Leviathan Transformed

Seven National States in the New Century

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The Contemporary Canadian State: Redefining a Social and Political Union

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Canada that has just entered the third millennium does not much resemble Canada of the year 1867. The composition of its population has changed radically. Its economy and culture have been profoundly transformed as well. One may say that this is in no way exceptional, because other countries analyzed in this book have undergone similar changes in many aspects. What is surely different in the case of Canada is that even the values upon which the country was founded have changed. Peace, order, and good government as presented in The British North America Act were the values of the Dominion of Canada, founded in 1867 as a union of four British colonies, and as a pact between two founding peoples. One hundred and thirty-four years later the new fundamental values of the Canadian society are: equality of persons, equality of the provinces, multiculturalism, two official languages, respect for individual rights, welfare and social security.

Canada's performance in respect to these values makes it a model for other states. Canada has been recently classified by UNESCO as one of the world leaders in social development. However, the state was close to collapse in November 1995 when 49.6 percent of Quebecois voted for the mandate to negotiate the sovereignty of Quebec. That was a sign of an evident crisis. From 1992 to 1997, the official opposition in the Canadian Parliament was a party advocating the sovereignty of Quebec. The parliamentary elections of 1996 and 2000

were strongly influenced by regional differences. As a result of those elections the Reform Party (another regional party) became the official opposition in the Canadian Parliament in 1996, and is now known as The Canadian Alliance. This was a signal that the West was going to play an increasingly important role in Canadian affairs. It announced as well the emergence of a new, quite radical neo-conservative political discourse close to the rhetoric of the U.S. Republican Party. The Canadian Alliance broke away from the previous Canadian conservative right. The party proposed a radical reduction of the role of the state in the economy, a radical re-orientation of Canadian welfare policy, a re-examination of official bilingualism, and a "tough course" in relations with Quebec. The emergence of the Canadian Alliance and the continued strength of the sovereignty movement in Quebec show a profound social cleavage and make it evident that Canada is undergoing a transformation. Finally, the division of power between the federal and the provincial governments in such areas as health care, education and social services is being renegotiated. The federal state is no longer disposed to limit its activities to the distribution of money to the provinces so that they can define and run their own social programs. It wants to play an active role in defining national standards and to be seen as important where social programs are concerned, since welfare state institutions have become the key elements in the identification of Canadians with their state. For reasons of national unity, the federal government would like to become more visible.

The Canadian state is undergoing a profound change. Historical relations between its two founding linguistic communities – French and English Canadians – are being redefined as well as their relations with the aboriginal population. Long-repressed aboriginal issues are coming to the surface. Meanwhile, Canada is searching for a new balance of power between the provinces and the federal state. The need for a new division of power results from the growing demographic and political importance of the western provinces as well as from the need to redefine the welfare state in the context of globalisation. Canada is becoming more integrated within North America with the signing of the free trade agreements with the United States and Mexico and as a result of globalisation. The Canadian economy is more narrowly integrated with that of the continent as a whole. The same thing may happen to Canadian culture, and that would put Canadian identity into question.

The text which follows is divided into three parts. In the first part we shall consider the macrosociological context in which the new values emerge. We shall pay particular attention to Canada's new self-

representation, which is marked by a breach with its past. We will then analyze Canadian performance with respect to the great national goals common to all democratic polities identified in the conceptual framework adopted for this book: union, justice, tranquility, defense, welfare, and liberty. We shall finish by examining a number of challenges that seem to be particularly acute in Canada.

2 NEW MACROSOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Canada forms a new collectivity, in the sense given to that term by Gérard Bouchard (2000), that is a collectivity "born of migratory international or intercontinental transfers from the old populated zones (mainly European), to the new territories (more precisely territories considered and treated as new), so that the immigrants could have the feeling of a certain zero point of social life" (Bouchard, 1998: 220–1). International immigration and internal migrations have played a central role in the transformation of contemporary Canada. Six tendencies seem to characterise the evolution of the structure of Canada: increase in immigration, linguistic polarisation, recognition of the aboriginal peoples, changes in the regional balance, increased continentalism and the emergence of a post-industrial economy. We shall discuss each of these briefly.

Increase in Immigration

The population of Canada is now over thirty million, half as large as the populations of France or Great Britain. If its growth continues at the present rate, the Canadian population will, in the course of the 21st century, equal the number of inhabitants of these two countries, which have in a way given birth to it. Who would have predicted that one day the population of Canada might attain the same size as that of France or Britain?

Canada is a country of immigration, so considerable during the past fifty years that it has profoundly transformed the country. The average number of immigrants has fluctuated since 1951, depending on economic conditions. In 1990 the Federal Government took steps to increase the annual number of immigrants. Since 1990, an average of 230,000 have been admitted annually. Between 1951 and 2000, about eight million people settled in Canada, which is roughly equivalent to the population of Switzerland or Austria. Taking into account its size, Canada is, of all the industrialised countries, the one most open to immigration and in the 1990s it showed the highest rate of population growth, higher than that of the United States or Australia, two other

countries that currently encourage mass immigration (Statistics Canada 1993).

The percentage of Canadians born abroad was about 15 percent according to the census of 1996. In most of the big Canadian cities, especially in Ontario and in the West, the foreign-born proportion is even larger (more than 20 percent in Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria, and about 18 percent in Edmonton and Winnipeg, not to mention Montreal and Toronto, which have become multicultural cities).

In the 19th century and for most of the 20th, most immigrants were of European origin. Before the 1960s, they came predominantly from the United Kingdom, western and southern Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Greece), and from Eastern Europe. Canada modified its immigration policy in 1962, making the country more accessible to people of non-European origin. In the 1980s, about half of the immigrants came from Europe, and the other half from Third World countries (Africa, South America, the Caribbean) or from Asia. This diversification was heightened in the 1990s when the number of immigrants from Asia exceeded that from Europe. Thus, contemporary immigration is culturally and ethnically heterogeneous. The Canadian population census now allows respondents to identify themselves as belonging to a visible minority. The data reveal that 11 percent of the population place themselves in that category and that they are heavily concentrated in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

The Relative Regression of the Francophone Population and Linguistic Polarization

Originally occupied by the aboriginal people, Canada was colonised and developed by French-speaking and English-speaking peoples. Their populations were nearly equal in number after the Rebellion of 1837. Afterwards, immigration sustained the demographic growth of English Canada, while the lesser growth of French Canada depended almost exclusively on the high fertility rate of French Canadian families. The number of francophones in relation to the whole of the Canadian population has been in regression since the second half of the nineteenth century. People who declare French as their mother tongue now represent a little less than one fourth of the Canadian population, compared to 29 percent in 1951. The proportion declaring English as their mother tongue was 60 percent in 1996. Because of immigration, the proportion of people who declare a language other than French or English as their mother tongue has increased as well (passing from 12 percent in 1951 to 16 percent in 1996). Finally, many of the aboriginal peoples who constituted 3.4 percent of the

Canadian population in 1996 chose one of fifty-two Amerindian languages as their mother tongue, although most of them speak English as a first or second language, or French in several communities in Quebec.

Quebec is predominantly francophone while the rest of Canada is predominantly anglophone. In Canada minus Quebec, English is the mother tongue of 77 percent of the population. New Brunswick is an exceptional case: the francophone Acadian community is concentrated there and although slightly declining, still comprises a third of the population of the province. In other Canadian provinces the position of francophones is weak and in decline. Francophones in Ontario, the largest Canadian province, are only 5 percent of the population, even though their number has been growing. The provinces situated on both sides of the Rocky Mountains – Alberta and British Columbia – have the smallest francophone minorities – less than 4 percent of their respective populations.

While the number of francophones has diminished outside Quebec, the number of anglophones has been diminishing in Quebec, falling from 14 percent in 1951 to 9 percent in 1996, as many anglophones moved to Ontario or the western provinces in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, as previously noted, the number of people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English has been increasing. A similar trend is observed in Ontario, where the population declaring English as a mother tongue has diminished, while those whose mother tongue is other than English or French have increased. The relative importance of anglophones in Quebec and francophones in Ontario is affected by the large number of immigrants whose mother tongue is other than English or French. Despite important migrations to other provinces, the number of anglophones in Quebec rose from 558,000 in 1951 to 659,210 in 1996 – and even to 817,540, if one considers the language spoken at home as indicative. Similarly, in Ontario the number of francophones increased from 342,000 in 1951 to 500,000 in 1996.

The French-speaking population of Canada has more than doubled since 1951, but its relative size has diminished because the English-speaking population has grown much faster. The francophones are heavily concentrated in Quebec. Only 8 percent live in Ontario, 4 percent in New Brunswick – the homeland of the Acadians – and 4 percent in the rest of the country. These data illustrate in another way the linguistic polarisation of Canada: the tendency of francophones to concentrate in Quebec is more and more marked, while their importance elsewhere in Canada is in decline. This condition threatens the survival of several French-speaking communities.

The language used at home is the most significant indicator of linguistic affiliation, and an important indicator of identity. The majority of Quebeckers (84 percent) speak French at home. In New Brunswick, 30 percent of the population do so, but a very slight proportion in the rest of Canada, where many other languages are spoken, reflecting the multicultural character of the country. It is important to note that the number of citizens who use English at home in Québec is higher than the number of those who declare it as a mother tongue. This proves the dynamism of the English language in Quebec, despite concerns to the contrary.

The language transfers to English have permitted the anglophone minority in Quebec to increase in number, in contrast to what happened to francophones elsewhere in Canada. We have analysed the extent of language transfers by comparing the mother tongue still understood and the language normally spoken at home, which enabled us to construct an indicator of linguistic continuity. The anglophone community in Quebec has grown thanks to the integration of immigrants who adopted English as the language of communication at home, according to data from the 1996 census. But forty percent of all such changes were made to French and there is a generation effect: young immigrants choose French more frequently because of language laws. Outside Quebec in 1996 there were a million people whose mother tongue was French, but only 650, 000 of them reported using French at home, which suggests that their assimilation is under way.

The immigrants and their descendants outside Quebec nearly all choose English as their language of daily use. Very few opt for French in an environment largely dominated by English. This contributes even more to the increase of linguistic polarisation observed with respect to the mother tongue. In addition, a considerable number of francophones assimilate with the majority while living outside Quebec, to such an extent that half of the francophones outside Quebec and Acadia are assimilated within two generations.

There are two contradictory interpretations of the situation of the two official languages. The first one, expressed by Heritage Canada and the federal Commission of Official Languages, points to the growth of the absolute number of francophones outside Quebec as well as to the progress of French as the second language in Canada and of English as the second language in Quebec. These two trends are presented as indicators of progress in bilingualism. Studies by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage minimise the considerable rate of assimilation of francophones outside Quebec. The author of one such work writes, "Finally, it is good to remember that most of these

so called assimilated francophones can still speak French" (O'Keefe 1998: 37). It may be so, but if French is replaced by English at home, that seems to be a prelude to assimilation or anglicisation in the course of the next generation.

The second perspective emphasizes the regression of the proportion of francophones in Canada. Three factors may explain it: assimilation, the declining birth rate of francophones, but above all the massive immigration from abroad, which has lowered the proportion of francophones in relation to anglophones since the majority of immigrants integrate with the English-speaking majority.

The rate of bilingualism has considerably risen in Canada since the 1960s. Today, 17 percent of the Canadian population is bilingual. This rate for the whole of Canada is biased by the high frequency of bilingualism in Quebec (38 percent), which is the only really bilingual province. Outside Quebec the rate of bilingualism is only 10 percent. Bilingualism is increasing among young people, which suggests that it may expand in the future. French immersion courses at primary and secondary levels of education are more and more popular outside Quebec. The number of students enrolled rose from 20,000 in 1976 to 250,000 in 1990.

The Federal state has played a key role in the expansion of bilingualism. It has instituted bilingualism in the government agencies of the capital (Ottawa) although the project has not been entirely successful. All high officials working in Ottawa are required to become bilingual by the year 2002. The everyday work of the government in the Canadian capital is certainly done mainly in English, but all the documents are translated into French. The Federal state gives financial support to French-speaking communities outside Quebec, and its policy promotes bilingualism in the public institutions under its jurisdiction, such as ministries and crown corporations in Ottawa. The Federal state would like to play a more important role on the symbolic level as well, stressing the bilingual character of the country, even though bilingualism is in fact very limited in Canada except for Ottawa, Quebec and some regions near Quebec.

The government of Quebec is also active in the sphere of language but it follows a different model. It wants to assure a dominant position for French in Quebec, as is the case for English elsewhere in Canada. The francophone Quebeckers try to encourage immigrants to integrate with the francophone majority. Anglophone Canadians follow a parallel model of integrating immigrants with the anglophone majority. Immigrants of diverse origins now represent about 10 percent of the Quebec population. Historically, the majority of newcomers who settled in Quebec chose English. However, things began to change in

the 1970s after the adoption of language laws and policies aimed at the integration of immigrants to the francophone majority. Since the effects of language laws will be visible only over a long period of time, it is too early to assess their real impact, but early indicators, such as language used in higher education and knowledge of French, suggest that the integration of immigrants in Quebec is done more and more in French, even though English is still attractive.

Will the integration of immigrants to the francophone majority of Quebec (which is presently underway) transform Quebec society, just as their integration with the anglophone majority outside Quebec has transformed Canadian society? There is no doubt about that, even if this transformation is just beginning. Possibly, a new francophone identity, different from the Quebec national identity of the 1970s and 1980s, is about to emerge, as illustrated by the vigorous debate on how to define identity in Québec.

Recognition of the Aboriginal Peoples

In Canada there are 608 groups of Amerindians who speak 52 different languages. The aboriginal population was 642,414 in 1998, which represents 2 percent of the whole Canadian population. The percentages are higher in the Prairies, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. In two western provinces – Manitoba and Saskatchewan – Amerindians represent about 10 percent of the population. The majority live on reserves (58 percent). The aboriginal population is relatively young (half of them are under 25 years old), but their living conditions are much worse than those of the rest of the Canadian population. In spite of diverse living conditions and heterogeneous interests, Amerindians share a common identity as the first settlers on Canadian soil.

Changes in the Regional Balance

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Canada is the country with the largest land area in the world, but its population is very unequally distributed. Three out of four Canadians live less than 150 kilometers from the U.S. border, most of them in urban areas; 62 percent live in Ontario and Quebec, the two provinces which have always been the most important for demographic, political and economic reasons. However, this situation is now changing. The population of the two provinces on either side of the Rocky Mountains (Alberta and British Columbia) are increasing rapidly and their importance in Canada almost equals the importance of Quebec. The relative demographic

importance of Quebec and of the Atlantic Provinces has been in decline since the 1950s, while Ontario's has grown. While the demographic growth of the western provinces partially re-establishes the balance between the regions, the high rate of demographic growth in Ontario threatens a new desequilibrium. Thirty-eight percent of the Canadian population now live in this province, compared with 33 percent in 1951. The importance of Ontario in the Canadian Federation is enormous; it produced 41 percent of GDP and elected 60 percent of all liberal members of parliament – 101 out of 103 ridings in Ontario – in the 2000 election. The position of Quebec and of the Atlantic region in the Canadian economy is declining, while that of British Columbia is rapidly increasing.

The problem of regional inequalities has always been very important in Canada. The country has developed from east to west although natural conditions favored exchanges with the south. The Federal state has played a key role in the development of the country. Construction of railways, and of a seaway on the St Lawrence River, tariff and energy policies, regional development programs, as well as the distribution of tax burdens between rich and poor provinces are examples of central government intervention. In spite of such interventions, the Atlantic provinces seem somewhat peripheral, while the west of the country is developing rapidly. Frustrated under the Trudeau government, those provinces are now trying to play a more significant role in Canadian affairs, in contrast to Quebec which is seeking greater autonomy. The representation of political parties in the federal parliament reflects this regional diversity.

Increased Continentalism

The Canadian state in the twentieth century has been more interventionist than its U.S. counterpart. It intervened in the economic sphere, in order to develop a national economy by tariff barriers that long disfavored the west of the country. It also intervened to redistribute resources among the provinces, a policy non-existent in the United States. The energy policy adopted by the Federal Government after the oil crisis of 1973 was another example of interventionism , as was the creation of the welfare state. Over a short period of time, social welfare programs have come to be regarded by Canadians as a characteristic differentiating them from Americans (Clement 1996). The Canadian state was also interventionist in the cultural sphere, founding such national institutions as public radio and television, the National Film Board and the Council of Arts of Canada, institutions that have influenced the way English Canadians perceive themselves.

Since the Quiet Revolution those institutions have also contributed to the self-representation of Quebecois culture.

The Canadian economy is increasingly integrated with that of the rest of the North American continent. The free trade agreement, first with the United States, then with Mexico (NAFTA), and the new context of globalisation have further opened up the economy. In the 1960s and 1970s continentalism was regarded as the very negation of Canadian identity. It is no longer so, even though the Canadian left still believes that Canadians lost a part of their identity when they opened the borders. State capitalism is in decline and large public pan-Canadian enterprises, which had played a major role in the formation of the country, have been privatised (Air Canada, Canadair, Canadian National, Petro-Canada, etc.). Do all these changes indicate that Canada and the United States are drawing closer together and that as a result specific characteristics at the heart of the Canadian identity are being abandoned? Only the future will tell, but the tendency is certainly there. It must be noted however, that in spite of being well integrated within the continental economy, Canada is also showing considerable cultural dynamism – in literature, popular music, film and painting – which allows it to affirm its own identity, different from that of the United States (Conlogue, 1996; Smith 1997). If this analysis is correct, economic and cultural trends are developing along divergent lines. The Canadian State would like to promote a policy of cultural exceptionalism in negotiations concerning international economic exchange, in line with the *politique d'exception culturelle* promoted by France. It is in open conflict with the U.S.A. at this point, since it aims at protecting the Canadian cultural industry from American competition.

End of Lumberjacks and Emergence of a New Post-Industrial Economy

For a long time the development of Canada was based on the exploitation of its rich natural resources and thus the primary and secondary sectors used to constitute the basis of the Canadian economy. World War II accelerated industrial development and modernisation. A long period of prosperity followed, known as the Thirty Glorious Years (1945–75). In a few decades, Canada passed from an economy based on the exploitation of natural resources to a post-industrial type, dominated by services and new technologies, though natural resources remain important. Agriculture is no longer primarily a way of life and farms have become real commercial enterprises, in most cases highly mechanized and capitalized, while the extraction and processing of

natural resources such as wood and metals have adopted new technologies and are now extensively computerised. High-technology industries have multiplied, especially in the sectors of energy (hydro-electricity), transport (planes, trains, cars, leisure vehicles), communication (telephones, cable television, radio, television), electronics, and biotechnology, to cite just a few examples. More than two thirds of all jobs are now in the service sector.

The economy based on the exploitation of natural resources nourished the social and cultural imagination of Canadians and largely influenced the way they were perceived by outsiders. Whether he spoke English or French, the Canadian was most often represented in literature or painting as a frontiersman or a lumberjack (Atwood 1971). This representation, like that of the Canadian economy, must now be corrected.

Having discussed the context of the activity of the Canadian state, we shall briefly examine its performance with respect to six main goals of the contemporary state, common in fact to all developed countries. These are national unity, justice, tranquility, defense, welfare and liberty.

3 UNION

We shall pay particular attention to the evaluation of Canadian unity, which is presently undergoing a profound transformation (Létourneau 1996). Three aspects will be considered. First, we shall stress the emergence of a new Canadian identity from the multiplicity of structural changes described above. The second aspect concerns the transformations of francophone identity, as well as conflicts between Quebec and the rest of Canada, and changes within that call for a revision of the terms of co-existence for two different national societies within one state. Finally, the Canadian Federation is confronted with the difficult question of redefining the status of its Amerindian peoples.

The new Canadian Identity

Canada is probably questioning its identity more than any other developed country. The structural changes mentioned above have stimulated the emergence of a new Canadian identity, based on values which are in clear contradiction with the traditional ones. In a book entitled The Continental Divide (1990), the American sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset suggests that the North American continent began to divide itself more than two hundred years ago into two

opposed entities: one of them made a revolution and the other a counter-revolution. At their origins, the first was liberal, egalitarian and rebellious, the second conservative, authoritarian and loyalist (see also Banting, Hoberg and Simeon 1997). While the frontier has been the most significant symbol in the American imagination, survival and heritage dominated the Canadian mental universe for about two centuries. Desmond Morton insists upon the "loser mentality" which has marked Canadian identity, "An important element of Canadian identity is the place given to losers, whether they be the defeated Loyalists from the American colonies or the inhabitants of New France conquered by England, the Irish immigrants fleeing the famine or recently arrived political refugees" (Morton 1994, B-1).

Evidently, it is no longer possible to sustain a collective self-image characterised by a "loser mentality." Canada is constructing a new identity. Today, John Diefenbaker's dream of *one* Canada has practically come true outside Quebec. We suggest that a new meaningful entity has been under construction in Canada, following the adoption of the Constitutional Law in 1982. This Law recognised on the juridical level the sociological transformations that had been underway since 1945 (Langlois 1999).

Multiculturalism has become one of the principal elements of Canadian identity (LaSelva 1996; Kymlicka 1995; Angus 1997). By adopting multiculturalism, Canada has chosen a policy adapted to its new structure but in Quebec that policy has been perceived as diminishing the importance of the Quebecois identity and as treating francophone Quebeckers as just another ethnic group. Elsewhere in Canada multiculturalism is considered to be an effective way to integrate newcomers and to distinguish Canada from the United States. This approach is different from those adopted by other countries of immigration. France has opted for a Jacobin model of integration, which eradicates differences and emphasises equality. The United States has privileged a liberal model of integrating individuals into the great American dream of a free society, regardless of origins, language or culture, a society where everyone is responsible for himself.

Multiculturalism is an essential element of the new official definition Canadians give themselves. Certain analysts have criticised the official policy of diversity as tending to isolate cultural communities by promoting only their differences (Bissoondath 1995). But such criticisms remain marginal, probably because that view is not shared by the immigrants themselves who eagerly integrate with the anglophone society and culture (outside Quebec), as shown by John Conway (1992), who goes on to assert that Canadian multiculturalism is a myth.

> Then there was the multiculturalism myth – that Canada was a mosaic of many cultures and national identities of which the Québécois were but one and English Canadians another. The effect of this was to deny the essential binational, bicultural reality of Canada while effectively masking the continuing hegemony of English Canada. Official multiculturalism ignored the sociological reality that immigrants have largely joined – and uniquely and often dramatically influenced – one or the other of the English-Canadian or Québécois nations through a sort of functional integration (while resisting assimilation). (Conway, 1992, 140)

An analysis by Bibby (1990) goes in the same direction. Even if public discourse on immigration is different in Canada than in the United States, the two countries resemble one another in practice; the so-called melting pot is at work in both and the challenges posed by a harmonious integration of immigrants of diverse origins are in fact the same. The great diversity of origins of Canadians living outside Quebec and their integration with the anglophone majority are probably the two most powerful factors which stimulated the formulation of a new self-definition now underway in Canada, and the abandonment of the binational model of the state, which was a francophone dream from the beginning of the century until the end of the 1960s (see Kymlicka 1995).

In 1982 Canada gave itself the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has taken on an enormous symbolic significance (Cairns 1992; Taylor 1992). Probably more then any other factor, its reference to the rights of the person has changed the political culture of the country and contributed to the construction of a new identity, at the heart of which lies the emphasis on individuals rather than collectivities. This is a major change. There are a number of clauses in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that are directed towards the promotion of collective rights, but in practice individual rights are central.

The third principal point is the equality of provinces, despite the evident disparities between Ontario (10 million inhabitants) and Prince Edward Island (135,000 inhabitants). The concept of provincial equality has supplanted that of equality between two founding peoples, professed since the beginning of the century by French-Canadian ideologists and politicians. From the birth of the Confederation in 1867 until the election of Trudeau in 1968, Canada was not defined in the same way by francophones and anglophones. The former considered Canada to be a binational country, and French Canada as a cultural and normative entity based in Quebec. In the 1950s and especially at the beginning of the 1960s Canadian federalism evolved to recognise to some extent the binational and dual character of the nation. The government

of Quebec obtained new powers and began to exercise new jurisdictions. The federal government transferred to Quebec the right to collect certain taxes. In just a few years the amount of tax paid by Quebeckers to their provincial government rose significantly and now exceeds the amount paid to the federal government. When it came to the introduction of a universal state-based pension system, the Quebec government created its own system – le Régime de rentes du Québec – while the rest of Canada adhered to the Canada Pension Plan. The government of Ontario led by Robarts played for a time in the 1970s with the idea of officially adopting the thesis of two nations, which would have given Quebec a special place within a redesigned confederation. During the electoral campaign of 1968 the Conservative Party of Canada led by Robert Stanfield, then the official opposition in Ottawa, adopted the thesis of two founding nations and promised to give it official recognition. The Liberal Party, which had just chosen Pierre Elliott Trudeau as its leader, was re-elected, and as a result the policy of Ottawa towards Quebec moved in another direction.

The strategy of national unity launched by Pierre Trudeau after his election in 1968 marked a halt in the recognition of national duality. Trudeau's strategy emphasised new principles, such as the equality of provinces, equality of all citizens and equality of francophones and anglophones as individuals. Trudeau's strategy sought to promote bilingualism in Canada and to impose bilingualism in federal public administration, rather than to consolidate the development of French language and culture in Quebec.

In a well-documented work, Kenneth McRoberts, maintains that the concept of Canada developed by Trudeau's government was misconceived. He rejects the argument that the recognition of Quebec in a multicultural Canada would have led to an intensified demand for the autonomy of Quebec within the federation. He maintains instead that such recognition would have checked the growing support for the sovereignty option. He argues that Quebecois nationalism was defeated in 1980 by Canadian nationalism: "this new Canadian nationalism was different from Quebec nationalism. Rather than an 'ethnic nationalism' it was a 'civic nationalism,' which rose above ethnicity, and other social divisions. None the less it was nationalism and, moreover, it was one in which the nation consists of individuals who first and foremost are Canadian. As such this Canadian nationalism directly contradicts the vision of a federal, dualist Canada with distinct societies and multiple identities which has been so important to generations of Quebec francophones" (McRoberts 1997, 172).

Several attempts to reform the Canadian Constitution had failed between 1968 and 1980. In 1980 the First Referendum on sover-

eignty-association took place in Quebec. The proposal was rejected (the sovereignists obtained 40 percent of the votes) and after that Ottawa unilaterally repatriated the Constitution from England without the consent of Quebec. What followed is well known – two other attempts to recognise the status of Quebec within the Canadian Federation failed as well (the Meech Lake Accord and the Charlottetown Accord) while the second Referendum almost gained a simple majority (49.4 percent of votes in favour of sovereignty). The constitutional impasse still persists (see Robertson, 1991).

In short, a new Canadian identity – an imagined community (Anderson 1983) – is presently being consolidated (Resnick 1995). While this new Canadian identity can be considered a successor to the English-Canadian, it represents a break with the country's history, especially with the French-Canadian dream formulated at the beginning of the century, the dream of a binational country based upon the recognition of two founding peoples. Latouche (1995), Laforest (1992, 1995) and other political analysts insist that the contract agreed to in 1867 – the Federal Union established by the British North America Act – was unilaterally broken when the Constitution was repatriated from London in 1982. As Latouche has put it: "It was decided that the country could no longer allow itself to exist without being a nation" (Latouche 1995, 81).

Not being of British stock, new immigrants who have settled in Canada could not define themselves as English-Canadians (Tully 1995). Instead, they have defined themselves simply as Canadians, and they have learned English to participate in the civic life of their new country. In 1998 the prime ministers of the three prairie provinces were all of non-British stock, from families relatively recently settled in Canada. Like an increasing number of their fellow citizens, they define themselves as Canadians. The same is true for Amerindians, who proudly declare their distinct cultural identity and seek to obtain more power to develop their communities, but without calling into question their identity as Canadians. In short, Canadians have developed a strong national sentiment that is expressed in their attachment to their *great northern country* (Angus 1997) and the symbols which represent it – the maple leaf, the beaver, the flag and the national anthem.

Transformations of Francophone Identities

In this new context traditional French-Canadian identity has been shattered (Harvey 1995, Dumont 1997; Stebbins 2000). Francophones outside Quebec have managed to reconcile their own identity with the Canadian one by defining themselves as bilingual Canadians and

not only as French-Canadians. The latter term is now disappearing and is being replaced by an explicit regional reference, such as Franco-Ontarians or Franco-Manitobans. The fact of defining themselves as bilingual emphasises that English and French are equally important as points of reference in their new identity (Langlois 1995). There seem to be three components of the new francophone identity outside Quebec – the fact of belonging to a specific region, the status of a minority and the fact of belonging to one of the two main linguistic groups. If this analysis is correct, it is possible to characterise francophone minorities outside Quebec as national minorities distinct from ethnic minorities formed by immigrants of diverse origins.

The unilateral repatriation of the Constitution in 1982 is perceived in Quebec as a breach of the federalist pact agreed on in 1867 and as breaking away with the historical Canada, a country defined by francophones as having a dual character. French-speaking citizens of Quebec – sovereignists but also some federalists – have developed a strong national sentiment of their own, a new Quebecois identity which is a national identity, open to integration of immigrants (Ignatieff 1993, 1995). This national sentiment, however, is not accepted in the new emerging Canada which is reluctant to acknowledge Quebec's special status in the Confederation, whether in the form of asymmetrical federalism, or by accepting Quebec's demands expressed in a variety of formulas: special status, distinct society, sovereignty-association (Conway 1992). The history of constitutional failures from the first constitutional conference in 1867 to the rejection of the Charlottetown Accord in the 1992 referendum suggests that this reluctance has become an obstacle impossible to overcome (R. Cook 1994; C. Cook 1994). It follows that the new Canadian identity and the Quebecois identity coexist and develop along parallel lines, but within different universes of reference, to use the concept proposed by Fernand Dumont (Bourque and Duchastel 1996; Fortin and Langlois 1998).

The Amerindian Question

The Amerindians of Canada are officially the wards of the federal state in accordance with the Indian Law. The Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs has a considerable annual budget, a part of which goes directly to Indian Councils which are responsible for the management of everyday affairs on the reserves. The Indians are listed in state registers according to the rule of blood – one must have at least one-fourth Indian ancestry to be classified as Indian.

The Constitutional Law of 1982 recognizes the old treaties signed with Amerindian nations, which gave them the right to territories as

well as the right to hunt and fish all year round or the official right to trade freely without regard to customs regulations.

The status of Indians as defined in Canadian law is no longer adapted to the law-governed society based on common citizenship. As wards of the state, the Amerindians living on the reserves are in practice unable to borrow money from banks to start their own businesses nor are they entitled to mortgage their property. On the other hand, they do not pay any income or sales tax if they live on a reserve. The reserves have become too small for their current populations and thus the possibilities for their economic development are limited. However, if their borders are extended, it would raise the question of joint management of these territories with non-Indian residents, since the traditional rules of Indian self-government will no longer be applicable. This may threaten Amerindian identity itself, protected until now by the system of reserves.

The Amerindian nations demand autonomy to manage their everyday affairs. They also claim the right to ensure their economic, social, and cultural development and extend their demands to establishing a new order of government which remains to be defined in each case, since the situations of particular Amerindian nations groups vary greatly. Authority must be delimited and the forms of government determined. Will non-Indians have the right to vote? How much autonomy? What new entities? The list of questions could easily be prolonged.

New problems are emerging. Amerindian villages in the far North are underdeveloped, especially in the north-west; some do not even have a basic municipal infrastructure. The increase in the number of educated Amerindians, the emergence of a political and business elite, but above all the high level of fertility will force the aboriginal, provincial and federal governments to negotiate new agreements in the coming years. The aboriginal communities presently face a demographic boom. For example, ten years from now the community of Crees in Quebec will have grown from 15,000 to 25,000 people. How will it be possible for young people to live and earn their living in villages of the Great North far away from the cities? The problems are even more challenging in certain provinces of the Canadian West where the aboriginal population is more numerous.

The search for solutions of the Amerindian question raises many practical problems and some basic questions as well. How is it possible to maintain and develop Amerindian identity based upon blood relations and at the same time affirm the existence of a law-governed state in which all citizens are equal without distinction of race, sex, language, or origin? Negotiations between Amerindian leaders and

superior levels of government are under way, but they proceed very slowly. There are considerable obstacles to overcome but the completion of a few new treaties and agreements – with the Crees of James Bay in Quebec in the 1970s and with the Niguas in British Columbia in 1998 – seems promising.

4 JUSTICE

The exercise of civil and criminal justice does not cause serious problems in Canada. Nevertheless, in this sphere as in any other, there are changes under way. Two major changes are the emergence of a new juridical culture emphasising personal rights and the new role of the Supreme Court. According to Judge Brian Dickson the passage of Canada from a parliamentary to a constitutional democracy, necessarily gave more power to judges.

New Role of Courts of Justice and Especially of the Supreme Court

The role of courts of justice and above all the role of the Supreme Court has changed profoundly since the beginning of the 1980s. With the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which has been an integral part of the Constitution since 1982, the courts of justice acquired a new function; they may declare whether the laws passed by the federal or provincial parliaments are in accordance with the Charter. By deciding whether laws are constitutional, the judges assume an important political role since they now solve problems which formerly belonged in the strictly political sphere.

Courts of justice are more and more expected to resolve conflicts between groups of citizens and the state. In the past such conflicts used to be resolved by negotiation or as a result of public protests. The examples are numerous. A divorced woman from Trois-Rivieres has managed, by a decision of the Supreme Court, to avoid the income tax imposed by the ministry on the child support paid by her ex-husband for their children, basing her claims on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Labor unions have successfully opposed several laws concerning work. Women in Ontario demanded and obtained the right to walk topless in municipal parks, thus invalidating municipal regulations. Amerindians have had their territorial claims confirmed by the courts. The Supreme Court decriminalized abortion. It has also established a body of rights for homosexuals (pensions, discrimination at work, etc.) and in 1998 overturned some clauses of an Alberta law on the grounds that it allowed for discrimination against homosexuals.

There is no constitutional court as such in Canada. This is a significant deficiency of the federal system which is susceptible to conflicts of jurisdiction between different levels of government since the Constitution inspired by the British tradition is not specific about the division of all powers. Which level of government will pass laws pertaining to telecommunications? This was difficult to foresee in 1867. But, as noted above, the Supreme Court does act as a constitutional court. In 1982 it declared as legitimate the unilateral repatriation by Ottawa of the Canadian Constitution from England despite the opposition of Quebec, since this decision was supported by the majority of the provinces. The Supreme Court has also judged unconstitutional certain clauses of the Law 101 concerning the official language of Quebec. Since the Canadian Constitution does not include any provision for the secession of a province, the Canadian government asked the Court for a ruling on the legality of a unilateral declaration of independence by Quebec. The 1998 ruling holds that Quebec cannot unilaterally declare its independence, but it allows for the secession of Quebec from Canada after gaining approval in a referendum (the referendum question must be clearly formulated) and obliges the federal government to negotiate with Quebec. This judgment is interpreted differently by the two levels of government, since the problem of Quebec's right to secede can not be confined within a strictly juridical framework.

The fact that the procedure for nominating judges to the Supreme Court has not been changed raises the question of their legitimacy. The Prime Minister has the exclusive personal privilege of naming Supreme Court judges, the only constraint being that they must be citizens of a given region. Quebec for instance has the right to be represented by three out of the nine judges because the legal system (the Napoleonic civil code) existing in Quebec is different from that of the rest of Canada (common law). Since there is no public examination of candidates, the nomination procedure has come under intense public criticism as anachronistic and undemocratic, considering the expanded role of the Court. After the last nomination of four judges to the Supreme Court, there was an outburst of protest and demands for a more transparent procedure.

The New Juridical Culture Centers on the Promotion of Individual Rights

There exists in Canada a real culture of equality among citizens, which was reinforced by the inclusion of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution. This Charter has radically modified the Canadian

political culture. Several authors have demonstrated that a constant reference to rights leads to the emergence of a culture of special rights that tends to replace the common public culture (Gagné 1992; Loney 1998; Mackey 1999).

We shall cite one example of the new problems raised by divergent assertions of rights. After the massacre of seventeen young women students of the Polytechnic School in Montreal in the 1990s, citizens' groups launched a campaign to restrict access to personal firearms and to oblige their owners to register them with the police. Such measures are widely accepted in the Atlantic provinces, Quebec (especially) and Ontario, but not in the Western provinces, where people regard gun control measures as infringements on their liberty, thus sharing an attitude popular in the U.S. The Canadian Alliance vigorously opposes this law and favors freedom of possession of firearms. This example, though limited in itself, illustrates the kind of disagreement that occurs within Canadian political culture between groups of people who claim incompatible rights as well as a characteristic division of opinion between the East and the West.

Traditionally, judges have always enjoyed high prestige, as demonstrated by surveys of occupational prestige. However, public opinion has become more critical of their work, as the social representation of crime has changed. Thus, women's groups demand more severe punishment for assault, rape and other crimes of which they are victims and the work of certain judges has been much criticized in recent years on the grounds that they were not sensitive enough to the gravity of the offenses.

Incarceration in Decline

The total rate of incarceration in Canada fluctuates around 100 prisoners per 100 000 residents and has risen only slightly since 1980. Penal sentences for less serious offences have tended to be less severe in recent years, in contrast to sentences for more serious crimes. Generally, offences are more severely punished in Canada than in European countries, but much less severely than in the United States, which has a very high rate of incarceration. The federal state favors more severe criminal laws. Quebec, which prefers resocialization, is opposed to that project.

5 TRANQUILITY

Canada is a relatively peaceful country. Crime exists there as everywhere else, but it does not seem to result in any serious deprivation of

tranquility for law-abiding citizens. The same is true of violent confrontations (dangerous street demonstrations, violent strikes, and acts of terrorism), which are few and far between. There were racial riots in Toronto in the 1980s and acts of senseless violence at the end of 1980s when the Montreal hockey team won the Stanley Cup, but these were isolated events.

Labor-Management Conflicts

A certain number of labor – management conflicts resulted in violence in the 1970s, especially in Quebec (strike of the Front Commun in public administration, strike of firemen in Montreal, plunder of a building-site in James Bay, etc.). Such conflicts have since become less frequent and they are no longer characterized by violence.

Few Ethnic Conflicts

There are no major conflicts between ethnic communities in Canada, in contrast to the United States. There is some residential segregation in large Canadian cities, but the groups involved are not in open conflict with one another.

An exception must surely be made for Amerindian communities. Relations with Amerindian communities remain troublesome and sometimes very tense. Some of them want to defend territories they have traditionally occupied against what they consider to be attacks from outside. They do so most often by opposing projects of economic development like forest-cutting (in British Columbia) or hydroelectric dams (Churchill and Ste-Marguerite Rivers, James Bay, etc). They often choose spectacular means of protest to attract public attention, like the blocking of bridges or roads, the occupation of buildings or demonstrations during international meetings.

There are tensions between some of the 608 Indian groups and neighboring communities about access to animal and fish resources, about lumber exploitation, and about smuggling. The situation on several reserves continues to be very strained. There have been violent confrontations between the forces of order and armed Indians. The crisis in Oka (a village near Montreal) was widely publicized in the summer of 1990, but there have been similar incidents, not without victims, in Ontario and British Columbia. Such violent confrontations seem less probable now, since different levels of government have begun to negotiate with Indian authorities and the Amerindian question is under discussion at a high political level. Nevertheless, a potential for trouble remains.

Evolution of Crime Rates

The number of violent crimes rose significantly between 1960 and 1980. In recent years the rise has been smaller (Cusson 1990). The homicide rate is the most analyzed indicatory in criminology because homicide is the most serious of common offenses and also the best reported. The rate was level in Canada from 1920 to 1960, then it rose substantially until the end of the 1970s, with a remarkable surge of murders (Ouimet 1994:23). The rate has since declined, passing from 2.5 homicides per 100,000 residents in 1980 to 2.0 in 1995. A large number of these homicides were due to war between criminal groups, such as Hell's Angels.

Other acts of violence have been increasing, especially simple assault where the increase has been dramatic during the past fifteen years. The main factors appear to be the deteriorating living conditions of a part of the population, increased unemployment, and increased drug-trafficking as well as the criminalization of violence against women. Aggravated theft for financial gain varies with economic cycles but has tended to increase. Less serious crimes against property have been in decline for fifteen years, except for motor vehicle theft. Criminologists observe a correlation between age structure and crime rates. "The sharp rise in crime in the 1970s coincided with the increased proportion of teenagers and young adults in the population" (Ouimet 1994:36). Other factors like dwellings that are empty during the day (due to both partners working), and increases in the number of stealable goods (electronic equipment, leisure vehicles) contribute to an increase in larceny.

The number of police per 100,000 residents rose in the 1970s in response to the general increase in crime. It was 201 in 1970, 235 in 1975, and 229 in 1980 and has been slowly decreasing since that time. It does not appear that the security of the population in general is more endangered than before. Canadian towns and cities are relatively safe and crime tends to be concentrated in specific social milieus.

War between Motor Gangs and Battles between Clans

Juvenile delinquency is above all a group activity, as has been repeatedly shown. About two thirds of all convicted young offenders are gang members, according to a study of juvenile delinquency in Montreal (idem p. 284). The number of youth gangs has risen in large Canadian cities, with frequent conflicts between rival gangs, especially gangs of the same ethnicity. This type of conflict between gangs whose members have the same ethnic origin (Asian, Antillais, Latin-

American) is a recent phenomenon in Canada and is obviously attributable to the increase and diversification of immigration.

However, what attracted the most attention in the 1990s was the phenomenon of criminal motorcycle bands. There were real wars between rival gangs of adult motorcyclists, first in Quebec and then in other Canadian provinces. In particular members of Hell's Angels, Banditos and Rock Machine fought violently over control of the drug market, with several bombings and numerous murders.

Conjugal and Family Violence

Acts of violence against women and children are more visible and less tolerated than formerly. Women who are victims of conjugal violence are encouraged to report the abuses they suffer, leading the police to intervene more frequently. The witnesses of conjugal and family violence are also more inclined now to denounce the offenders to the police or to public organizations, such as the Youth Protection Organization or to centers for battered women. What is more, conjugal violence has been redefined as criminal, so that the police are now obliged to arrest those who commit it and to begin legal proceedings. At the end of the 1980s an increase in the incidents of conjugal violence was recorded (Lemieux 1994: 343). Conjugal rape is now considered a form of aggravated assault, and public sensibility towards this type of violence has changed.

It is difficult to calculate with precision the incidence of conjugal violence or to measure its evolution in time. Victimization surveys suggest that it is frequent, but estimates vary. A study by Statistics Canada early in the 1990s reported that one fourth of women over 16 had been or would be victims of a violent aggression in the course of their lives. However, men do not monopolize conjugal violence. One fourth of all murdered spouses are men. Those men who are victims of conjugal violence consider themselves badly protected by the law and victimized by the commonly accepted idea that in every case of conjugal violence the man is the aggressor and the woman is the victim.

Other categories of persons especially exposed to violence are the sick and the handicapped, the elderly and the very young. These are now the object of particular attention by the judicial authorities (Brodeur and Ouimet 1994).

6 DEFENSE

Canada has a professional army whose role was redefined in the early 1950s in order to orient it towards missions aimed at maintaining

world peace. Canada first proposed to the United Nations the creation of a multinational peacekeeping force – the Blue Helmets – during the Suez Canal crisis of 1956. In recognition of this initiative, Lester B. Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize. Since that date, the Canadian army has been very much involved in missions in all parts of the world under the aegis of the United Nations, for instance on Cyprus, in Egypt, in Somalia, in Indonesia, and in Bosnia. During the Gulf War Canadian participation was rather modest, limited to a supportive role far from the front lines. The role of the Canadian army is to maintain peace in distant zones of conflict, rather than to defend its own unthreatened frontiers.

But the army has been called upon to intervene on several occasions in interior affairs to maintain order, as in the crisis of October 1970 or the Oka crisis of 1990. After the proclamation of martial law by the Trudeau government in October 1970, troops deployed in front of main government buildings, in reaction to terrorist attacks by the *Front du Libération du Québec* (FLQ) which kidnapped a British diplomat (James Cross, liberated in December 1970), and assassinated Pierre Laporte, a minister in the Quebec government. In retrospect, this intervention may have been out of proportion to the threat and partly motivated by the federal government's desire to check the growing sovereignty movement in Quebec. In 1990, the army intervened to put an end to the Oka crisis, after Amerindian warriors had blocked access to a bridge connecting Montreal with the south bank of St. Lawrence River and had partially occupied a village north of Montreal.

Until recently, the army enjoyed a favorable public image. This image was somewhat blackened by the misbehavior of one of its contingents in Somalia and subsequent attempts at a coverup by high army officers. The incident exposed the shortcomings of the army command and reduced public confidence in that institution. The integration of women into the army became the topic of the day in 1998, when several cases of rape and sexual harassment in the ranks came to light. The male military culture has not adapted easily to the presence of women soldiers and to the reconstruction of the soldier's role. Complaints by women soldiers of abuse have been widely featured in the press and high army officials have been reticent about them. Public discussion of what the army considers its internal affairs is not inscribed in the military culture, a fact that does not match the new juridical culture described above, with its emphasis on individual rights. The army is now going undergoing a struggle between its traditional culture and the new legal standards that demand more transparency.

Nevertheless, the favorable public image of the army has been to a large extent recovered thanks to its participation in humanitarian missions during natural disasters (floods in the Saguenay region in 1995 and in Manitoba in 1996, the black ice crisis in Montreal in 1998). Its interventions provide effective insurance in case of major disasters and reduce the tensions associated with the abandonment of the military's traditional responsibilities.

7 WELFARE

From the 1940s to the 1980s Canada developed a welfare state of the conservative type, according to the Esping-Andersen typology (1990). Important changes have been underway since the end of the 1980s. Some analysts speak of the deconstruction of the welfare state. This pessimism seems exaggerated , as several indicators show. The total expenditure of the state for health care, education, social services, leisure and culture amounted to 27 percent of the GDP in 1995, compared to 25 percent in 1980. Even though the federal and provincial governments still invest a large share of their financial resources in social programs, there have been significant attempts to rationalize expenses since the beginning of 1990s and cuts in public expenditure have affected the budgets of social programs and of the health care and educational sectors, as well as the number of employees in public administration.

A detailed analysis of the welfare state would have to be much more extensive. We shall restrict ourselves to certain recent tendencies on the microsociological level, in order to determine to what extent the well-being of citizens has been achieved. The welfare state is presently undergoing a profound transformation in Canada, partly because needs have changed (the aging of the population for example), but mostly as the result of a crisis in public finances and the new supply of costly advance care. The state, being a federation, has undertaken to reorganize the relations between its levels of government.

Tax and Transfer Payments as Means of Reducing Inequalities

The state redistributes the income of households by means of two mechanisms which considerably reduce socio-economic inequalities. These are transfer payments directly to households and the income tax.

The average amount of these transfers is highest in low income households and diminishes with rising household income. Transfer

payments represent about half of the financial resources of families in the lowest quintile of income. Transfer payments have increased significantly during the past fifteen years. This increase has been important for households at the bottom of the income range but also for middle-income households. In 1980, households in the lowest income quintile received 45 percent of their incomes from the state; fifteen years later this proportion reached 55 percent In the second quintile, the state's contribution rose even more during that period, from 13 percent to 25 percent.

The state also redistributes income by means of taxation. Two tendencies characterize this intervention. First, a family's tax rate increases sharply with any increase of revenue in a given year. Second, the rates in the upper quintiles have been rising faster than gross income for the past fifteen years. The average tax paid by families in the upper quintile rose by 42 percent between 1980 and 1995, while their incomes increased by only 4 percent.

It is therefore useful to take the average net income of families, after transfers and taxes, as the indicator of their economic position. According to this indicator, households in the lowest income quintile have experienced a slight financial improvement during the past fifteen years, but there has been no improvement for the other quintiles. Households in the middle ranges suffered the most income loss. Even though the middle-class has not grown smaller, according to data pertaining to households (Beach and Slotsve 1986), its disposable financial resources have diminished more than those of households with low or high incomes. A recent study by de Gardes, Gaubert and Langlois (2000) confirms this pattern for the period 1969–1992.

Is it possible to speak of rising economic inequality in the light of the trends described above? The answer is positive if we consider market income, and negative if we consider net disposable income of households.

We consider first the development of inequality in individual earnings, which has been increasing since the beginning of the 1980s. Morissette (1995) identifies three contributory factors. First , the real wages of young workers declined sharply in the 1980s for all levels of education and in all main sectors of industry. Betcheman and Morissette (1994) have shown that accounting for marital status, profession, level of education, union membership or province does not modify the observed decrease. Second, disparities in hours worked increased in the 1980s. This factor is related to income inequality between men and women, since the latter work fewer hours per week on average. Third, Morrissette's study demonstrated the appearance of a new phenomenon in the 1980s: employees with the highest hourly wages

tended to work more hours a week, while those with low hourly wages tended to work less. This correlation between the hourly wages and the number of hours worked has played a major role in the increasing inequality of earnings.

A greater disparity in work hours and an increased correlation between the number of work hours and hourly wages have been observed in all sectors of employment, for union members and non-members alike. It is clear, therefore, that neither de-industrialization, nor a slight decrease in union membership can explain the increase in income inequality (Riddell 1993).

Did the level of education of individuals play a role in this increase of inequality? It is known that technological progress resulted in an increased demand for specialized workers in the 1980s and that they benefited from higher wages (Freeman and Needell 1991). This was a very clear trend in the United States, where the ratio of the average salary of university graduates to that of non-graduates increased between 1978 and 1989 (Murphy and Welch 1992). A widening disparity between the incomes of graduates and non-graduates was not so marked in Canada, although clearly observable. Freeman and Needels (1991) explain this difference by four factors: the greater availability of university graduates in Canada, the rapid increase of GDP, flourishing international trade and the strong position of labor unions.

Labor unions managed to raise the wages of poorly remunerated workers in the 1980s. Between 1981 and 1988 the real hourly wages of male union members in the lower quintile rose by 17 percent compared to only 3 percent in the upper quintile. The same was true of female union members. "This suggests that in the context of slight increases in real wages which prevailed throughout the 1980s, negotiations led by labor unions succeeded in improving the situation of their poorly remunerated members" (Morissette 1995:13). It should be remembered that the proportion of labor union membership varied very little in Canada, passing from 32 percent in 1980 to 34 percent in 1993, while in the United States it fell from 30 percent in 1970 to 16 percent in 1990 (Riddell 1993).

The problem of inequalities presents itself differently if we examine the income of households rather than that of individuals. Inequalities in family market income (before taxation and transfers) have been undoubtedly rising in recent years; the Gini coefficient increased from 0.447 to 0.495 between 1970 and 1998. Individual earnings, market income, and investment profits are more and more unequally distributed. State intervention reduces this tendency. The equalization effect resulting from taxes and direct transfers is shown by a wide gap between the Gini coefficients for household income calculated before

and after taxes and transfers. The difference between the two coefficients measures the redistributive effect of state policies. A comparison with other countries is instructive. In the United States for example, the gap between the two coefficients is not very significant, which means that the redistribution of income is less marked (Glatzer and Hauser 1998). Murphy and Wolfson noted "a most dramatic contrast between Canada and the United States: There was an unequivocal *increase* in income inequality in the United States over both decades [from 1975 to 1995], while there was an almost unequivocal *decrease* in inequality in Canada" (Wolfson and Murphy 1998:14, underlined by authors).

Two other indicators confirm the importance of redistribution in Canada. We calculated the ratio of the average disposable income of families in the upper quintile to the average disposable income of families in the lower quintile, for both definitions of income (that is before and after transfers and taxes). The ratio for gross income increased between 1980 and 1998 while the ratio for net income decreased. We then calculated the shares of total income and the shares of disposable income according to quintiles, which is a classic indicator of distribution. We can see once again that families in the lower quintile increased their share of the aggregate aftertax income and that this tendency intensified from 1980 to 1998.

Even if the two devices for redistribution – the progressive income tax and direct transfers to individuals and households – have functioned well, the net result of state intervention has changed somewhat. In the 1960s and 1970s, it diminished the existing inequalities among households; since 1980 it has worked to neutralize increases in inequalities which might otherwise have occurred. From 1970 to 1980 the Gini coefficient for household income decreased (from 0.373 to 0.356). Since then it has remained quite stable. But the situation may change in the next few years. The distribution of income from private sources is increasingly unequal. The best-qualified workers and these who are employed in rapidly developing sectors (new technologies, financial institutions, high-productivity industries) increase their incomes faster. The disparity between the incomes of graduates and non-graduates is widening (although at a slower rate than in the United States), as shown by Morissette (1995). Free trade and globalization intensify the growth of inequalities. Less qualified workers have to compete with lower-paid workers in developing countries, and labor unions find it more difficult to maintain their bargaining power. Finally, certain political parties promote a radical reduction of taxes, a policy that has now been adopted by some provincial governments, notably in Ontario and Alberta. Such

tax reductions together with cuts in social programs in recent years, will probably contribute to inequality.

Reduction in the Number of Low Income Families

Poverty is not officially measured in Canada, but Statistics Canada calculates annually the so-called Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) which is (mistakenly) interpreted by some analysts as the threshold of poverty. The proportion of families below the LICO has been declining since 1980, followed by a slight increase. The low-income measure (LIM) characterizes poverty better and permits international comparisons. Households are considered poor if they receive less than half of the median disposable income, the disposable income being divided by the number of household members (the equivalence scale). These statistics show some reduction of poverty since 1980, consistent with the data on disposable income distribution.

However, social dependency has been high in Canada since 1980, with a slight decline at the end of 1990s. The proportion of social aid recipients more than doubled in fifteen years, from 6 percent of the population under 65 in 1980 to 10 percent in 1998, with a peak of 12 percent in 1994. It has since decreased somewhat but remains very high.

The Decrease of Gender Inequality

Women have steadily increased their participation in the labor market, while men are less and less active as a result of early retirement. The ratio of women's to men's earnings in full-time jobs has increased considerably in recent years, from 64 percent in 1980 to 72 percent in 1998. However, that ratio does not take account of the differences in education and in qualifications between the sexes, the differential preference for free time, the fact that women are more engaged in housework, or the total number of work hours. On average, employed men work more hours outside the home than employed women who use more hours for housework, a fact that affects the difference in income.

8 LIBERTY

The constitutions of all developed countries propose to protect the liberties of their citizens and specify their fundamental rights. Respect for rights is not a problem in Canada. The free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, political freedoms and due process are universally respected. There are no political prisoners and

parties of the extreme left are not suppressed in any way. The high degree of political freedom is dramatically illustrated by the existence of an officially recognized socio-political movement claiming sovereignty for Quebec. The political parties representing this movement – the Parti Québécois on the provincial level and the Bloc Québécois on the federal level – are a part of the Canadian political landscape. A few opponents in English Canada have wanted Quebec's secession to be declared illegal, but their marginal opinions have little, if any, support. The debate on Quebec's future is proceeding within a democratic framework. Referenda were held in 1980 and 1995. A recent judgment of the Supreme Court, alluded to above, recognizes the legitimacy of the democratic promotion of Quebec's sovereignty under certain rules.

In connection with the 1995 referendum, a movement demanding a partition of Quebec's territory emerged in the anglophone community of the province. It was supported by certain elements in English Canada, including some ministers of the federal government. Those who support the partition of Quebec argue that "If Canada can be divided, so can be Quebec." This movement remains marginal.

The state frequently intervenes to counterbalance inequalities and to block discrimination against disadvantaged groups: linguistic minorities, other visible minorities, aboriginal peoples, women, handicapped persons and homosexuals. So many actions of this kind have been taken since the 1960s that there is now a concern about the fragmentation of citizenship. Some of these interventions, in the context of the new juridical culture that emphasizes the protection of individual rights, deserve special notice.

In the 1960s and especially in the 1970s, the state intervened in favor of the francophone minority. The accessibility of public services in French was improved in the institutions of the federal government thanks to the adoption of the Law on Official Languages. Bilingualism was mandated in public administration and economic inequalities between francophones and anglophones were reduced. In Quebec, the anglophone community has a wide range of social and public services at its disposal (hospitals, social service centers, schools and universities, media,) as the law guarantees. The law on public advertising, which limits various forms of advertising in English-only and imposes priority to French, is however resented by some members of the anglophone community who regard it as a restriction of their liberty of expression. Nevertheless, measures to protect the French character of the province of Quebec are widely supported by the population of Quebec, including a majority of Anglo-quebecers. The law obliges immigrants to send their children to a French-language school at the

primary and secondary level, and immigrants are informed of this obligation before entering Canada and Quebec. These laws are intended to insure the integration of immigrants with the civil society and the francophone majority and insure the possibility of full social participation, just as immigrants outside Quebec integrate with the anglophone majority.

Outside Quebec, the accessibility of services in French is more problematic, even though efforts are made to develop them. The only francophone hospital in Ontario is struggling (in 2000) to continue and its future is uncertain while francophones of the Ottawa region are suing the provincial government on this issue. Demands for services in French reappear from time to time here and there, but they no longer have the same importance as in the past; presumably because the new constitution offers a formal guaranty of services, especially in education at the primary and secondary levels.

Discrimination against women in the workplace has been the subject of extensive discussion and interventions in recent years. The best known of these are the measures that corrected systematic inequalities of earnings in public administration. The Commission on Personal Rights has obliged the governments of Quebec and Canada to award heavy compensation to members of employment units, mainly female, that formerly paid lower salaries than equivalent units, made up mostly of men. Another law requires private enterprises to correct their salary scales in order to eliminate discrimination against women; they are allowed a transition period of about ten years to achieve complete equality between the sexes.

The state intervenes as well to check discrimination against visible minorities and immigrants. Statistics Canada collects data on racial and even physical characteristics (handicaps) of the population – a procedure that surprises foreign, especially European, observers. The state, as well as various interest groups, is thus enabled to evaluate the effectiveness of its anti-discrimination measures.

Finally, the state intervenes, more timidly in this case, in favor of the recognition of rights for homosexuals. Different measures have been taken to oppose the discrimination of which they are victims, particularly the recognition of rights of homosexual partners (pensions, insurance, etc.), but such interventions are not of equal importance in different provinces, since several spheres of life fall under provincial jurisdiction.

State interventions in favor of particular groups inevitably provoke public debates, some of them quite vigorous, as the interventions in linguistic matters show, but the usual outcome is the recognition of a new group right.

9 CONCLUSION

Canada is going through transformations that are underway in other countries as well. Nevertheless, it must face its own peculiar challenges. Three such challenges can be clearly distinguished: the question of relations between Quebec and the rest of Canada, the question of the position of Amerindian nations in Canada, and the question of the future of the welfare state. All three issues imply a search for a new balance of powers between the provinces and the federal state. More generally, the very identity of Canada is at stake. Everything seems to suggest that Canada is now constructing a new national identity that moves it further and further away from the federal system established in 1867, which recognized regional differences, while one of the fundamental principles of the 1982 Constitutional Law is the strict equality of provinces. This principle has become a dogma in the public discourse of English Canada.

The redefinition of collective identity is occurring not only in connection with the status of Quebec but also in the context of globalization and North American free trade, not to mention the multiculturalism associated with recent immigration. Clearly the federal state is disposed to take a leading role in the search for responses to the challenges enumerated above.

Consider the first challenge is the question of Quebec's status within the Canadian federation. The present situation is inconclusive, as we have shown earlier (see Webber 1994; Lenihan, Robertson and Tassé 1995, among others). The present Constitution does not grant official recognition to the Quebecois nation on one side, and if the Parti Quebecois prevails in the coming elections, it could propose another referendum on sovereignty before long.

The second challenge is the future of aboriginal peoples in Canada. The present Constitution, recognizes both the ancestral rights of aboriginal peoples and their rights acquired by treaties, which forces the provincial and federal governments to negotiate new relationships. The problems are numerous and complex. Aboriginal communities differ in size and are unequally prepared for autonomy. The arrangements already negotiated – like that with the Niguas of British Columbia in 1998 – open new possibilities but global solutions will not be found quickly or easily.

The third challenge involves redefinition of the welfare state and promotion of a new social union. The federal government and most provincial governments have in recent years eliminated constant deficits and stabilized their finances, although the public debt remains high. A thorough revision of social programs has been undertaken.

The budgets for health care and education are being re-examined. It is certainly an exaggeration to speak of the dismantling of the welfare state, but the changes are profound. Neo-liberals press for more radical reforms, but a large part of the public and the labor unions (still an important political force in Canada) oppose such tendencies. Neo-liberalism has not won the game entirely and the debate will continue. It may divide the country along regional lines.

Canada is a very decentralized federation, in which provincial governments have important responsibilities, including the collection of direct taxes. The western provinces demand more powers and more freedom to act, but they acknowledge the central role of the federal government, which is accepted much more reluctantly by Quebec. The Atlantic provinces remain dependent on federal government subsidies and on the government's policy of equalization between richer and poorer regions. The leftist parties are stronger there and they counterbalance the conservative parties of the western provinces, which are opposed to policies of regional redistribution (see Hiller 1991).

While the federal state searches for a balance of power in a new social and political union, with national standards in health care, social assistance and education, Quebec views such projects as intrusions into the provincial sphere of competence.

The federal state has always played a central role in the economic and social development of the country. Even though its direct intervention into the economic sphere has diminished in recent years as a consequence of privatization, both federal and provincial governments continue to claim major roles in key sectors, like social development, welfare and culture. In the latter sphere, it will not be possible to avoid conflicts with the U.S, where the production of cultural products is relegated to private industry. In Canada, as in many European countries, cultural products and activities are closely linked to national identity and are a legitimate subject of state policy.

The construction and promotion of the national identity have become an important function of the federal state in recent years, for several reasons. First, the state attempts to counterbalance the sovereignty movement in Quebec by opposing it to Canadian identity. This is a new approach, devised after the second referendum on Quebec sovereignty. Second, in the new context of globalization, that identity is under continuous threat by the omnipresent southern neighbor, particularly with respect to the media and cultural products. Last, but not least, as a country open to immigration, Canada must modify its prior identity in important ways.

The federal state promotes a new Canadian nationalism based on national symbols and values. Canada no longer defines itself as a

British Dominion, although it still officially retains the symbols of the English Crown. Unlike Australia, there is no movement proposing to abolish these symbols. The question will surely be brought up one day, given the multicultural character of a country whose citizens no longer feel attached to the old-fashioned symbols of royalty, but it is not currently under discussion. Canada no longer defines itself as a dual nation, as proposed by the francophone elite in the 1960s. Both of these changes mark a break with history, as a new national identity slowly takes shape.

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