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## **Immigration and the solidarity-diversity-security nexus<sup>1</sup>**

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“Il ne suffit pas de savoir pour accepter ce que l’on sait et agir en conséquence »

Jean Pierre Dupuy

“La Fraternité, c’est le droit par dessus le droit”

Michelet

## Introduction

Nothing can be more telling about the state of *insouciance* of the Canadian intelligentsia than the cancellation (for lack of interest) of a conference on diversity and security that was planned for September 2010 – at the very time when security concerns were omnipresent in daily conversations in the forum, and when the link to diversity was being explicitly argued.

For a number of reasons – among the most important of which are a grievous lack of critical thinking, and a congenital fear of tackling complex sensitive issues – dealing with the diversity-security nexus remains a taboo topic, even more than the diversity-solidarity issue. Yet these issues are of great concern to Canadians, and need to be publicly discussed.

The most important mental prison that works at preventing such debates is the dogma propounded by some influential Canadian academics and ideologues (and the two sets intersect) that this issue has been permanently settled, that there is a national consensus<sup>2</sup> on indiscriminate and massive immigration, and general agreement that it has no impact on solidarity and security in Canada. In fact, there is no such national consensus about the country’s ill-inspired, lax immigration policies, and no consensus on the presumed innocuous effects of such policies on solidarity and security either. The objective of this paper is to question this ill-founded argument.

First, the meaning of these interfaces will be clarified, and I will show that taking refuge in academic sophistry to support an indiscriminate increase in diversity, and to defend the presumption that it will not reduce solidarity and security, is grossly irresponsible. Second, I suggest that the current Canadian immigration and refugee system reveals the *unsettling or rash lack of concern* (the definition of criminal negligence in the Canadian criminal code) of political authorities for these issues. This calls for repairs, both on the quantitative front of the problem (not stopping immigration flows but regulating them); and on the qualitative front (through more effective selection and integration) in the name of a strengthened notion of citizenship. Third, it will be shown that this nexus of issues starkly illuminates the problem of the evolving common public culture on which societies

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<sup>2</sup> Peter O’Neil, “Is Canada Up to the Immigration Challenge? Ottawa Citizen 25.09.2010 A6

thrive: it raises questions about administrative processes that could be easily resolved, but more importantly, it calls for the negotiation of a number of moral contracts with the newcomers – a matter likely to be more contentious. In conclusion, I will argue that a pan-Canadian conversation on these issues is urgently required, and, given that forty years of propaganda has made the debate on these issues quasi-taboo, *catastrophisme éclairé* may be the only way to ignite such a conversation<sup>3</sup>.

### The SDS nexus

#### (1) Fraternity as linchpin

Tackling this extraordinarily complex nexus of issues through all its facets, and taking into account all the implications of trade-offs among those three dimensions, is all but impossible in a short paper. Consequently, I have chosen to focus on an approach that puts front and center the notion of *fraternity* as a linchpin in this nexus of issues. Therefore, my argument has a Henri Bergson flavour. For him, fraternity is the oil that makes the gears of equality and liberty mesh as smoothly as possible. Without a sense of fraternity (trust in and affection for our co-citizens), liberty tends to become a toxic absolute that can lead to radical inequalities, and equality can become a justification for severe limitations of freedom<sup>4</sup>.

Despite the angelic pronouncements of a variety of academics and ideologues, fraternity is eroded by diversity, and policies like multiculturalism, that purport to strengthen in a propulsive way the boundaries between persons and among groups, can only have a negative impact on solidarity, and, *ceteris paribus*, tend to increase security risks. It is not sufficient to fire ideological salvos against such propositions. One must unearth and develop an appreciation of the mechanisms through which such impacts are generated and widely spread.

Obviously, one cannot probe this nexus of issues totally in the abstract. In discussions of the relationships between diversity and fraternity, much remains contingent on the nature of the context. However, *practical reason* would suggest that there are limits to diversity – limits beyond which the cost/benefit ratio (whatever the method of calculation and the range of costs and benefits considered) tips over, and fraternity gets significantly eroded<sup>5</sup>. So, unless one can demonstrate that auxiliary arrangements are in place (more serious selection, better integration services, etc.) that can and will contain such risks, the *precautionary principle* would suggest that to proceed blindly beyond such tipping points where costs become greater than benefits, and to ignore the potential malefits that may develop from diversity, is irresponsible<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *Petite métaphysique des tsunamis*. Paris : Seuil 2005.

<sup>4</sup> This is a point raised by Raymond D. Boisvert, "Diversity as Fraternity Lite" *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 19 (2) 2005, 120-128; Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1955, 300.

<sup>5</sup> Gilles Paquet, Paul Reid, "Are There Limits to Diversity?" [www.optimumonline](http://www.optimumonline.com) 33(1) 2004, 13-19.

<sup>6</sup> François Ewald et al. *Le principe de précaution*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 2001.

(2) Diversity<sup>7</sup>

The word *diversity* is opaque and ideologically loaded. It has been used as a convenient label to connote very different realities and to underpin quite different action programs.

First, diversity has been used as a picturesque word to describe the outcome of the great shuffle of population worldwide that has led to much more commingling of different cultural groups in many regions of the world as a result of the reduction of transportation costs, and the lowering of territorial borders.

Second, it has also been used to connote the objective pursued by some countries (either wittingly or unwittingly) to increase such inter-cultural migrations in order either to recalibrate the age distribution in an ageing country, or to get access to a higher level of creativity and innovation through the greater social learning likely to ensue when different cultures and frames of reference are cross-pollinating.

Thirdly, the word has also been used to identify clinically the plight of countries torn apart or perceived as losing their soul as a result either of an unwelcome co-habitation of deeply different and hostile groups within the same territory, or of an unbridled invasion of external groups getting established as isolated communities in the host society, and generating fractiousness and factions. In such cases, it is asserted that, far from leading to more creativity and innovation, diversity is more likely to generate social enclaves, ensuing social friction and higher costs of transaction.

Whatever the sense of the word, diversity is not an absolute social good. It may be a source of social energy, but also a source of dissipation of social energy. The interaction with evolving contextual factors has made diversity more than a matter of nominal recognition, respect, and tolerance of otherness. When converted into a policy, it has often translated into a tool to generate balkanization and group entitlements. As a result, diversity has sometimes become associated with the erosion of certain basic principles which the host society holds dear.

But the trade-offs diversity imposes on a society are not easily discussed. Indeed, the very notion of “governance of diversity” (i.e., the intentional use of instruments to optimize diversity and to ensure that dangerous thresholds are not crossed) is challenged in many circles as politically incorrect and ethically wrong.

This is a remarkably obtuse point of view that defines diversity not as a matter of choice, but as a matter of fate. Refusing to govern the diversity interface has come to be blessed with the name of virtue in such circles, while any effort at attempting to manage the diversity of a society has been scorned as a misguided effort to limit it, and therefore chastised as a sign of latent fascism.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the diversity phenomenon, see Gilles Paquet, *Deep Cultural Diversity: A Governance Challenge*. Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 2008.

It is my view that the governance of diversity is a central challenge facing pluralistic societies, and that no responsible society would agree to be shaped by faceless external forces.

The question is — how do we do this job?

### (3) Solidarity

As Raymond D. Boisvert puts it, “the triumvirate diversity, tolerance, multiculturalism, comes up short ... when looked at from the perspective of fraternity”<sup>8</sup>. Being solicitous of diversity risks generating silo-societies; tolerance emphasizes the negative leave-them-alone kind of virtue; and multiculturalism further works at maintaining and enhancing cultural differences (as a matter of policy). All this translates into enlarging intercultural gaps, and generating relatively more isolated communities. This does not encourage genuine affiliation and active dialogue, and, without such features, the sufficient conditions for fraternity to materialize cannot be expected.

One of the consequences of declaring diversity a primary good has been that at times it has been pursued as such<sup>9</sup>, to the detriment of other objectives, like freedom, efficiency, equality, and the like. Probably the most sensitive trade-off for those who claim to be ‘progressive’ is the one between diversity and solidarity. Since progressives are clearly of the opinion that both these goals are absolutely desirable, they would face a dilemma if it were to be discovered that the multicultural approach to diversity, for example, generates lower levels of social cohesion and solidarity, and might thereby undermine the egalitarianism-driven welfare state.

The question was raised explicitly by Brian Barry<sup>10</sup>, and his book has generated a heated debate. The main points in contention were aptly synthesized by David Goodhart<sup>11</sup> in response to the more specific question “is Britain becoming too diverse to sustain the mutual obligations that underpin a good society and a generous welfare state?”. This issue has since received a fair amount of attention both nationally and internationally, and a synthesis of recent findings emerging from the work done by a consortium of Canadian researchers has been recently prepared by Keith Banting<sup>12</sup>. The nuanced Banting summary directly tackled the two central questions: are there deep tensions at work between heterogeneity and redistribution, and between recognition and redistribution?

The results pertaining to the first question are that “there is no evidence ... that countries with large immigrant populations have greater difficulty in sustaining and enhancing their historic welfare commitments. But large increases in the foreign-born population do seem to matter” (p:7).

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<sup>8</sup> Raymond D. Boisvert, op.cit. 2005, 120.

<sup>9</sup> The rest of this section draws freely from Gilles Paquet, *Deep Cultural Diversity ...* 78ff.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2001.

<sup>11</sup> David Goodhart, “Too Diverse?” *Prospect*, February 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Keith G. Banting “Canada as Counter Narrative” [www.optimumonline.ca](http://www.optimumonline.ca) 37 (3) 2007.

As for the second and much more difficult question (as to whether explicit recognition policies like official multiculturalism tend to weaken redistribution) there seems to be no support for it as a bald claim, but Banting admits that “there are more localized circumstances where particular forms of recognition erode particular forms of redistribution” (p. 10).

Interest in the issue reached a climax in 2007 with the publication of Robert Putnam’s *E Pluribus Unum*<sup>13</sup>. This paper, based on a study of over 30,000 people and over 40 communities, comes to the clear conclusion that, after standardizing for all sorts of extraneous factors, more diversity means lower social capital; and that diversity, at least in the short run, seems to entail less social cohesion – less volunteer work, less charity, less involvement, less belief that the citizen can make a difference.

Given the time lag that might be involved in the generation and disappearance of such tensions, the empirical work on these difficult questions leaves these questions unresolved in any definitive way for the long run. But it is quite difficult to believe — given the extraordinary resistance to any symbolic recognition (like distinct society) and the general apprehension generated by the slogan “different but equal” — that an increase in symbolic recognition and therefore in separateness does not reduce solidarity.

Indeed, much anecdotal evidence would appear to reveal that the sharper and the more publicly celebrated the symbolic recognition of separateness (as in the case of French Canadians and the Aborigines), the more the sense of belonging and trust is eroded<sup>14</sup>. One can choose to ascribe such antagonism to history or to other “institutional and policy contexts” (whatever this may mean), but it is simplistic to discard separateness as a root cause. And it is clear that if recognition and separateness are clearly encouraged by a multicultural policy, it can only generate a weakening of the social fabric over the long haul. How can the determination to remain apart generate anything different, whatever the multiple regressions suggest?

The worst aspect of the formalization and judicialization of these differences that the multiculturalism policy encourages (and the parallel insistence that there is no such thing as Canadian culture, or at best that it is “thin”) is that it fosters a certain civic malaise as these phenomena shape a certain way for minorities and immigrant groups to think about themselves, and leads them to emphasize their difference, to play the “humiliation card”, and to demand more equalization initiatives.

Indeed, one of the dirty little secrets nobody wishes to face is that the virtuous circle of more solidarity generating more redistribution generating more solidarity may have been broken by way of the significant increases in diversity that strained the absorptive

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<sup>13</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30 (2), 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Keith G. Banting et al. (eds) *The Art of the State. Volume 3, Belonging?*. Montreal: IRPP, 2007, Conclusion; see also Bonnie H. Erickson’s “Ties that bind and ties that divide” in the same volume 601-609. .

capacity of Canadian society. Any heightened recognition of separateness cannot but generate less solidarity (however much time it may take to be revealed in multiple regressions), and this can only translate into less willingness to indulge in egalitarian inter-cultural redistribution.

The debates around the trade-off between diversity/multiculturalism and solidarity have been haunted by the spectre of egalitarianism. Since egalitarianism remains a canonical reference in progressive circles, and this reference is non-negotiable, no trade-off is possible with the other absolute — identity and recognition of separateness. One is therefore forced to have to postulate that not only is there no need for any trade-off between these absolutes, but that they necessarily go hand in hand. Indeed, the conclusion of the IRPP 2007 volume ends up with a re-affirmation that the search for equality is the road to intercultural peace and prosperity<sup>15</sup>.

This calls for a re-reading of de Tocqueville, whose sociology of equality<sup>16</sup> holds quite a different message. Recognition, bridging, and redistribution may reduce the differences, but the smaller the differences the higher the tension. What has to be debunked is the idea of the sacred character of egalitarianism, and its replacement by a weaker and softer notion likely to lend itself to trade-offs. Equability may be a more useful reference.

This word — “equability” — is a term that Merriam-Webster defines as “lack of noticeable, unpleasant, or extreme variation or inequality”. The term poses a reference point in finding the right balance in the practical search for openness, inclusiveness, and high-performance. Equability would appear to capture well the sort of balancing act required. Yet this is a word that is not in good currency in Canada, where terms like “entitlements”, and “egalitarianism” — words that are much more legalistic and speak of non-negotiability — are the sort of reference points most often quoted.

The use of equability would shift the doctrinaire position of the progressive from an either-or to a more-or-less framework.

Instead of staunchly denying any possibility of trade-off between equality and diversity, the word equability would foster a discussion in which both terms are open to some accommodation. This would pose the challenge of defining how much egalitarianism needs to be abandoned in order to accommodate a requisite but not absolute degree of separateness and recognition. Equability would raise the possibility of acceptable inequalities. On the other side, the notion of recognition would also have to give and become less of an absolute.

Consequently, it may not be possible to proceed further without some relativization of what multiculturalism has tended to absolutize.

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<sup>15</sup> This is argued despite the fact that interregional and inter-groups laundering of money and other redistribution schemes have ceased for quite a long time to be able to claim that they are at the source of national solidarity (if they ever were), except in the sermons of the progressives for whom it is an article of faith.

<sup>16</sup> Gilles Paquet, *Deep Cultural Diversity...* ch. 2.

#### (4) Security

Security – the other word in this triad – is a weasel word. It connotes a wide variety of phenomena: ranging from physical safety from violence as the result of a general agreement on rules of behaviour in a particular society, to a psychological sense that one is protected from hostile occurrences that may threaten the full use of agency. In general, it refers to the degree of protection (real or assumed) against danger, damage, etc., and the adjective ‘secure’ is usually attached either to an environment that is deemed non-threatening or providing a zone of protection, or to the state of mind of individuals or groups that have developed a sense (real or assumed) that they are thereby liberated from threats that would prevent them from making the highest and best use of all their assets (physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, etc.). The sense of security is associated in good part with the sentiment of being protected from a hostile environment by a sort of we-community, or latent reciprocity, that serves as a shield or an insurance against threats or at least against the malefits attached to such threats.

Because of the *mélange* of objective and subjective characteristics of security, it is not easy to get agreement on indices that would measure security in a manner that would gain a consensus on their usefulness and reliability. The issue is thorny because there are, at times, important gaps between official measures (that sound reassuring about criminality, for instance) and the state of mind of a population that is exposed daily to violence in the street. Moreover, the meaning of the word is affected considerably depending on what terrains are felt in need of security (border, infrastructure, public health, criminal activities, etc.) and whose security one is concerned with (the state, society, humans, etc.).

Obviously, there is no way to insulate one completely from the vagaries of the environment (natural disasters, economic instability, terrorism, etc.), but solidarity provides protective devices enabling an individual to better weather the storm with the help of one’s co-citizens as a result of some sort of guarantee or insurance. To the extent that any expression of kinship or sense of belonging (we-feeling) is eroded, solidarity is bound to be eroded, and the willingness to provide common protection against the bad circumstances is also eroded in one’s environment.

This has been observed and commented on as the European Union expanded: the growing diversity made it more difficult to develop a perception of commonality, and solidarity has become more elusive<sup>17</sup>. Consequently, mutual support (in the sense of contingent assistance, provision of social goods, and sharing of the financial burden to ensure less insecurity for other members of the “community”) has diminished.

Therefore, it is not surprising that massive and indiscriminate immigration might be generating some erosion of solidarity, and of a sense of security, through its generating a significant increase in diversity that might affect the sense of kinship or commonality.

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<sup>17</sup> Ines Hartwig, Phedon Nicolaides, “Elusive Solidarity in an Enlarged European Union” *Eipascope*, 2003 (3) 19-25.

But even if there is no reason to believe that the existing arrangements for dealing with immigration and refugees (arrived at by happenstance) are either optimal or even adequate, in a modern democratic society like Canada, it has become a dogma in Canadian progressive circles to say that massive and indiscriminate immigration does not reduce solidarity, and therefore does not increase security risks<sup>18</sup>.

(5) Intellectual complacency and sophistry

As Jeffrey Reitz suggests, complacency is not what might be expected from policy analysis. So the prevailing view that the existing arrangements about immigration and refugees are optimal, and that the burden of the proof is squarely and entirely on the shoulders of those who are not satisfied with the status quo, make it eminently easy to automatically dismiss in a facile way the complaints of those who testify that the current flawed arrangements have led them to experience “diffuse anxiety”<sup>19</sup>. But this is hardly satisfactory. Indeed, the view that, until the requisite regression analyses have proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the existing regime and policies are destructive, they should continue to be regarded as optimal cannot be regarded as a prudent way to deal with policies. Yet this has been the canonical position adopted by the “*politiciens frileux*” and the so-called progressive intelligentsia and their advocacy friends.

Canadian politicians, mesmerized by the need to attract the votes of the 20% of Canada’s population that is foreign-born, have been immensely reluctant to allow immigration and refugee policy reforms to become ballot questions. It has been much easier for politicians of all stripes to suppress the debates by branding anyone suggesting that the existing policy may be flawed and should be reformed as a nativist, a bigot, and a racist, without bothering to listen to the arguments. As a result, there has been no national debate on these questions because of a conspiracy of silence among politicians.

This shameful silence has been supported by the epistemological coup perpetrated by progressive academics who have blessed that failure to initiate a national conversation on these issues as virtuous by declaring that there was and is a national consensus on immigration, and that therefore these debates are superfluous. Yet there is a substantial amount of evidence that suggests that the Canadian immigration system is not working well<sup>20</sup>: (1) The number of immigrants in Canada every year has increased systematically without any regard to the employment and economic conditions in Canada; (2) Most of the quarter of a million who immigrate to Canada every year are never interviewed by a visa officer to determine if they are well-suited to integrate into the Canadian society and economy; indeed only some 17% of immigrants admitted each year are fully assessed on the basis of their employment and language skills; (3) Canada’s acceptance rate for

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<sup>18</sup> This is a dogma that serene experts condemn (e.g. see Jeffrey G. Reitz, “Getting Past Yes or No” *Literary Review of Canada* July-August 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Phil Ryan, *Multicultiphobia*. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Don Drummond, Francis Fong, “An economics perspective on Canadian immigration” *Policy Options* 31 (7) 2010, 28-34.

refugee claimants is three times the average of other countries, and Canada often accepts as refugees those who would not be considered genuine refugees by other countries – revealing therefore a laxity that requires some scrutiny. These naked facts point to an immigration and refugee system that may require a revision in depth, and they go a long way toward explaining why, with each new cohort of immigrants over the last 30 years, the level of relative earnings of newcomers falls increasingly away from those levels achieved by those born in Canada<sup>21</sup>.

Growing concern about increasing ghettoization, dual loyalties, cultural relativism, explicit expression of disdain by newcomers for the cultural majority, radicalization in Canada of immigrants from other countries, etc., are too readily discarded as anecdotal evidence. Meanwhile, the weakest of arguments supporting those for whom Canada is doing quite well in the integration of ethnic minorities, and their positive claim that a significant increase in immigration would have no negative impacts (it is all ascribable to “institutional and policy contexts”) are receiving the most uncritical acclaim for the most Panglossian reasons<sup>22</sup>.

### **Citizenship and the SDS nexus**

Even though immigration has been an important feature of Canadian life over the last century and more, it would be difficult to find a thread through the different Canadian immigration policies that have evolved over time, except perhaps for a concern about *absorptive capacity*. This was the case at least until the early 1990s, when Canada appeared to have abandoned any concern about absorptive capacity, and failed to cut back on immigration flows, despite major labour market woes at the time. Moreover, there seems to have been an important *insouciance* about the careful selection of immigrants in the recent past, even though this careful screening may have been a major source of earlier successes.

Fundamentally, until the issues that led to the creation of the Bouchard-Taylor commission, it had become acceptable to avoid any serious discussion about the need for newcomers to adapt to the Canadian way of life, despite a Dominion Institute survey, conducted by the Innovative Research Group, which suggested that, in 2005, 70% of Canadians indicated that it should be the priority of newcomers<sup>23</sup>.

Immigrants to a country (unless they plan to stay only temporarily) are asking the privilege of becoming a sort of kin as citizen (i.e., as co-producers of governance in a

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<sup>21</sup> Centre for Immigration Policy Reform ([www.immigrationreform.ca](http://www.immigrationreform.ca)); Drummond, Fong, op.cit. 30.

<sup>22</sup> A critical analysis of the increasingly nuanced discourse of Will Kymlicka (the federal choirmaster on the magnificence of multiculturalism) or a less uncritical examination of the weak foundations of some of Irene Bloemraad’s argument about the meaning of citizenship acquisition, or about the real meaning of some of the intricate regression results presented by Christel Kesler and Irene Bloemraad (“Does Immigration Erode Social Capital? Canadian Journal of Political Science, 43 (2) 2010, 319-347) and from which it is inferred skillfully that “institutional and policy contexts” are to be indicted for any maleficits and not significant immigration and increase in diversity – would be quite revealing.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in the Policy Research Initiative of their program on Cultural Diversity (Multicultural Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Harnessing Opportunities and Managing Pressures).

pluralist polity). Consequently, the sort of immigration and refugee regimes that can be regarded as satisfactory will have to be gauged on the basis of the notion of citizenship that is agreed to, and absorptive capacity (and the speed at which the absorption can proceed) gauged accordingly.

(1) Too elusive a notion of citizenship

Some see citizenship as sheer legal status, others as participation in governance, and still others as belonging. These ideal-types may be represented as the apexes of a triangle<sup>24</sup>.

At one apex of this citizenship triangle is the liberal idea of citizenship rooted in the notion of legal status — a ‘thin’ notion that is in good currency in the Anglo-Saxon world. Here, citizenship inheres in individuals, who are seen as the bearers of rights, and it is couched in a language of entitlements. Citizens do not have to do anything, or at least not much, to become or remain citizens. It minimizes participation requirements and expects little sense of identification. This liberal notion emphasizes the centrality of negative freedom (i.e., protection against interference with individual choices by the State).

At a second apex is the civic republican view of citizenship. It is largely couched in terms of duties, and defines citizenship as a notion with a high valence given to practice and participation: the citizen is a producer of governance. It calls on individuals to become members of the community, to participate in the culture and governance of the community. This concept emphasizes positive freedom (i.e., the person’s being able to do this or that, and the duty to help others in that respect).

A third apex emphasizes neither status nor participation, but the process of belonging. In this zone of the triangle, what is of central importance is the recognition, respect, and esteem given to the individual-and-his-circumstances.

Citizenship may cover a whole range of possible meanings, with all sorts of mixed cases giving different weights to each of these dimensions. Moreover, instead of being absorbed into a simple, formal, and legal linkage between the citizen and the state, the citizenship relationships have evolved into a looser but more encompassing covenant, covering a web of relationships among members of the community.

Finally, the proliferation of multiple citizenships has heightened the complexity of these arrangements for persons or organizations purporting to hold membership in many clubs at the same time. This has led both to ugly abuses of power (when a group of citizens has been branded by a paranoid State as likely to collaborate with the enemy, as happened to Japanese Canadians during World War II), but also to individuals and organizations using their “citizenship of convenience” to take opportunistic advantage of all possible entitlements in the *pays d’adoption*, while shirking all the responsibilities of citizenship in a naively tolerant host country. Many have complained that Canadian citizenship has been somewhat trivialized, both by systematically diluting the conditions imposed on its

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<sup>24</sup> The following paragraphs draw freely from Gilles Paquet, *Deep Cultural Diversity...* ch. 5

acquisition and maintenance, and by allowing multiple citizenships to further dilute any sense that there must be loyalty and responsibilities attached to the citizen's burden of office<sup>25</sup>.

Canadians as individuals are inclined to be both much more demanding in their definition of citizenship than Canadian officials, and much more willing than bureaucrats and politicians to craft *de facto workable terms of integration*. They define it not only in terms of a bundle of rights and liberties, but also in terms of responsibilities, attitudes and identities.

But public officials boast of having no concern about defining any such set of expectations in the terms of integration for newcomers, on the grounds that one cannot ask anything from newcomers that one does not require explicitly from the native born. Making any additional demands from newcomers is automatically branded as intolerance, chauvinism, or racism. As a matter of consequence, officials are not much concerned either with ensuring that newcomers are provided with the requisite help to make them capable of participating fully in the host society. They even seem to feel that they have no legitimate basis for refusing to modify Canadian ways, in response to requests by newcomers claiming that such ways constitute a discriminatory stance against them. These bizarre views are held despite Canadians having clearly stated their disagreement with such views, and Canadians' strong beliefs that newcomers should qualify before being admitted to the host society and that it is a priority commitment expected from newcomers that they will adapt to the Canadian ways.

This bizarre official position is quite treacherous, since the required terms of integration are in fact bound to emerge both from a continuous renegotiation as the expectations and environments change, and from an explicit statement of rights and responsibilities of newcomers, but also as a statement of the limits to the tolerance of the host society. This is the fundamental challenge that Canadian leaders appear to refuse to confront.

The current official Canadian refusal to engage in an exercise of definition of the terms of integration may be rationalized from an electoral standpoint, but it is an irresponsible stance that is not inconsequential for Canadian society. The lack of a clear notion of the responsibilities attached to citizenship can only lead to undue fuzziness in the definition of the limits of tolerance that can be expected legitimately by newcomers. More than any other factor, the very reluctance of the Canadian government to foster debates leading to a clear articulation of guideposts is probably the main source of concern for those who favour tighter controls on immigration to Canada, because the current regimes appear to foster an "anything goes" attitude.

The danger of this unwillingness to establish clear conditions of admission and terms of integration is that it has eroded trust. Significant groups have found it opportune to take advantage of Canadian benefits, without accepting any of the obligations that constitute the flip side of this moral contract of citizenship. In the longer run, this sort of abuse can

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Collacott, "Has it become too easy to acquire Canadian citizenship?" *Canadian Diversity*, 6(4), 2008, 141-144.

only lead to action generating greater exclusion than would otherwise be desirable. Both old and new Canadians are consequently bound to be worse off.

This Canadian ‘strategy’ – entailing a betrayal by Canadian officials of their burden of office to define meaningful selection, admission and terms of integration for newcomers – can only be interpreted as a clear abandonment or delegation of the task of developing the workable terms of integration to civil society and to local neighbourhood groups. Raymond Breton has underlined the consequences of this “social” approach to a fundamental aspect in the definition of citizenship<sup>26</sup>. Such an approach may not be viable for much longer.

For the Canadian citizen (as opposed to Canadian officials) citizenship is a privilege, and newcomers must qualify for it; moreover, a citizen is granted rights so as to enable him/her to meet his/her responsibilities as a person with the burden of office as citizen. This burden of office entails active participation in the polity in transforming disruptive differences into liveable relations. The citizen is therefore expected to be actively involved in a pluralistic society in transforming a community of fate into a repertoire of established ways of dealing with conflicts, both actual and potential, and in arriving at a shared definition of acceptable results<sup>27</sup>.

## (2) A blind faith in massive and indiscriminate immigration

The new philosophy of immigration seemingly adopted by Canadian officials since the 1990s would appear to be based on a “faith in the long-term benefits of high levels of immigration”, although no evidence or meaningful argument has ever been put forward to justify this faith<sup>28</sup>. This has led in the recent past to per capita rates of immigration that have either been the highest or among the highest in the world, with seemingly no reference at all to any guideposts inspired by a reference to the absorptive capacity of the Canadian socio-economy, and to the notion of citizenship and the citizen’s burden of office.

This quantitative act of faith has had an impact on the quality of the newcomers. Dealing with such a volume of immigrants has created problems for the screening of immigrants. The Auditor General’s office has explicitly questioned the officials’ capacity to maintain the quality of decisions and the integrity of the program, and has noted serious deficiencies in the way admissibility criteria related to health, criminality and security have been applied throughout the 1990s. The AG has also complained about the limited progress made despite her repeated warnings<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Raymond Breton, “Societal Governance and Increasing Ethnic Diversity” [www.optimumonline.ca](http://www.optimumonline.ca) 33 (1) 2003, 9-12.

<sup>27</sup> Herman R. van Gunsteren, *A Theory of Citizenship*. Boulder: Westview Press 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Green, David Green, *The Economic Goals of Canada’s Immigration Policy: Past & Present*. Burnaby: Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis, 1996, 40, 41.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Collacott, *Canada’s Immigration Policy: The Need for Major Reform*. Vancouver: The Fraser Institute, 2003, 26-33.

Although there has been much evidence (1) that these problems have generated concern – since more recent waves of immigrants are doing relatively less well than preceding ones, becoming more ghettoized, and integrating less well; and (2) that negative attitudes and decreased support for current immigration levels have been recorded both from Canadian-born and the immigrants themselves, little has been done to address these problems, and, even as a topic of discussion, these issues have remained somewhat taboo.

Even very modest and commonsensical modifications to the immigration policy, like insisting that immigrants have a basic working knowledge of English or French before they arrive in Canada (something recommended by the Immigration Legislative Review and supported by 75% of the Canadian born and 73% of immigrants themselves according to a Vancouver poll) were successfully opposed by opposition parties, immigration activists and immigrant service organizations<sup>30</sup>.

Indeed, even the well documented evidence of the inadequate Canadian response to terrorism in controlling the entry and departure of non-Canadians into and from Canada's territory has failed to generate any meaningful reaction<sup>31</sup>.

Things are no better on the refugee policy front. Although, inexplicably, there is a very high percentage of refugee claimants getting accepted by Canada (three times the average rate of other refugee receiving countries), little has been done (1) to scrutinize the reasons why it is the case, (2) whether it constitutes a flow of refugees that is desirable given the state of the socio-economy, and (3) whether the nature of this flow of refugees emerging from almost anywhere (as opposed to originating from UN sponsored refugee camps) is indeed the best way to exercise our humanitarian concerns.

Indeed, even modest efforts by the government to deal more effectively with the refugee smugglers have met with denunciations by opposition parties, and elicited threats of Charter-based court challenges from the Canadian Council for Refugees (an advocacy group) of the perceived attempt to stream refugees (regular and irregular) to better deal with legitimate and illegitimate refugees<sup>32</sup>. A confederacy of interest groups (political and not political) appears to be determined (with much self-righteous fanfare) to prevent any attempts at correcting a system that all in private would concede is significantly flawed.

### (3) The costs of inaction

One of the most important impediments to a meaningful discussion of the existing immigration and refugee regimes is the lack of any reasonably accurate measures of the various costs to Canadians of the present regimes. These costs have been significant in the last two decades, and they are likely to grow as more and more newcomers meet more

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Collacott, *op.cit.* 2003, 37ff

<sup>31</sup> Martin Collacott, *Canada's Inadequate Response to Terrorism: The Need for Policy Reform*. Vancouver The Fraser Institute 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Douglas Quand & Norma Greenaway, "Tories target refugee smugglers" *The Ottawa Citizen* 21/10/2010, A4.

difficult circumstances, and consequently downward trends in immigrant employment and earnings<sup>33</sup>.

These public costs are all the more invidious to the extent that they are indirectly borne not by the federal government that makes the major decisions about immigration flows, but by provincial and municipal governments saddled with the welfare costs of this increasingly impoverished group.

Some of the costs are direct cash costs of handling the cases, costs associated with the benefits granted to immigrants and refugees, and with the privileges granted to immigrants and refugees (e.g., when, under the family re-unification programs, they can bring to Canada a number of relatives that may have no meaningful qualifications, nor any of the usually required linguistic capabilities). Over and beyond those direct cash costs of these aspects of the cases, one must also factor in the indirect spill-over social costs associated to inadequate screening of newcomers, which leads to additional costs associated with increased health, criminality, or terrorism problems.

Certain costs associated with certain segments of the administrative processes in those regimes are more easily calculable, and have been approximated. It has been stated by government officials that false refugee claimants cost Canadian taxpayers an average of \$50,000. But most of the costs referred to in the last paragraph have not been gauged even approximately. As a result, one has to rely on broad guesstimates that are not at all re-assuring. Herbert Grubel has estimated that the benefits received by newcomers who have come to Canada in the last two decades (another segment of the total costs) are in the order of tens of billions of dollars per year in excess of what they pay in taxes<sup>34</sup>.

Most important, but also most difficult to measure, are the broad indirect social costs associated with the impact of significant increases in immigration and diversity on social capital, solidarity, and security. Robert Putnam's 2007 study clearly stated that a significant increase in immigration tends to reduce solidarity and social capital. Putnam's work has been attacked by the advocates of diversity and of massive and indiscriminate immigration as absolute goods. Much sophistry has been used in questioning Putnam's results and in trying to ascribe whatever malefit is observed to other "mediating" sources<sup>35</sup>. Yet, despite much massaging of data, the incontrovertible results of operating flawed regimes have a price tag that may remain not totally clear, but is significant.

The same may be said about the costs of inaction in the face of the blossoming of processes of radicalization of immigrant groups *in situ* by networks and organizations operating in Canada with financial support from foreign countries. The funding of many

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<sup>33</sup> Jeffrey G. Reitz, *Immigrant Success in the Knowledge Economy*. University of Toronto 2000.

<sup>34</sup> Herbert Grubel, *Immigration and the Welfare State in Canada: Growing Conflicts, Constructive Solutions*. Public Policy Sources No. 84. Vancouver: The Fraser Institute 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Barbara Arneil, *Diverse Communities: The Problem with Social Capital*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006.

mosques by Saudi Arabia (and the radicalization of Canadian residents there) may be regarded as a well-documented case in point<sup>36</sup>.

The external costs of such activities and the impact they are bound to have on solidarity and security risks in Canada are important: as Charles Taylor would put it, “solidarity is essential to democratic societies; otherwise they fall apart”<sup>37</sup>.

Many of these malefits borne by a society with a less intense solidarity are undoubtedly at the basis of the “diffuse anxiety” that permeates the Canadian population, but that is so readily dismissed by the supporters of diversity and massive and indiscriminate immigration. The fact that these costs have been generally occluded, and that any general discussion of these issues has been actively discouraged (when not openly condemned as politically incorrect), cannot hide the fact that all those “costs” – however often they are denied – are real.

(4) Some uncontroversial process repairs

While some absolutists will be satisfied by nothing short of open unconstrained entry into Canada from anywhere in the world, it is clear that such a position is clearly untenable. But there is, obviously, an array of modifications to the Canadian immigration and refugee regimes that can be regarded as somewhat uncontroversial. A standard might be new regimes that are as inclusive and open as possible, and that would meet reasonable norms of openness and inclusiveness, but without Canada’s losing control on its own population and territory.

i. Quantitatively, immigration levels should be modulated according to the economic and employment circumstances of the country: more immigrants in good times and fewer in bad times.

ii. Qualitatively, it should be clear that there are two streams entering the country: the immigrants, selected on the basis of characteristics that prepare them to fit well within the country (language and other skills); and then those who are admitted to the country on humanitarian and compassionate grounds (refugee, family class). Both streams should be modulated according to the absorptive capacity of the country, and as a result of an appreciation of the economic and employment circumstances but also of the likelihood of immigrants fitting well with Canadian society.

iii. In the selection of standard immigrants, it should be clear that not requiring a modicum of linguistic and work skills is bound to condemn the newcomers to serious difficulties in integrating within the Canadian workforce. Therefore, evaluation of the suitability of the regular immigrants should not be allowed to proceed without a face-to-face meeting with an immigration officer charged with assessing the candidates on the basis of these skills, and their capacity to adapt to Canadian ways.

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<sup>36</sup> Radicalization, Violence and the Power of Networks. Global Futures Forum 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Taylor, “All for one and one for all” The Globe & Mail, 30 September 2010.

iv. In matters of family class immigration, it should be established that reunification would apply only to immediate family, i.e., spouses and unmarried, dependent minor children. If an immigrant wishes to sponsor his or her parents, they should be able to do so only under rules along the lines of those in place in Australia, i.e., at least half of one's siblings must already be in the country (in order to accord with the principle of family reunification rather than dispersion). Sponsors should also assume full responsibility for the parents, including support for their medical expenses.

v. With reference to refugees, a limit on the number of refugees to be admitted each year should be established, and priority should be given to the refugees living in United Nations-sponsored camps or at least selected overseas. A rigorous process of evaluation should allow Canada to evaluate health and security risks before anyone is admitted. People who arrive from safe third countries should not be allowed to make refugee claims. The process should ensure a final decision on claims within weeks, not years.

vi. Acquisition and maintenance of citizenship should be tightened (1) by increasing the waiting period from 3 to 5 years for a permanent resident before applying for citizenship (as was formerly the case); (2) by ending the practice of granting automatic citizenship to a child born in Canada of non-Canadian parents, in line with the policies in Australia, New Zealand, Britain and other European countries; (3) by denying access to social services, such as the public health care system, – to Canadian citizens who have chosen to live abroad for extended periods unless they have continuously contributed through their income taxes to the financing of these programs; (4) by establishing clearly that holders of Canadian passports who have chosen to live abroad for very extended periods cannot expect to receive anything but consular assistance in times of difficulty<sup>38</sup>.

### **The moral contracts with newcomers**

Other modifications to the immigration and refugee regimes are likely to be more controversial because they would be based on a refurbished and strengthened notion of citizenship. As was noted earlier, a meaningful notion of citizenship is based on an understanding that an immigrant is not simply entering a bingo hall when he or she comes to Canada, but is joining our society as a matter of privilege.

This means that the newcomer should be fully informed about the expectations that the host country clearly asserts *as the quid pro quo* for all the support services and entitlements that will be afforded to the newcomer<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, it should be made as clear as possible, in an adequate briefing, exactly what services newcomers will be

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<sup>38</sup> Situations of the sort have led to the development of unreasonable expectations on the part of such 'casual Canadians'. See Andrew Cohen, *The Unfinished Canadian*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 2007, ch.5.

<sup>39</sup> A number of Western countries have been developing extensive briefing programs to give to prospective newcomers a very accurate picture of what to expect should they decide to make the move. The purpose of such briefings is explicitly to discourage those persons and their families who are likely to have serious problems in adapting to the cultural norms and practices of the receiving country (Martin Collacott, "Has it become too easy to acquire Canadian Citizenship?" op.cit.)

afforded to help them meet the terms of adjustment and integration to the culture and norms of the host country.

(1) The evolving common public culture of the host society as ground zero

In a pluralist society, there are no shared values<sup>40</sup>. Through their life experience, individuals and groups develop different values and identities<sup>41</sup>. But they have to negotiate some agreement about a variety of norms and principles to coordinate their activities in daily life. Gary Caldwell has used the notion of *common public culture* to encompass the concrete expression of the ensemble of rules of the game on which such an agreement has been reached – (1) from codes and conventions of politeness and *savoir-vivre*, (2) to the rules of the game proper (freedoms, rights, responsibilities, virtues), (3) to basic principles like the rule of law or the separation of Church and State, and (4) to essential beliefs like freedom of choice and equality of men and women<sup>42</sup>. As Caldwell suggests, the first two layers are *grosso modo* the *rules of the social game*; the last two are the *foundations* on which these are built.

This baroque ensemble is obviously not static. Over time, it evolves as a result of experience and social learning. The death penalty used to be part of the rules of the game in Canada, but it has been determined over the last while that it was no longer a valid rule. Generally speaking, one can best describe this ensemble as a corpus of *conventions* that are more or less deeply grounded, and therefore can be regarded as more or less deeply ingrained in the way of life of a society. One would expect all these conventions to evolve over time as a result of discussion within the society, but also of the growing awareness and understanding of the benefits and costs of all sorts attached to them.

Clearly, the top two layers of this ensemble may be regarded as more easily negotiable (though it may not be easy) than the foundational ones. Such negotiation may be more or less difficult, depending on the extent to which these different conventions have come to be regarded as essential to the identity of the group, or somewhat peripheral, or simply as a matter of temporary fashion.

For instance, in the process of transmission of culture, some aspects of the mores may evolve quickly, like the wearing of some types of hat or gloves, or the use of *vous* and *tu* in different circumstances. Other aspects, having to do with codes of honour, may on the other hand truly require moral revolutions to be modified, and may not only take more time, but be very difficult to carry out, even when the costs of maintaining the old ways may be regarded as enormously high<sup>43</sup>.

When newcomers request the privilege of joining the host society, they have to accept the idea that they are entering a complex and delicate set of arrangements that cannot be

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<sup>40</sup> Joseph Heath, *The Myth of Shared Values in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development 2003.

<sup>41</sup> George A. Akerlof, Rachel E. Kranton, *Identity Economics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Gary Caldwell, *La culture publique commune*. Québec : Editions Nota Bene 2001, ch. 3

<sup>43</sup> K. Anthony Appiah, *The Honor Code*. New York: W.W. Norton 2010.

disturbed without consequences. Some of these arrangements may ostensibly be visible, but may not constitute something that is particularly cherished. Cohabitation of different ways of life may then be regarded as quite acceptable, and even, in a relatively short time, become part of the refurbished common public culture. Others may be cherished for reasons that are not clear to the newcomer, and quickly become a source of tension when they are challenged. Indeed, some may be icons representing fundamental aspects of a way of life that the host society regards as quintessential and not negotiable.

It would be great if all this baroque ensemble of conventions was clearly and unequivocally defined, and if the degree of non-negotiability of each one was well known to all. It would also be great if the newcomer were to join the host society unburdened by any cultural baggage of his/her own. Such is not the world we live in. There is much that is latent and unspoken in the common public culture of the host society, and any newcomer carries with him/her many conventions originating from another society where the common public culture may be quite different.

The only reasonable basis for viable accommodation between these different common public cultures is for the newcomer to ascertain as fully as possible the nature of the common public culture of the host society, and to determine if he/she can accommodate to it. If, for instance, a newcomer were to join a host society while firmly believing and stating clearly that he/she considers (1) the members of the host society as “dogs” unworthy of any consideration, and (2) that their usages and mores are globally depraved and to be opposed *in toto*, one might reasonably suggest that this is a bad fit, and that the newcomer should reconsider joining this sort of club.

However, it should be clear from our earlier discussion that not all aspects of the common public culture of the host society are equally non-negotiable. The reality of reasonable accommodation is the determination of the extent to which the newcomer will have to adapt to the different sets of arrangements in good currency in the host society: either totally, in good part, or not necessarily.

But it should be clear also that, if the newcomer wants the privilege of joining the host society, he/she has to agree to shoulder most of the accommodation to the common public culture in the host society. This is the view held by 70% of Canadians, but not the view arrived at by the officialdom of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission in Quebec. Rather, the commission has suggested that the bulk of the accommodation has to be shouldered by the host society. This explains why the Commission report was summarily shelved: it was in too sharp contradiction with the views of the citizenry.

Consequently, one needs to start with the common public culture of the host society as ground zero, as the starting point for negotiation between the host society with the newcomers.

(2) Negotiating moral contracts<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> The following paragraphs borrow freely from Gilles Paquet, *Deep Cultural Diversity... Ch. 7*

Native-born citizens have legitimate expectations that some of the trust and social capital that have been built over generations will not and should not be dissipated lightly; newcomers have legitimate expectations that there will be some accommodation to take into account some of their needs and preferences, since they intend to make a value-adding contribution to their host society.

As the assumptions on which the host community is based are challenged (sometimes seemingly without a sense of any limit to such external displacement of the internal principles and institutions) there may be a reflex closing of the mind to the demands of the new groups; and as the demands of the new citizens are denied, a growing sense of alienation and exclusion in the newcomer is bound to ensue. As a result, the two groups may become mutually antagonistic, and collaboration more and more difficult. We know that the economic, social, and political costs of such antagonism are large.

Dealing with this conundrum requires that the problem of moral distrust be engaged directly. Most of the time, this is not resolvable through the orthopaedic interventions of the law, but requires negotiated soft arrangements like conventions and moral contracts that establish the basis for the definition of mutual expectations.

For many reasons, the challenge of negotiating such moral contracts is daunting.

First, such negotiation entails a clarification of expectations on both sides that may not at first appear as unduly constraining (one can imagine a wide range of moral contracts, more or less binding on both established and new citizens), but, to the extent that culture means anything, it means a capacity to establish differences, to accomplish some integration of these differences, and to succeed in determining some hierarchy in this more or less diversified and more or less integrated complex of principles<sup>45</sup>. This is quite an arduous task.

Second, the very informality of these “contractual” arrangements leaves them open not only to genuine misinterpretation, but also to sabotage by those intent on using this very vagueness to pursue other political or electoral objectives. Indeed, deception is the Achilles’ heel of moral contracts. The systematic misuse of the language of the Charter and of human rights legislation to camouflage one’s own preferences or desires into entitlements imperatives has provided much evidence of the usage of deception in aid of ideological pursuits.

Moral contracts are not only meant to establish guidelines on what the newcomers may expect, but also to set limits to the level of diversity accommodation that a society regards as legitimate. This latter level of tolerance will often depend on certain basic tenets of the host society that it feels incapable of abandoning for fear that it would not be capable of withstanding the anomy-generating pressures emerging from a no-limit diversity stance that would not protect such tenets. Both constraints and limits would be determined through some *principle of precedence*<sup>46</sup>: some constraints being regarded as

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<sup>45</sup> Bruno Lussato, *Le défi culturel*. Paris : Nathan 1989.

<sup>46</sup> David Braybrooke, *Meeting Needs*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1987.

taking precedence over others in the definition of viable arrangements. Deep diversity cannot be managed otherwise.

(3) The less easily negotiable items

Nowhere is there a clear mapping of the terrain where accommodation can or cannot be negotiated. Caldwell has prudently surveyed the terrain, but has been reluctant to determine whether crucial tangible borders might exist between what is negotiable and not negotiable. Yet this is an issue that requires immediate attention because, even if in the longer run it is not known what will become non-negotiable, it is not possible to engage newcomers in a meaningful conversation unless one is able at the very least to identify a plausible list of some of the items that would appear, in the short run, to be non-negotiable.

A complete review of the whole array of conventions (covering the whole range from etiquette to freedoms, rights, responsibilities, to principles and beliefs) might be both tedious and fraught with immense difficulties at least until one has clarified some foundational basic principles and essential beliefs that would appear to underpin the common public culture.

As a preliminary step, I have taken the bold move of producing a minimal list (drawing much from the lists proposed by Caldwell) under each of the two more fundamental rubrics he has used, in order to present a plausible set of principles or beliefs about which a broad consensus might be generated.

**Basic principles**

Representative democracy  
 Separation of Church from State  
 Rule of law  
 Responsibility for one's actions  
 Duty to help those in need

**Essential beliefs**

Freedom of choice  
 Equality of opportunity  
 Equality of men and women  
 Collaboration  
 Fraternity

These lists are not presented as self-evident, but as samples of principles and beliefs that might be of help in determining what is and is not negotiable in the moral contracts with newcomers. It should be clear that, in practice, one may fail to live up to these principles and beliefs, but they would appear to correspond to a plausible set that might approximate some sort of hard core of the common public culture that may be defensible.

This sample of principles and beliefs is itself open to debate and should be debated in due course. But, for the purposes of discussion, let us assume that until these sets have been disputed and dislodged from such a position (that they may represent the defensible outcome of a long common experience that has led a community to develop such an anchor), they may be regarded as temporary reference points in determining what is and is not acceptable in the community.

In such a case, any person violently opposed to these principles and beliefs might find it difficult to live within the community. And to the extent that such principles and beliefs are regarded by the community as foundational, accommodation becomes problematic. Consequently, if newcomers were to feel incapable of accepting these principles and beliefs, and were to declare that they would not only challenge them but forcefully fight them, it should be clear that it would not be unreasonable to ask whether one wishes to grant to such individuals the privilege of joining this community.

Again, in a pluralist society, agreement on any such set of beliefs and principles does not mean that all persons need to have the same values. Some may regard these principles and beliefs as echoing their most profound values indeed; but others may simply accept them as convenient contraptions. But one might reasonably expect that they would be the outcome of some legitimate discussion, à la Habermas<sup>47</sup>.

(4) Some more controversial modifications to our immigration and refugee regimes

Once it has been established that there exists a core common public culture that is intensely valued by the host society, it becomes fair to ask to what extent it is desirable and legitimate for the host society to ensure itself that this common public culture will not be undermined by inviting into the host society elements determined to overthrow it.

For instance, how wise is it for a liberal society to accept in its midst illiberal elements determined to undermine and overthrow its liberal regime? How wise is it for a society that is based on the separation of Church and State and has a strong belief in fraternity to allow indiscriminate massive immigration by elements that believe that the State should be subservient to the Church, and that citizens who are not members of their faith are and should be treated as “dogs”?

It would appear reasonable that in screening newcomers, it should be established beyond reasonable doubt that they accept incontrovertibly and honestly the obligation to live by the core principles and beliefs in good currency in the host society, such as those sketched above, but also by the rules and codes that would appear to follow from them.

One may argue that anyone who is not willing to accept the full equality of men and women, to accept the need to have a command of the *lingua franca*, to be a fully responsible producer of governance, and to display the willingness to operate *à visage découvert* with other fraternal citizens, might reasonably be regarded as not fit to be granted the privilege to join the host society. *A fortiori*, anyone involved in actively undermining these principles and beliefs, despite having been clearly informed that these are non-negotiable conditions of admission, would be regarded as *persona non grata*.

There is no reason why there should not be an on-going conversation about the evolution of rules and conventions to accommodate newcomers within the agreed set of core principles and beliefs, and even an on-going conversation about the evolving construction

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<sup>47</sup> James G. Finlayson, Habermas: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005.

of the set of core principles and beliefs to be regarded as in good currency in a given society. Indeed, this is what is ideally happening in the forum in liberal societies. But as the newcomers join the host society, accepting the core principles and beliefs in vogue is a *sine qua non*, and this would of necessity constrain the democratic negotiation of the moral contracts defining the mutual expectations of the host society and of the newcomers in the short run.

Moreover these imperatives can be expected to shape the immigration and refugees regimes accordingly.

Much of this negotiation work must be done to ensure that the foundations of fraternity and solidarity in the host society are not eroded, and it would explicitly factor solidarity and security as elements that need to be taken into account in deciding how many and whom to admit to the host society.

### **Conclusion**

However commonsensical these comments may sound, they do not fit well with the official views underpinning the current immigration and refugee regimes. The dogma of mass and indiscriminate immigration prevails, and the importance of protecting the common public culture is being ignored. Indeed, the progressive ideology has attacked any attempt at regulating immigration flows, or at screening newcomers in the name of protecting the common public culture, as nativist and racist.

Moreover, once such massive and indiscriminate immigration has generated predictable pressures on the common public culture and demands for accommodation, the same progressive ideologues have argued that the host society should indeed fully accommodate these demands, whatever the effects on the common public culture.

When signs of strain have shown that solidarity may be under stress and that security risks may be on the increase, these signs have been ignored or declared ill-founded alarmism.

The very discourse that has attempted to draw attention to the legitimacy of protecting the common public culture (even on the road to a more cosmopolitan common public culture of the future<sup>48</sup>) has been denounced by multiculturalist ideologues who wrongly and dangerously presume that because individuals must be regarded as equal, cultures must also be regarded as equal. Indeed, this fantasy of declaring all cultures equal has amounted to granting the same status to the common public culture of societies that have evolved dramatically over the last centuries and to those whose development, for all sorts of reasons, has been arrested centuries ago. In that world of moral relativism, every move that can be interpreted as increasing diversity is automatically celebrated, even when it might entail an evolved common public culture getting contaminated by regressive mores.

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<sup>48</sup> This is the position defended in Gilles Paquet, *Deep Cultural Diversity...*

Thus, hyper-tolerance (mostly for fear of the police of political correctness) has been elevated to the status of virtue, when in fact it reveals a grievous incapacity to critically appraise meaningful differences: a new version of voluntary servitude to moral relativism. This has become such an incredible force in the last decades that nothing less than a Cassandra-like denunciation has any chance to attract the necessary attention and to result in any significant change.

As a result of this lack of critical thinking and moral fortitude in the face of the common public culture being undermined, one can be reasonably concerned about the possibility of a quiet cultural capitulation of societies with undefended common public cultures.

GP/