranging from humiliating searches to unjust incarcerations. Subsequently, they became iconic references for a generation of *indépendantistes* that last to this day. Nor did any of it prevent the murder of Pierre Laporte, while ordinary police work eventually resulted in the freeing of James Cross and the exiling of the terrorists.

The lesson of these two incidents is clear. Neither stripping individuals of their basic civil rights nor casting suspicion on whole ethnic, religious or political groups has strengthened Canadian society. The wounds of these two incidents bled for a long time, as did those from other examples, such as the wartime internment of Germans, Italians or Ukrainians and the violation of the civil rights of political activists when Maurice Duplessis was Premier of Quebec.

The message is that such practices breed anger and contempt more than anything else. Each time that democracy has been sacrificed to security, as it was with the *War Measures Act* in the two wars and in 1970, the long-term consequences have enfeebled rather than strengthened Canada's capacity to manage the diversity in its midst. Each time that an ethnic or cultural group is demonized because of what is being done by its country of origin or because of what a small group does, we diminish our claims to respect human rights and provide a beacon of sanity in an often insane world.

Therefore, the challenge we face in 2001 is to nurture rather than starve the diversity model. If the model can be sustained, all the while being adapted to the new realities of the need to fight international terrorism, we will come out of this a stronger society for having faced such a challenge. The institutions of democratic dialogue and engagement, both formal and informal, must be mobilized to find the balance points, new ones if necessary, that Canadians wish to identify in these new circumstances.

Doing so means that Canadians must be allowed to communicate among themselves and to their representatives any concerns they feel about too hasty a move to retaliatory action, for example. They must be able to make their own careful choices about whom to support and under what conditions, without being accused of disloyalty. There must be space for the expression of skepticism as well as enthusiastic support for State responses to the recent events.

Young Canadians especially must be allowed to ask why the genocide in Southern Africa from which their parents escaped to Canada did not provoke the same outpouring of sympathy as the horrible deaths in New York City. Young people of Middle Eastern origin must be able to ask why daily acts of terrorism in Lebanon, Israel or Palestine – from whence their families fled to Canada – receive passing attention at best. More importantly, they must *receive* thoughtful answers to such questions, and not be dismissed as “excusing terrorism” as some recent reactions to dissenting opinions have done. Public institutions and democratic encounters must be capable of communicating in every community, as well as at the highest levels, that cultural and religious diversity, as well as political discussion and disagreement, is still valued and respected in Canada.

Protecting and guarding the space for political debate is key to maintaining the health of the Canadian diversity model. A conflict of this order, at the international level, challenges us to continue to manage the tensions and conflict within our own society, and to accept them as normal. Without attention to such matters, we risk breeding insecurity and fear at the heart of Canadian society itself, and finding that we too may harbour angry terrorists in our own schools and neighbourhoods.





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