Towards a New Québec Policy on Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

CONSULTATION PAPER

Québec ⚜⚜

An Intercultural, Plural and Inclusive Québec

Towards a New Québec Policy on Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

This Consultation Paper proposes a vision, guidelines and strategic choices that, once adopted, will become the foundation for Québec's new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion.

To realize these strategic choices, the new policy will be unveiled at the same time as an action strategy involving Government of Québec departments and agencies. Subsequently, the new policy will serve as foundation for the coming pluri-annual immigration planning to begin in 2016. *An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec* (CQLR, chapter I-0.2) will also be revised to grant the authorities required to implement the strategic choices and the actions that will ensue from it.

A concerted effort and a mobilization approach

This process is more than a public consultation on a new policy regarding immigration, diversity and inclusion. What is proposed is a concerted effort aimed at mobilizing Québec society. It propounds the following objectives in particular:

– foster a better understanding of current issues regarding immigration, diversity and inclusion, as well as the basic tenets of Québec interculturalism;
– engage partners and stakeholders in building an intercultural, plural and inclusive Québec;
– identify objectives and effective courses of action.

This Consultation Paper is the result of a reflection conducted with staff from the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and representatives of government departments and agencies. Discussion meetings also took place with experts and socioeconomic partners and stakeholders.

This document also benefitted from research by academics on such themes as the impact of immigration on the economy; the impact of immigration on innovation; the conceptual foundations of ethnocultural diversity management; and the challenges associated with the recognition of skills.

Points for consideration are set out in order to further the analysis, but they should not be considered comprehensive. Other aspects associated with immigration, diversity and inclusion may be addressed during the consultations.

Message from the Prime Minister

More than 50 years ago, Québec redefined itself as a Francophone host society. Every year, thousands of people from all around the world come to make Québec their home. They bring with them their unique talents and dreams.

Throughout its history, Québec society has been shaped by the women and men who chose to settle here and that Québec chose to welcome to help forge its future. Today, Quebecers of all origins have a role to play in the pursuit of this common goal of building a pluralistic society proudly sharing an identity based on our common language and values.

In keeping with that spirit, Québec gradually developed a balanced intercultural approach. It bears repeating: our diversity is priceless and a true economic strength. Québec is proud to be a modern, democratic, open and welcoming society. Gender equality, the primacy of the French language and the separation between the State and religion are some of the core values that define us. And so does our culture, enriched by multiple sources, and our legal system. Their expression has been shaped by the history and social battles that have moulded our society.

What matters is our support for and commitment to these principles. It is what binds us together as Quebecers and it is also what gives Québec the distinctiveness and originality that make up its reputation.

This consultation is a chance for us to come together to work out an inclusive intercultural vision that will strengthen our social cohesion around a vast collective project: developing an inclusive society that benefits from the participation of all and that conjugates its diversity to the affirmation of its very distinct identity in North America.

Philippe Couillard

Prime Minister of Québec

Message from the Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

Québec's rich diversity and the contribution of immigrants play an important role in fostering Québec's strength, prosperity and the vitality of its territory. The extent of this contribution depends on how well people of all origins are included in society.

To integrate Québec society means to willingly recognize and respect its values as well as to share its official and common language of public use, French. It also means having the opportunity to fully participate in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres of public life.

In Québec there is a broad consensus in support of this two-pronged approach to successful participation. Yet, and despite all efforts, we cannot ignore the fact that immigrants and ethnocultural minorities continue to face obstacles that limit their participation and reduce their chances of realizing their full potential. These situations generate disappointment among immigrants, instill a sense of injustice among their descendants and lead to a lack of understanding from the population of Québec, which relies on the contribution of all talents, wherever they may come from, for Québec to grow and prosper.

It is with great determination that I committed myself to developing a new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion to govern Québec's actions in these areas over the coming years. Among other things, this policy will help us define the actions needed to achieve the full potential of Quebecers of all origins. It will subsequently serve as a foundation for the pluri-annual immigration planning.

I am confident that this consultation will help us move forward together in our understanding of the key challenges to immigration and diversity and strengthen our collective commitment to an open and inclusive society.

Kathleen Weil

Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

Table of contents

Text boxes

Introduction

In the wake of the major reforms brought on by the Quiet Revolution, Québec got engaged in the area of immigration and positioned itself as a host society for immigrants. Resting on Québec's national affirmation, a policy on immigration and integration as well as an intercultural approach specific to Québec society and its aspirations were progressively developed.

For the past 25 years, Québec has based its actions regarding immigration and integration on the 1990 policy statement *Let's Build Québec Together.* Unanimously adopted by the National Assembly, this policy has had structuring effects and, through the years, has played a key role by guiding actions with regard to immigration and integration. Although its vision and objectives are still relevant today, it is clear that a new policy, building on the strides forward brought about by the policy statement, is needed in light of new challenges that have emerged and those that persist.

In particular, we have seen international migratory patterns evolve over the past few years. Migration in general has gone up, especially temporary immigration. Western countries are increasingly dealing with ageing populations and shortages in specialized labour in certain sectors, despite sometimes very high unemployment rates among young people. In fact, a number of countries have adopted immigrant-selection systems that take into greater account the pressing needs of companies. Fiercer competition for strategic talents is also being observed. It stems from a sharp increase in migration flows. These are intracontinental in regions where agreements on the free movement of persons have been signed. They are also directed at emerging countries as a result of their recent opening up to some forms of economic immigration. In addition, the situations of refugees and of individuals in distressful situations are becoming more complex, particularly due to geopolitical context, natural disasters, increased border controls and a tightening of the rules for submitting an application for asylum.

With immigration perceived as having an essential role to play in fostering its development, in particular by contributing to the growth and renewal of the working-age population, Québec is determined to distinguish itself on the international scene in order to attract the best talents and to demonstrate its international solidarity in keeping with its societal choices.

In democratic countries, these changes in migratory patterns have prompted a broader examination of issues associated with the principles of justice, equality and solidarity as well as pluralistic models of integration. Today, major host societies – Québec among them – are called upon to position themselves regarding these issues and undertake the actions required.

Québec has demonstrated openness, sensitivity, forcefulness and originality in seizing the opportunities provided by its ethnocultural diversity. It has gradually built a model of Québec interculturalism, striving to find a balance between, on the one hand, the continuity of a collective identity intrinsically linked with Québec's history and its distinct and Francophone character and, on the other hand, openness to mutual and collective enrichment through the recognition of diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and rapprochement.

Québec interculturalism rests on the principles of mutual recognition, fairness and shared commitment as well as on participatory civic practices that regard as valuable, intercultural encounters and dialogue. These principles and practices aim to give concrete expression to society's deeply held convictions regarding equality and human dignity and its aspiration to strengthen the bonds of solidarity between all Quebecers.

Adapted to the specific realities of Québec's diversity, this model for the management of ethnocultural diversity is built on the following foundations:

– The Québec identity, plural and dynamic, enriched by the contribution of people of all origins, yet deeply committed to preserving its distinct and Francophone character and the historical contribution made by the Native peoples and the Québec English-speaking community;

– The French language, official language of Québec and common language of public space in Québec society;

– Openness to multiple contributions, where the diversity and plural affiliations of the population, freely and openly manifested in public life, are recognized and valued;

– Fair access for all citizens to resources, services, institutions and public spaces, without discrimination;

– Active participation in society, which is expected and encouraged;

– Intercultural rapprochement, where positive encounters between people of all origins foster harmonious civic relations and new bonds of solidarity while contributing to preventing prejudice, intimidation and discrimination;

– An approach to the integration of immigrants that rests on reciprocity and the sharing of the common values of Québec society;

– Mediation and mutual adjustments with due respect for the fundamental principles of Québec society.

This intercultural approach to diversity and inclusion was essentially developed based on two major Québec policies: *Autant de façons d'être Québécois* [the many ways of being a Quebecer] (1981) and *Let's Build Québec Together* (1990).

It was subsequently embodied in several other Québec policies, namely the *Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education, A School for the Future* (1998);[1] the Government policy to promote the participation of all in Québec's development, *Diversity: An Added Value* and its action plan (2008); and the *Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes immigrantes adultes au Québec* [*French framework program for adult immigrants to Québec*] (2011).[2]

Even though it has given structure to the government's discourse and actions, the intercultural approach has never been the object of a comprehensive and coherent official statement. The new policy aims to address this weakness. In order to move beyond simple discourse, it is very important that an implementation strategy be established to concretize interculturalism's vision and thereby contribute to enriching the intercultural experience of Quebecers of all origins.

The proposed new policy recommends a vision conveying a unifying collective project for all of society. In order to build an inclusive society, where the full participation of all is encouraged, Québec's entire population is called upon to mobilize by proudly asserting a forward-looking Québec identity that is both dynamic and based on a shared public culture and on common language and values. To this end, the consultation that the Government of Québec undertakes with the publication of this document is a chance to consolidate the bonds of trust and solidarity between Quebecers of all origins. It is also an opportunity to keep all actions taken with respect to immigration, diversity and inclusion in line with other key objectives like gender-based analysis, the occupancy and vitality of territories, and sustainable development. Taken as a whole, the policy is also likely to contribute to the permanent settlement of immigrants in Québec, thereby reducing the number of departures to other Canadian provinces or abroad.

This Consultation Paper presents the vision, guiding principles and strategic choices which, once adopted, will define Québec's actions over the next years with respect to immigration, diversity and inclusion. In addition to forging the new policy, they will especially guide the pluri-annual immigration planning and the thorough revision of the *Act Respecting Immigration to Québec*.

The government invites the population to take part in the consultation process to contribute to what will become another milestone in the history of Québec's approach to immigration, diversity and inclusion.

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[1] This policy includes three action principles on which the school relies to take into account the ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the students, i.e. equal opportunity; knowledge in French, common public language; and citizenship education in a pluralistic democracy.

[2] This program harmonizes the content of the French courses offered to immigrants, describes the learning content and the knowledge to be acquired for each level of competency in French and presents the sociocultural indicators, the common values of Québec society and elements of intercultural competence.

Documents tabled by the government

This Consultation Paper is divided into two parts. The first part explains the foundations of Québec's anticipated new policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion. The choices made collectively to build a pluralistic, free and democratic society are recalled. The issues that jeopardize these societal choices and require society to mobilize to resolve them are then explained. From this situational analysis, a vision for building an intercultural, plural and inclusive Québec is put forward. Guiding principles are proposed for bringing about this vision and ensuring the coherence of the strategic choices submitted to the consultation.

The second part sets out the challenges Québec faces in order to realize the proposed vision. For each challenge, strategic choices are presented to delineate the actions likely to address adequately the concerns raised. For each strategic choice, key points for consideration are suggested to further the situational analysis and propose action strategies apt to foster the full participation, in French, of individuals of all origins in society's economic, social and cultural development.

This Consultation Paper joins together, in an appendix, the 30 points for consideration on which it is hoped that the public consultation will shed light.

A statistics handbook on immigration and diversity in Québec completes this Consultation Paper. A reference document is also available to help better understand immigration in Québec and the role played by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and its partners. Both documents can be found online on the National Assembly website: www.assnat.qc.ca.

The foundations
of the new policy

The choices made collectively by Quebecers over time have helped build a pluralistic, free and democratic society in pursuit of common goals. The proposed policy is in keeping with the history and unique journey that forged today's Québec. In light of recent social changes and Québec's current needs, the key challenges that the new policy is meant to address are rooted in a unifying vision and principles fundamental for Québec society, now and in the future.

Québec, a pluralistic, free and democratic society

These collective choices made over time have helped build a pluralistic, free and democratic society that:

- **is determined to assert its distinct and Francophone character in North America and to preserve the established rights of the Native peoples and the Québec English-speaking community;**
- **is deeply committed to human rights;**
- **is relying on all Quebecers to contribute to its democratic, economic and cultural vitality;**
- **perceives its diversity as an asset and is relying on immigration's essential role in fostering its development.**

These characteristics form the basis of this policy and of the overall approach proposed by the government. In order to continue, collectively, to build an intercultural, plural and inclusive society that relies on immigration's essential role in fostering its development, Quebecers of all origins must genuinely commit to it.

Québec, a **pluralist**, free and democratic society

Québec society originated from the first encounters between the French, who came to settle in North America beginning in the 16th century, and the Aboriginal nations already on the land since time immemorial. In many ways, Aboriginal peoples contributed significantly to the development of a new identity deeply anchored in North America and distinct from that of the European French.[3] The exchanges that followed these first encounters were sometimes friendly and cooperative,[4] but at times were marked by conflict and injustice. Yet a new society shaped by many influences emerged.

Born out of this initial complex relationship, Québec was later enriched with the arrival of the English, Irish, and Scottish people, beginning in the mid-18th century. Their descendants subsequently diversified with the arrival of people of all origins, giving rise to an English-speaking community that contributed significantly to Québec's development and international reputation. What they did for Québec's democracy, prosperity and culture is made abundantly evident by the reputation enjoyed by their universities and the Anglophone health network, their entrepreneurial vitality and their rich contribution to Québec's architectural and cultural heritage.[5]

The importance of Black people also marks the history of Québec society. A few hundred Black slaves arrived in Québec City and Montréal between the time the colony was first established, and 1834, the

By the numbers

Diversity of the population

12.6%

Proportion of the immigrant population in Québec's total population in 2011, compared to 8.7% in 1991

22.6%

Proportion of the immigrant population in the Census metropolitan area of Montréal, compared to 18.4% in 2001 and 16.8% in 1991

29.4%

Proportion of newborns in Québec in 2013 with at least one parent born abroad, compared to 14.6% en 1990

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[3] QUÉBEC, COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE ET DES DROITS DE LA JEUNESSE. *Mythes et réalités sur les peuples autochtones*. Second edition, 2009, p. 6.

ANCTIL, Pierre. "À la recherche du paradigme de base de la culture francophone d'Amérique." From *Le dialogue avec les cultures minoritaires*, under the supervision of Éric WADDELL, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999, pp. 3-26.

[4] For many historians, original relations between the first French Americans and the Native peoples were characterized by cooperation as a result of the very nature of the fur trade, which had to differ significantly from colonial ideology which favoured domination. This trade required protection of the territory and cooperation from the people inhabiting the land. These exchanges gave rise to a new kind of person (clerk, *coureurs des bois*, trappers, fur traders) who, unable to control production, had to maintain friendly relations with the Native peoples to contend with an unknown natural environment. See in this regard:

JACQUIN, Philippe. *Les Indiens blancs. Français et Indiens en Amérique du Nord (XVIᵉ – XVIIIᵉ siècle)*. Saint-Hubert, Libre Expression, 1996, p. 4.

[5] In 2000, in the *Act respecting the exercise of the fundamental rights and prerogatives of the Québec people and the Québec State*, the National Assembly of Québec officially recognized that "there exists a Québec English-speaking community that enjoys long-established rights (CQLR, chapter E-20.2)." This community, therefore, enjoys specific rights and prerogatives like the right to receive public services in English.

year slavery was abolished in the British colonies. Emancipated slaves and fugitives also arrived from the United States and Nova Scotia, especially starting in the 18th century.[6]

Québec continuously evolved with the various immigrant populations it subsequently admitted. In the first half of the 20th century, primarily Italian, Jewish, Polish, Greek, and Portuguese immigrants came to Québec. As of the late 1950s, Québec immigrants have been of Caribbean, Latin American, Asian, Middle Eastern, Maghrebian, and sub-Saharan African descent. This immigration has made Québec an ethnoculturally diverse society.

Moreover, like all contemporary societies, Québec society is also characterized by a pluralism of values. In its midst, a broad range of views, political ideas, ethical standpoints, and belief systems coexist.[7]

In other words, diversity has been an integral part of Québec from the beginning. Today, that diversity is expected to grow because Québec is welcoming and selecting immigrants from an increasingly broad range of backgrounds. In addition, Québec is evolving in a globalized world where individual identities and affiliations are multiple. Because of Québec's international appeal, talented people from around the world are expressing their determination to join Québec on its unique path and contribute to its future.

Although achieving this vision is sometimes difficult, Québec proudly asserts its pluralistic character. It recognizes, accepts and values all of its plurality, in particular its rich ethnocultural plurality, as an intrinsic and essential part of its national identity.

Aboriginal nations

In Québec, 11 Aboriginal nations co-exist with the Québec nation: the Waban-Aki (Abenaki), Mamiwinnik (Algonquin), Atikamekw, Nituuhuuiyiyuuch (Cree), Huron-Wendat, Innu, Innuit, Wulust'agooga'wiks (Maliseet), Mig'maq (Micmac), Kanien'kehakas (Mohawk), and Naskapi.[8] These Aboriginal nations live across Québec in 14 Inuit villages and 41 Aboriginal communities. Today, an increasing number of Aboriginal people live in urban centres like Val-d'Or, Sept-Îles, La Tuque and Montréal. Aboriginal nations are stakeholders in Québec's history, culture and identity, which they have helped shape from the time of their first encounter with European settlers.

Because of the history and identity of Aboriginal nations and the recognition of their ancestral rights, Aboriginal diversity issues differ from issues related to ethnocultural diversity from immigration. Consequently, and in accordance with two resolutions passed by Québec's National Assembly in 1985 and 1989 and the approach that led to "La Paix des Braves" in 2002, the Aboriginals and Québec hold a nation-to-nation relationship.

Aboriginal diversity will therefore not be directly addressed in this document. Nonetheless, the policy's main inclusive goals and its underlying principles could apply equally to Aboriginal peoples. As nations, Aboriginal people are invited to take part in the reflection and discussions on the new immigration, diversity and inclusion policy.

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[6] BESSIÈRE, Arnaud. *La contribution des Noirs au Québec : quatre siècles d'une histoire partagée*. Québec, Les Publications du Québec, 2012, pp. 19-67.

TRUDEL, Marcel. *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*. Montréal, Les Éditions Hurtubise, 2004, 408 pages.

[7] WEINSTOCK, Daniel. "Moral Pluralism." From Edward Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London-New York, Routledge, vol. 6, 1998, p. 529.

[8] The designations given to the different Aboriginal nations are from :

QUÉBEC, COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE ET DES DROITS DE LA JEUNESSE. *Mythes et réalités sur les peuples autochtones*. Second edition, 2009, pp. 69-78.

Québec, a pluralistic, **free** and democratic society

Québec considers itself a distinct society and as a founding nation within the federation. Consequently it has always insisted on using the powers needed to promote and protect its distinct Francophone identity.[9]

In that spirit, Québec began, in the early 1960s, to develop an immigration and integration policy that would promote its specific cultural, economic and political interests.[10] In the years that followed the creation, in 1968, of the ministère de l'Immigration,[11] Québec negotiated agreements with the federal government that provide the flexibility it needed to make the immigration and integration of immigrants a lever for its development. To that end, it developed an original approach to immigration and the management of ethnocultural diversity.[12]

It should also be remembered that the Canadian federal government passed a motion in the House of Commons, in 2006, recognizing that "the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada."

Thus, Québec is a nation that exercises its freedom as a host society. It is committed to promoting the vitality of its distinct, Francophone character and intends to make immigration an essential component of its collective life. It acts freely in managing its ethnocultural diversity in accord with its own aspirations, while respecting the division of constitutional jurisdiction in Canada's federal system.

Québec, a pluralistic, free and **democratic** society

Québec is deeply committed to the democratic ideals of freedom and equality. Its culture and democratic institutions are strong and marked by the original democratic culture of Aboriginal nations, the influence of republican ideas, and British parliamentary constitutionalism.[13] That fusion of influences gives Québec's democratic culture a unique character.

Within the framework of representative democracy, the political community is driven by an ideal of liberty that leads it to freely establish its governing order while limiting the arbitrary use of power. Sovereignty belongs to the citizens forming the political community and is exercised through their elected representatives.

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[9] The role played by George-Étienne Cartier, leader of the Québec delegation to the Québec Conference of 1864 – the conference that led to the adoption of the Canadian Constitution in 1867 – was significant in this regard. He was given the mandate to safeguard and ensure the perenniality of his compatriots' interests, rights, institutions, nationality, i.e. everything that they cherished above all, within the proposed union. See in this regard:

BROUILLET, Eugénie. "George-Étienne Cartier et la naissance de la fédération canadienne." *Le Devoir*, Thursday, October 16, 2014.

[10] The first motion on the need to act in immigration came before the government in 1965. This motion read as follows [tr.]: "That in the opinion of this House, exercising the powers conferred on Québec by section 95 of the constitution to the fullest extent, the government should examine the possibility of establishing a ministry or department of Immigration, without delay, to ensure that (a) immigration to Québec is always geared to supporting Québec's economic interests; (b) immigration does not, in federal hands, become a way to modify the cultural composition of the Québec community; (c) new Canadians admitted to Québec may benefit from all of the reception and support services they may need to preserve their legitimate distinctiveness and facilitate their contribution to Québec life."

QUÉBEC, ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DU QUÉBEC. Débats, Quatrième session – 27e législature. Wednesday, February 10, 1965, vol. 2, no. 12.

[11] For a complete historical summary leading up to the creation of the ministère de l'Immigration du Québec, see:

PÂQUET, Martin. *Vers un ministère québécois de l'immigration, 1945-1968*. Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association, 1997, 29 pages.

[12] The *Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* was designed with this in mind and that it was established as part of the Meech Lake Accord. In this regard, see the text written by André Burelle, federal negotiator.

BURELLE, André. "Plusieurs 'cultures publiques communes' peuvent-elles coexister au sein du Canada 'chartiste' et multiculturel de Pierre Elliott Trudeau?" *Du tricoté serré au métissé serré? La culture publique commune au Québec en débats*.

GERVAIS, Stephan, Dimitrios KARMIS, and Diane LAMOUREUX. Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, 2008, 365 pages.

In a recent speech, the Minister responsible for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs and the Canadian Francophonie, Jean-Marc Fournier, made a similar interpretation of the Canada-Québec Accord by also stating that this accord confirmed "interculturalism as a mode of integration for newcomers" to Québec. Speech consulted online on November 3, 2014: www.saic.gouv.qc.ca/centre_de_presse/discours/2014/2014-10-16.htm.

[13] QUÉBEC, COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE ET DES DROITS DE LA JEUNESSE. *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

CHEVRIER, Marc, Louis-Georges HARVEY, Stéphane KELLY, and Samuel TRUDEAU. *De la république en Amérique française. Anthologie pédagogique des discours républicains au Québec 1703-1967*. Montréal, Septentrion, 2013, 538 pages.

Since democracy is a system in which power belongs to all rather than a mere few, a diversity of views and proposals is inevitable and encouraged. Therefore, one of the goals of democracy is, in keeping with the principles of liberty and equality, to manage pluralism in the best way possible. To that end, it nonetheless assumes that Quebecers share a common will to participate in collective life in a spirit of mutual trust.

In Québec, the free, peaceful and law-abiding expression of political differences reflects the will of Quebecers to engage collectively and acknowledge their joint responsibility in a common endeavour. The pursuit of social cohesion inherent in Québec's approach recognizes the right of all Quebecers to peacefully express their political opinions and their disagreements.

The Québec political system is based on the right of each and every one to adhere to, and freely participate in, the civil and political institutions of society, as well as exercise their freedom of conscience and expression. Founded on respect for the rule of law, Québec democracy considers individuals as equal in value and dignity. They benefit from equal protection under the law, with which they are in turn required to comply, given that the rights and freedoms of the human person are inseparable from the rights and freedoms of others and from the common well-being.

A pluralistic, free and democratic Québec **determined to assert its distinct and Francophone character in North America and to preserve the established rights of the Native peoples and the Québec English-speaking community**

In 1977, the *Charter of the French Language* (CQLR, chapter C-11), a fundamental law and cornerstone of Québec's language policy, confirmed Québec's commitment to being a French-language society in North America. It makes French the language of Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce, and business. At the same time, it asserted that the learning of French as the common language of public life is one of the essential prerequisites to intercultural rapprochement.

In fact, Québec's immigration policy was designed to contribute to the lasting vitality of the French fact. Efforts to increase the proportion of Francophone immigrants have helped to improve the proportion of people with knowledge of French at the time of admission in overall immigration. This, combined with significant improvements in the quality and accessibility of francization services as well as to provisions of the Charter of the French Language regarding the language of instruction in kindergarten classes and in elementary and secondary schools, from census to census, knowledge of French by Anglophones and allophones (individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English) is increasing: 70.7% in 1991, 75.5% in 2001, and 79.2% in 2011. It should be recalled that this proportion barely reached 50% in 1971.

In the same breadth, in recent decades, Québec has been more open to the world than ever before. This openness, as well as its special geopolitical situation and its will to live in French in a North American context, have made Québec a strong advocate for cultural and linguistic diversity internationally.[14]

Québec's linguistic specificity is not the only aspect of its uniqueness. It is also rooted in its unique history and the various interpretations given of that past. Quebecers share democratic ideals and principles. In addition to pluralism, the democratic ideal, and French as official language, Québec also attaches great importance to the rule of law, equality, and peaceful conflict resolution. Neutrality of state institutions is also a shared principle that is expressed in particular by the separation of religion and the State. Although these are widely accepted universal principles, they acquire special meaning in each society. In Québec, these principles are associated with a significant collective experience.[15]

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[14] QUÉBEC, CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE. *Vivre en français au Québec*. [Online], [www.cslf.gouv.qc.ca/vivre-en-francais-au-quebec/politique-linguistique-et-charte-de-la-langue-francaise/] (viewed on October 15, 2014).

[15] BOUCHARD, Gérard, and Charles TAYLOR. *Fonder l'avenir : le temps de la conciliation*. Gouvernement du Québec, 2008, p. 126 [Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles].

This distinctiveness explains the importance Quebecers place on the religious neutrality of state institutions and the separation of politics and religion. Once characterized by the predominance of the Church and its doctrine, Québec quickly became a secular state at the time of the sweeping reforms that marked the Quiet Revolution in the early 1960s. This included a transformation of its education system. The challenges marking that period have, to this day, influenced discussions on the place of religion in the public arena and are reflected in Québec's unique approach to implementing the principle of religious neutrality of the State.[16]

The same holds true for the principle of equality between women and men. This principle of social progress is expressed in a special way in Québec, given the particular feminist struggles the province has experienced.[17] In 2008, they led to the enshrinement in the preamble to Québec's *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, of gender equality as a fundamental Québec value.

A pluralistic, free and democratic Québec **deeply committed to human rights**

Drawing on the principles of liberal democracy, Québec democracy is deeply committed to the fundamental human rights protected by the State. In 1975, Québec adopted its own *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* (CQLR, chapter C-12), [18] a fundamental and quasi-constitutional law [19] guaranteeing the equality of all human beings in both dignity and worth. It affirms and protects the freedoms and fundamental rights of every person, as well as their right to equality without discrimination, and their political, legal, economic, and social rights.

It guarantees every person "the right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race,[20] colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap" (section 10).

In addition to protecting fundamental human rights, such as the right to life and the right to privacy, the Charter ensures fundamental freedoms such as freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 3).

Furthermore, it confirms that fundamental freedoms and rights must be exercised with proper regard for democratic values, public order and the general well-being of the citizens of Québec (section 9.1). The Charter also recognizes the right of persons belonging to ethnic minorities to maintain and develop their own cultural interests with the other members of their group (section 43).

The Charter contributes to the embodiment of Québec's values with regard to respect for diversity and the pursuit of equality and dignity.[21] It serves as a foundation for collective life in Québec within the context of ethnocultural diversity.

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[16] MILOT, Micheline. *Laïcité dans le Nouveau Monde. Le cas du Québec*. Turnhout, Brepols Publishers, 2002, 180 pages.
For a philosophical perspective, see:
MACLURE, Jocelyn, and Charles TAYLOR. *Laïcité et liberté de conscience*. Montréal, Éditions du Boréal, 2010, 168 pages.

[17] QUÉBEC, SECRÉTARIAT À LA CONDITION FÉMININE. *À parts égales, à part entière. L'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes au Québec*, 2014 edition, 59 pages.

[18] QUÉBEC. *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne, Chapitre C-12*. Updated on November 1st, 2014, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 2014 [online], [www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/C_12/C12.HTM] (viewed on November 5, 2014).

[19] BOSSET, Pierre. "La Charte des droits et libertés de la personne dans l'ordre constitutionnel québécois : évolution et perspectives." *Conférence de lancement de l'Association québécoise de droit constitutionnel*, Québec, June 27, 2005, 15 pages.

[20] The notion of "race" was abandoned by scientists some 50 years ago. In fact, no human population is biologically homogeneous, and the differences within populations are greater even than those that exist between the various populations. That is why scientists say that the human species represents a vast biological unit – hence the use of quotation marks whenever the term "race" is used. These days, biologists talk of "populations," while sociologists use the terms "population" or "ethnic group." Because people are socially characterized based on the colour of their skin or their body type and often identify with these, sociologists also speak of "racialized groups."

[21] GAGNON, Alain-G., Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE, and François BOUCHER. *Rapport présenté au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion en vue d'élaborer un nouvel énoncé de politique*. Montréal, October 2014, p. 62 [research report presented to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion].

A pluralistic, free and democratic Québec **relying on all Quebecers to contribute to its democratic, economic, and cultural vitality**

A sense of belonging to one's society is an essential human aspiration. Full participation in society, based on one's potential and aspirations, boosts self-esteem and personal growth. This is all the more important in a context of ethnocultural diversity, because participation creates bonds of solidarity and trust between Quebecers of all origins.

The vitality and development of Québec society rely on the contribution of all Quebecers. In order to optimize the full potential of all, Québec needs to aim for full participation. That is how it will be able to build on its strengths.

In the past decades, Québec has developed a unique approach. The approach is described as intercultural by many observers,[22] and it reflects Québec's vision of ethnocultural pluralism. A notable feature of the approach is that it attaches great importance to the participation of every Quebecer in economic, civic, social, cultural, and political life.

That is why, in this perspective, every individual must have fair access to resources, services, institutions and public spaces. To this end, common institutions must remove the obstacles that hinder full participation for that is a prerequisite for the civic solidarity and mutual trust that are essential to the proper functioning of a democratic society. Because Québec views immigration as an asset, it must ensure that the women, men and children it has chosen to welcome have the opportunity to fully participate in its development. Barriers must therefore be lifted.

Québec's interculturalism embraces other dimensions besides participation, but perhaps this component is the one most in need of reaffirmation and a shared commitment to contribute to greater social cohesion.

A pluralistic, free and democratic Québec **perceiving its diversity as an asset and relying on immigration's essential role in fostering its development**

Knowing the major impact immigration could have on its development, Québec chose, almost 50 years ago, to play a key role in this area. An undeniable asset for Québec society, immigration is also an opportunity for Québec to manifest its will to contribute to international solidarity by admitting individuals seeking protection, and to express its commitment to family reunification.

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[22] BOUCHARD, Gérard. "L'interculturalisme : Un point de vue québécois." Montréal, Éditions du Boréal, 2012, 288 pages.

EMONGO, Lemomba, and Bob W. WHITE. *L'interculturel au Québec : Rencontres historiques et enjeux politiques*. Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2014, 253 pages.

GAGNON, Alain-G. "Plaidoyer pour l'interculturalisme." *Possibles*, vol. 24, no. 4, fall 2000, pp. 11-25.

Gérard BOUCHARD, and Charles TAYLOR. *Fonder l'avenir : Le temps de la conciliation*. [Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles], *op. cit.*

ROCHER, François, Micheline LABELLE, Ann-Marie FIELD, and Jean-Claude ICART. *Le concept d'interculturalisme en contexte québécois : généalogie d'un néologisme*. 2007, Centre de recherche sur l'immigration, l'ethnicité et la citoyenneté, 64 pages [research report no. 3 presented to the Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles].

LABELLE, Micheline, and Xavier DIONNE. *Les fondements théoriques de l'interculturalisme*. Research report, Montréal, ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles du Québec, 2011, 55 pages.

IACOVINO, Raffaele, and Charles-Antoine SÉVIGNY. "Between Unity and Diversity: Examining the Quebec Model of Integration." Stephan Gervais, Christopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy (eds.), *Quebec Questions*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 249-266.

BARIL, Geneviève. *L'interculturalisme : le modèle québécois de gestion de la diversité culturelle*. Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2008, 127 pages, [master's thesis].

A number of scientific studies[23] have shown that diversity brings about economic and social innovation. Among other things, ethnocultural diversity has increased the innovative capabilities of businesses and has resulted in productivity gains.[24] More generally, immigration is a multifaceted economic lever. A significant source of investment capital, it also contributes to Québec's entrepreneurial drive. Both temporary and permanent immigration help to fill labour needs for businesses. In addition, foreign students attracted by Québec are a driving force in the educational and research network, in addition to generating significant economic spinoffs.

Diversity and innovation

Based on a 2013 analysis of a sample of 7,600 businesses in Great Britain, researchers Max Nathan and Neil Lee concluded the following:

- Companies that rely on managers from different ethnocultural backgrounds are more likely to introduce new products;

- Diversity in a company allows it to reach global markets more effectively and serve cosmopolitan client groups;

- Immigrants are more entrepreneurial;

- Diversity is not only a key economic asset, it also represents substantial social capital.[25]

Like many contemporary societies, Québec's population is ageing, under the combined effect of the birth rate falling to below the replacement rate and people living longer.[26] We cannot ignore the extent to which this trend is having an impact, given Québec's relatively small population, its geographic location, and its economic, social, political and cultural distinctiveness.

The projections, for the 2011-2061 period, made public in September 2014 by the Institut de la statistique du Québec, and which are premised on a reference scenario maintaining at 50,000 permanent admissions the yearly immigration volume, are a reminder that no foreseeable drop in Québec's population is expected if recent demographic trends continue to hold.

However, beyond the size of the population, it is the working-age population that should be considered, because, for the most part, it will be people aged 20 to 64 that will provide a succession for the labour market and thus contribute to Québec's development and continued prosperity. According to the same projections made by the Institut de la statistique du Québec, at a threshold of 50,000 immigrants annually, the size of the working-age population would decrease markedly between 2017 and 2030 and fluctuate very little in the long term in comparison with its present level. It is only by raising the level to at least 60,000 individuals admitted annually, that Québec could avoid a reduction of its working-age population beneath the 2011 level, and experience a more noticeable growth on the long term. Therefore, Québec society is still faced with challenges tied to ageing population and workforce renewal. Equally, Québec's population regional distribution and its diminishing weight whitin the Canadian population remain issues to be addressed.

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[23] For a literature review, see:

ZHU, Nong. *Synthèse de la littérature sur l'impact de l'immigration sur l'innovation*. Montréal, October 2014 [research report presented to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion].

See also:

ALESINA, Alberto, and Eliana LA FERRARA. "Ethnic Diversity and Economic Performance." *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2005, pp. 762-800.

OZGEN, Ceren, Peter NIJKAMP, and Jacques POOT. "Immigration and Innovation in European Regions." *IZA*, discussion paper series, publication no. 5676, Bonn, 2011, 33 pages.

HUNT, Jennifer, and Marjolaine GAUTHIER-LOISELLE. "How Much Does Immigration Boost Innovation?" *NBER* working publication no. 14312, Cambridge, Massachussets, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2008, 47 pages.

[24] CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA. *Immigrants as Innovators. Boosting Canada's Global Competitiveness*. Ottawa, Hewlett, 2010, 60 pages.

HEWLETT, Sylvia Ann, Melinda MARSHALL, Laura SHERBIN, and Tara GONSALVES. *Innovation, Diversity and Market Growth*. New York, Center for Talent Innovation, 2013, 60 pages.

[25] NATHAN, Max, and Neil LEE. "Cultural Diversity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship: Firm-level Evidence from London." *Economic Geography*, vol. 89, no. 4, 2013, pp. 367-394.

[26] INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC. *Bilan démographique du Québec*, 2013 edition. Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 2013, 152 pages.

Since the *Charter of the French Language* was adopted in 1977, the vast majority of immigrants have been integrating into Québec society in French. It has been a true success story in an environment where only 2% of North Americans speak French. This influx of immigrants contributes to the vitality of the French language in Québec, as well as in Canada and North America as a whole. It adds prestige to Québec and Québec's Francophonie on an international scale.

Immigration has, and continues to greatly increase the openness of Quebecers to the world and the enrichment of Québec's sociocultural heritage. For example, Québec has the largest multilingual workforce in North America.[27]

Furthermore, ethnocultural diversity and the meeting of cultures are vital for collective enrichment. The different cultures draw on and influence one another, while enriching themselves and informing one another of new opportunities to improve their shared life.[28]

To benefit fully from the contribution of immigration and diversity, Québec must therefore count on immigrants well integrated into all facets of collective life, and these immigrants need to settle into Québec for the long term. The overall policy will help to reach this goal. It is a collective project, and all Quebecers are invited to join together and participate.

Québec, a pluralistic, free and democratic society that is determined to assert its distinct and Francophone character in North America and to preserve the established rights of the Native peoples and the Québec English-speaking community; that is deeply committed to human rights; that is relying on all Quebecers to contribute to its democratic, economic and cultural vitality; that perceives its diversity as an asset and is relying on immigration's essential role in fostering its development. That is the basis on which Québec's collective project is being built. Everyone must bear this in mind and commit to these fundamental principles in order to to help build the future of this intercultural, plural and inclusive society.

An overview of the Québec situation: a need for action

The new policy is designed to strengthen the bonds of trust and solidarity between Quebecers of all origins, joined together in a pluralistic, free and democratic society. To reach this goal, the policy must take into account the new needs and social changes related to migratory movement and the differences inherent in Québec's ethnocultural diversity.

In order to strengthen an intercultural, plural and inclusive Québec, the new policy therefore takes into consideration that:

- **the ability to act of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities is facing systemic obstacles, thereby jeopardizing the fundamental principles, vitality and prosperity of Québec society;**
- **concerns are being voiced within society regarding ethnocultural differences;**
- **the volume and composition of immigration must be discussed;**
- **current practices and legislation governing immigration, both outdated, limit the optimum balance between the profile of immigrants and the economic needs of Québec.**

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[27] GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC. *La langue du travail.* [Online], www.spl.gouv.qc.ca/languefrancaise/politiquelinguistique/faq/languedutravail/.

[28] In a master's thesis on the theory of interculturalism, and drawing on philosophers associated with the intercultural movement, including James Tully of Canada and Bhikhu Parekh of Great Britain, Charles-Antoine Sévigny presents the recognition of, and the value given to ethnocultural diversity and the interaction between various cultures as a distinctive feature of a theory of interculturalism compared to other pluralistic theories of citizenship, including multiculturalism. Multiculturalism and its main theorists, like Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka, would argue strongly in favour of defending one's own culture as a context of choice, while interculturalism would put more emphasis on mutually beneficial relations between the various cultures within a political society.
SÉVIGNY, Charles-Antoine. *Citoyenneté et pluralisme culturel : le modèle québécois face à l'idéal de l'interculturalisme.* Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2008, pp. 59-65 [master's thesis].

The ability to act of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities is facing systemic obstacles, thereby jeopardizing the fundamental principles, vitality and prosperity of Québec society

Québec relies on the contribution of its entire talent pool to grow and prosper. For the past several decades, the full participation of immigrants and people from ethnocultural minorities born here has been central to Québec's approach to immigration, diversity and inclusion. Full participation is defined as the ideal engagement of all members of a society in all areas of collective life. It reflects a successful combination of individual abilities and aspirations and society's inclusive practices. It is possible to measure whether this combination has been achieved by comparing the participation of different groups in various aspects of collective life.[29]

For all humans, it is crucial to be able to fit into society and fulfil their aspirations by fully participating in social, political, economic, and cultural life. It appears, however, despite various measures implemented over the years that people from ethnocultural and visible minorities are still facing systemic barriers. Consequently, their ability to act, their chances of fulfilling their aspirations, and their contribution to Québec society are reduced.

Special attention must be paid to the intersectionality of inequalities and the deficit of participation. More vulnerable groups are faced with a combination of factors that hinder their full participation. For example, some people may face discriminatory barriers because they are from a visible minority, but also because of their gender, age, religion, social class or sexual orientation.[30]

Employment is one of the most visible and documented aspect of the unequal participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities. Economic indicators – employment rate, unemployment rate, labour force participation and income – reveal the difficulties experienced by immigrants, especially newcomers, trying to enter the job market. The same holds true for visible minorities, whether immigrants or native-born Quebecers.[31] Furthermore, the labour force participation rate for immigrant women is raising serious concerns, given that it is well below the rate for women in general and for immigrant men. Overall, it would seem that Québec does not compare favourably to other Canadian provinces like Ontario and British Columbia in terms of economic participation.[32]

Getting a job commensurate with skill level is another major issue for individuals trained abroad, who are more often overqualified than their counterparts trained in Canada, or in the United States.[33]

At the same time, discriminatory hiring practices definitely exist in Québec. A study using the discrimination testing method, conducted between December 2010 and May 2011, revealed that the difficulties experienced in obtaining employment by certain people identified as belonging to ethnocultural minority groups because of their name may be due to racial discriminatory biases among some employers.[34]

Entrepreneurs who have immigrated or belong to an ethnocultural minority also face unique challenges that can delay the launch of a prosperous business. Some obstacles are far more difficult to deal with than having to learn Québec's laws and culture. The obstacles may take the form of indirect

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By the numbers

Employment rate

56.5%

Employment rate in 2011 for visible minorities, compared to **59.9%** for the population as a whole

55.4%

Employment rate in 2011 for immigrants, compared to **60.8%** for the Canadian-born population

49.4%

Employment rate in 2011 for immigrant women, compared to **57.7%** for Canadian-born women

Unemployment rate

13.2%

Unemployment rate in 2011 for visible minority immigrants, compared to **12%** for visible minority persons born in Canada and **6.4%** for Canadian-born persons not belonging to a visible minority group

6.4%

Unemployment rate in 2011 for Canadian-born visible minority persons with a university degree at the bachelor level or higher, compared to **3.0%** for persons born in Canada not belonging to a visible minority group who have a university degree at the bachelor level or higher

(Source: Statistics Canada)

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[29] QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA DIVERSITÉ ET DE L'INCLUSION. *Stratégie de mesure de la participation*. Direction de la recherche et de l'analyse prospective [publication pending in 2015].

[30] GAGNON, Alain-G., Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE, and François BOUCHER. *Op. cit.*, pp. 42-44.

[31] STATISTICS CANADA. *Enquête sur la population active, Compilations spéciales, ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion.*
STATISTICS CANADA. *Recensements (1996, 2001, 2006) and Enquête sur la population active, Compilations spéciales, ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion.* Census *(1996, 2001, 2006) and National Household Survey (2011).*

[32] BOUDARBAT, Brahim, and Gilles GRENIER. *Impact de l'immigration sur la dynamique économique du Québec*. Montréal, November 2014, pp.38-44 [research report presented to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion].

[33] STATISTICS CANADA. *Profil professionnel et surqualification des jeunes travailleurs au Canada, 1991 à 2011*. Ottawa, *The Daily*, April 2, 2014, 3 pages.

[34] EID, Paul. *Mesurer la discrimination à l'embauche subie par les minorités racisées : résultats d'un "testing" mené dans le grand Montréal*. Québec, Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse (CDPDJ), 2012, 52 pages.

discrimination, which manifests itself as a greater difficulty in developing trust between investors, suppliers and clients of different origins.[35]

Although important, the economic activity of individuals is obviously not the only dimension of their participation in Québec life. Social and cultural participation is also crucial for successful integration and personal growth. It also allows all Quebecers to benefit from the breadth of Québec's diversity. In this regard, however, the underrepresentation of diversity in municipal and provincial politics, as well as in the culture and communications sector, indicates that there are barriers that society has a responsibility to remove.

Visible minorities are still underrepresented in senior management positions, even in the Montréal area.[36] This underrepresentation is particularly striking on television and in daily newspapers – including French newspapers – and is accompanied by the persistence of certain stereotypes.[37] One study showed that, in 2013, in the Greater Montréal Area (including municipalities on the Island of Montréal, Brossard, Laval and Longueuil), visible minority persons represented 29% of members of the federal Parliament, 16% of members of the provincial legislature and only 3% of elected municipal officials.[38] As a benchmark, visible minority persons comprised 20% of residents in the Montréal census metropolitan area in the National Household Survey 2011. Thus, immigrants and ethnocultural minorities appear to be facing certain barriers.

The systemic barriers to the participation of ethnocultural minorities and the resulting inequalities are inconsistent with the goals of a pluralistic, free and democratic society.

Yet, Québec's economic vitality, its positive job prospects in numerous business sectors, its economy based on small and medium-sized businesses, the opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship, and the undeniable contribution of its social economy are all levers of economic integration, the key vector of participation by immigrants and ethnocultural minorities. It is a matter of recognizing Québec's ability to foster full participation and mobilize all Quebecers so that Québec society can take full advantage of the opportunities offered by ethnocultural diversity and Québec's appeal to immigrants of all origins.

The main difficulties faced by immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in finding employment are as follows:

■ Insufficient access to appropriate and timely information on Québec's job market requirements and job opportunities;

■ Problems related to skills recognition, whether by employers, educational institutions, professional bodies or other regulatory bodies;

■ Language skills and socioprofessional skills that are inadequate or unsuited to the job requirements;

■ Incipient and therefore less developed social networks;

■ Discrimination in hiring.

It is important to differentiate the situation of immigrants from that of native-born individuals from ethnocultural minorities. The latter group does not have to deal with problems adapting to a different work culture, lack of networks or recognition of credentials, and is more affected by discrimination. This calls for the development of differentiated strategies aimed at two distinct groups in order to promote their full participation.

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[35] ARCAND, Sébastien, Victor ARMONY, and Pierre-Jean DARRES. *Besoins en formation et accompagnement pour des entrepreneurs québécois d'origine latino-américaine : un portrait*. Montréal, Emploi-Québec, March 2014, 48 pages [report presented to the Centre des services aux entreprises, secteur du soutien à la gestion, Emploi-Québec de l'Île-de-Montréal].
LEE-GOSSELIN, Hélène, and Ann HAWO. *Portrait et réalités de femmes entrepreneures immigrantes à Québec : une étude exploratoire*. February 2014, 90 pages [synthesis presented to the Conférence régionale des élus de la Capitale-Nationale].

[36] CUKIER, Wendy, and others. *Diversité en Tête : les femmes et les minorités visibles occupant des postes de leadership : profil du Montréal métropolitain 2012-2013*. Toronto and Montréal, Diversity Institute and Desautels Faculty of Management, 2013, 63 pages.

[37] CONSEIL DES RELATIONS INTERCULTURELLES. *Une représentation et un traitement équitables de la diversité ethnoculturelle dans les médias et la publicité au Québec*. 2009, 125 pages [opinion presented to the Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities].

[38] GAGNON, Alain-G., Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE, and François BOUCHER. *Op. cit.,* pp. 63-64.

Concerns are being voiced within society regarding ethnocultural differences

Québec admits immigrants from an increasingly broad range of countries.[39] This diversity is a great asset for Québec, which can then rely on talent from around the world to ensure its vitality. Indeed, Québec can be proud of its record on intercultural relations: although there are areas with a high multiethnic concentration, Québec has no ethnic ghettos,[40] its public schools are a vehicle for socialization and cohesion,[41] and there have been relatively few hate incidents based on race, ethnic origin or religion in comparison to other provinces.[42]

However, Québec's tradition of openness does not preclude the occasional emergence of issues and tensions related to intercultural relations. In recent years, the balance between increasingly varied beliefs and convictions and their expression in the public space has been the subject of extensive collective reflection. This was particularly the case during the *Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences* (Bouchard-Taylor Commission) in 2007-2008, and the Parliamentary Commission on Bill 60 – *Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests* in 2013-2014.

The discussions shed light on concerns expressed by a segment of the population about certain ethnocultural differences. They primarily showed that religious expression is raising the most concern about the norms defining collective life. The concerns were focused mainly on the wearing of religious symbols and on certain accommodation requests for religious reasons, considered by some as a rejection of gender equality or a refusal to integrate into Québec society. It is important to note that some requests may actually infringe on the rights of others or undermine public order. Such requests create "undue hardship" and may therefore be denied. It should be noted as well that requests made for religious reasons do not originate only from Québec's main religious minority groups. Catholic Quebecers and institutions sometimes claim accommodations or wish for religious practices or symbols to be present in public institutions.

The public discussions have also provided the opportunity needed to reflect on the terms of social cohabitation in a context of ethnocultural diversity. However, they have sometimes prompted hostile remarks and tensions based on cultural differences, especially against members of ethnocultural minorities, whether native-born or immigrant. Some of the remarks have affected the ties of mutual trust between Quebecers. They have also weakened some people's bonds of solidarity to fellow Quebecers from different ethnocultural backgrounds. Evidence of this situation has been brought to light by surveys conducted in recent years. However, it should be clear that the surveys were conducted during periods of controversy that have had a polarizing effect on opinions, and that they reflect views likely to change. Although not scientifically representative of Québec's entire population, the findings of a number of surveys indicate that negative perceptions of certain ethnocultural minorities persist, mainly with regard to the religious expression associated with certain minorities.

A recent study by a British daily newspaper also showed the difference in various countries between perceptions and reality on diversity and immigration issues.[43] For example, the study revealed that Canadians think that the proportion of immigrants in their country is much higher than what it actually is (35% compared to 21%). Moreover, the proportion of Muslims was significantly overestimated (20% as

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[39] See, in this regard, the *Recueil de statistiques sur l'immigration et la diversité au Québec*, table x. The statistics handbook completes this Consultation Paper and is available online at : www.assnat.qc.ca.

[40] APPARICIO, Philippe, and Anne-Marie SÉGUIN. *Retour sur les notions de ségrégation et de ghetto ethniques et examen des cas de Montréal, Toronto et Vancouver*. Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Urbanisation, Culture et Société, Montréal, January 2008, 56 pages [research report, Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles].

LELOUP, Xavier, and Philippe APPARICIO. "Montréal, ville plurielle! Bilan des travaux et perspectives de recherche sur la concentration ethnique." *Nos diverses cités*, vol. 7, 2010, pp. 185-194.

[41] PAGÉ, Michel. *Politiques d'intégration et cohésion sociale*. Québec, Conseil supérieur de la langue française, March 2011, 41 pages [study].

[42] ALLEN, Mary. *Les crimes haineux déclarés par la police au Canada*. 2012, [online], Ottawa, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14028-fra.htm].

[43] NARDELLI, Alberto, and George ARNETT. "Today's key fact: you are probably wrong about almost everything." *The Guardian,* Wednesday, October 29, 2014 [online], [www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/oct/29/todays-key-fact-you-are-probably-wrong-about-almost-everything]. (Viewed on November 4, 2014).

opposed to 3.2%[44]), while the proportion of Christians was clearly underestimated (49% as opposed to 69%). Although the study does not specifically look at the situation in Québec, it raises questions about the knowledge Quebecers have of their society's plural reality. The government and media have a role to play in this regard to promote healthy public debate based on accurate information.

However, it is important to note that everyday intercultural relations generate few major conflicts. Research shows, in fact, that coexistence in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods is generally positive, despite some tensions,[45] and that ethnically diverse neighbourhoods contribute to the development of positive intercultural contacts.[46]

Concerns about immigration and diversity are not unique to Québec and the debates remain generally more peaceful and less adversarial than elsewhere. Indeed, in several western European countries, including Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and France, there has been some serious questioning, if not rejection, of pluralist models for managing ethnocultural diversity.[47] In some of those countries, extreme right-wing political parties with anti-immigration policies have a significant share of public support, which is not the case on the Québec political scene.

Legitimate concerns expressed by a portion of the population on the adherence to common values and the desire expressed by immigrants to understand how Québec society functions demonstrate the importance of information. The ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion has therefore adopted a number of measures to properly inform newcomers about Québec society and increase their commitment to it. Since 2009, immigrants have to sign a statement on common values. In addition, the francization and integration services offered to them, such as French courses, *Premières démarches d'intégration* (a session on how to start integrating into Québec society), and Service d'intégration en ligne (online integration services) feature a variety of activities appreciated by immigrants, during which the common values of Québec society are explained to them.

The volume and composition of immigration must be discussed

In the 1990 policy statement on immigration and integration, Québec closely tied immigration to four key challenges: demographic recovery, economic prosperity, sustainability of the French language and openness to the world. The volume and composition of immigration have been determined based on these goals and Québec has gradually increased its immigration levels.

Although Québec has chosen to rely on immigration to contribute to its development, many of the consensuses reached since 1990 are now being challenged. Immigration's contribution to Québec's economic and demographic strength is the subject of repeated debate. For some, although in the minority, justifying an immigration policy based on demographic and economic arguments, as has been the case since 1990, is no longer feasible. The reason given is that immigration has only a marginal, if not negative, impact in those areas.[48]

Furthermore, the view that immigration may be a solution to the problems in recruiting workers is not unanimous. For example, a recently published study suggested that it is false to claim that Québec and Canada are facing a labour shortage and that immigration is the main engine for growth of the labour force.[49] Conversely, in 2014, the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal expressed the wish for higher

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[44] The study identifies the percentage of Muslims in the Canadian population as 2%, but according to the National Household Survey of 2011, it is actually 3.2%.

[45] JEAN, Sandrine, and Annick GERMAIN. "La diversité ethnique croissante des quartiers de classe moyenne dans la métropole montréalaise : des jeunes familles perplexes." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2014, pp. 5-25.

[46] CHRIST, Oliver, and others. "Contextual effects of positive intergroup contact on outgroup predjudice." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 111, no. 11, March 2014, pp. 3996-4000.

BILODEAU, Antoine, and Luc TURGEON. "L'immigration : une menace pour la culture québécoise? Portrait et analyses des perceptions régionales." *Revue canadienne de science politique*, vol. 47, no. 2, June 2014, pp. 281-305.

[47] GAGNON, Alain-G., Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE, and François BOUCHER. *Op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

[48] See, in particular:

DUBREUIL, Benoît, and Guillaume MAROIS. *Le remède imaginaire. Pourquoi l'immigration ne sauvera pas le Québec*. Montréal, Éditions du Boréal, 2011, 320 pages.

[49] HALLIWELL, Cliff. *No Shortage of Opportunity: Policy Ideas to Strengthen Canada's Labour Market in the Coming Decade*. Montréal, Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2013, 50 pages.

levels of immigration to ensure access to qualified labour for businesses, particularly within the context of an ageing population and low productivity.[50]

One of the reasons for the ongoing debate is the difficulty in empirically measuring immigration's economic impact. A review of the key studies conducted in Québec and in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries shows that, in the current context, the economic impact of immigration is potentially positive, but minimal.[51] The studies that saw immigration as having a negative impact also specify that the impact is low. These findings shed light on the importance of relying on the additional economic potential of immigration. Indeed, a better balance between Québec's economic needs and the selection of immigrants, as well as better socioeconomic integration, would ensure that immigration makes a greater contribution to Québec's economy.

These expert debates notwithstanding, a major scientific study gauging public opinion demonstrated a fairly widespread view among Quebecers that immigration contributes to Québec's economic growth.[52] Another study revealed that it is rather the impact on the linguistic and cultural dynamics that is raising concerns in the context of a minority Francophone nation in North America.[53]

Current practices and legislation governing immigration, both outdated, limit the optimum balance between the profile of immigrants and the economic needs of Québec

An Act Respecting Immigration to Québec (CQLR, chapter I-0.2) is the key tool at Québec's disposal to achieve its vision of immigration and to determine the volume and composition of the immigrants it admits. This act (formerly *An Act respecting the Ministère de l'Immigration*) came into force in 1968. Since then, the *Act Respecting Immigration to Québec* has undergone a succession of amendments, but it has never been the object of a thorough review. After 40 years, such an exercise is in order to equip Québec with a more modern and efficient immigration system that will meet the expectations of Québec society.

A review of the *Act Respecting Immigration to Québec* found that it is outdated and fails to provide a complete picture of Québec's responsibilities and of the issues related to immigration. As it stands, the Act only refers to the selection of foreign nationals. It does not address issues at the heart of public concerns, such as the sustainability of the French language, integration and consideration for Québec's common values, and the occupancy and vitality of territories.

Furthermore, the Act has several outdated provisions and some inflexible elements that hinder the ability to act of the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion. In addition, it diminishes Québec's appeal in an increasingly competitive global environment. For example, the Act stipulates that every immigration application must be processed, regardless of whether it meets the selection criteria or the type of profiles that Québec seeks. This requirement has resulted in a backlog with the dramatic increase in applications Québec has recently received. From 2009 to 2011, there were almost 100,000 immigration applications, an amount far in excess of the number needed to attain the selection and admission targets, and clearly greater than the number of applications that can be processed. This

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[50] BOARD OF TRADE OF METROPOLITAN MONTREAL. *Élections provinciales 2014 – La Chambre présente les cinq priorités de la communauté d'affaires pour donner un nouveau souffle économique à la région métropolitaine de Montréal.* [Online], www.ccmm.qc.ca/fr/nouvelles/elections-2014 (viewed on October 17, 2014).

[51] BOUDARBAT, Brahim, and Gilles GRENIER. *Impact de l'immigration sur la dynamique économique du Québec. Op. cit.,* p. 69.
For a transnational perspective specifically regarding the fiscal impact of immigration, see:
ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT. "L'impact fiscal de l'immigration dans les pays de l'OCDE." From *Perspectives des migrations internationales 2013,* OECD Publishing, 2013, p. 172.
The authors mention that their study is based on the current immigrant population and their outcomes. These, in turn, "represent the results of several decades of immigration and integration policies, with all of their successes and failures. In this context, they cannot be taken as indicative of what current immigration policies and outcomes will yield over time." Given the relatively recent shift to immigration systems fostering economic immigration in most major immigration societies, which include Québec, the fiscal impact of these cohorts of immigrants are likely to tend more and more towards positive outcomes.

[52] According to the data presented by researchers Antoine Bilodeau and Luc Turgeon in a meeting on May 16, 2014, at the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, only 16.9% of Quebecers feel that immigration has a negative impact on Québec's economy.

[53] TURGEON, Luc, and Antoine BILODEAU. "Minority nations and attitudes towards immigration: the case of Quebec." *Nations and Nationalism,* vol. 20, no. 2, April 2014, pp. 317-336.

has lengthened processing times, hindered the integration of immigrants, and weakened Québec's competitiveness.

From an administrative point of view, managing the application inventory has been very costly. In order to address the situation, an immigration system is required that is suited to the current environment and that will put Québec in a globally competitive position for selecting and attracting the best talent available.

An overhaul of the Act is in keeping with the determination to improve good governance practices. It is an opportunity to fill in some of the gaps, including the Act's omission of employers and immigration consultants, and thus develop the levers needed to prevent and deal with fraud, protect immigrants and Québec society, and strengthen the integrity of immigration programs.

The vision

This policy is based on a vision reflecting our common ambition to make Québec a prosperous place that ensures individual and collective development. This vision lays out the future for Québec society as a whole, and provides a framework for its actions with regard to immigration, diversity and inclusion.

> **Québec, a Francophone inclusive society, proud of its diversity, that aspires to greater social cohesion through the participation of all Quebecers in collective life and that perceives immigration as an asset essential to its development.**

It is through the participation of the entire population in all of its diversity, and in compliance with Québec's fundamental principles, that the bonds of solidarity uniting Quebecers can be strengthened and lead to greater social cohesion.

In other words, social cohesion is what makes a population more than an aggregate of individuals brought together through historical happenstance. The people of Québec express a sense of belonging through shared experiences, as well as close and meaningful interpersonal relationships that fuel a will to be collectively responsible, share the benefits of living together and build a future filled with hope. Given its dynamic nature, social cohesion can be weakened or strengthened at any time.[54]

A society that aspires to greater cohesion focuses on the need to build a societal project in which all acknowledge that they are active participants called upon to share the efforts required to achieve personal and collective well-being, and that they have the means to do so.[55] It also aims to reduce disparities, combat marginalization, equitably manage differences and ensure the social protection of the entire population.[56]

Ethnocultural homogeneity is not a prerequisite for social cohesion. On the contrary, societies that try to impose homogeneity through forced assimilation practices rely on exclusion and identitarian closure, which can only impede social cohesion. In a context of ethnocultural diversity, social cohesion instead draws on equality of access to common resources and the sense of acceptance and belonging that grows on a daily basis when people of diverse backgrounds live side by side, get to know each other and recognize each other as full members of a single society, with their similarities, differences, agreements and disagreements.

Diversity is constitutive of what Québec is: a society with a rich history and a promising future formed by people from different cultural backgrounds. To be a Quebecer means to be a participant in Québec's collective life, which is why Québec intends to continue building an inclusive society in which everyone can participate fully in a spirit of equality and solidarity.

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[54] GAGNON, Alain-G., Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE, and François BOUCHER. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

[55] Ibid, p. 31.

[56] CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE. *Nouvelle stratégie et Plan d'action du Conseil de l'Europe pour la cohésion sociale*. Strasbourg, Éditions du Conseil de l'Europe, 2010, p. 2.

The guiding principles

The guiding principles of the policy are the ethical and governance norms that give the policy its sense of direction. They help bring about the vision proposed by ensuring the coherence of the strategic choices implemented. They define the rights and responsibilities of the beneficiaries of the policy and those of the stakeholders and partners responsible for implementing it. Lastly, they provide a framework for analyzing and interpreting public engagement. These principles complement those for the occupancy and vitality of territories and sustainable development.

The proposed guiding principles are as follows.

NORMATIVE PRINCIPLES

Recognition

Acceptance and acknowledgement of ethnocultural diversity as a constitutive and intrinsic marker of Québec society and consideration for the needs of the individuals, communities and collectivities that contribute to Québec's development, with due respect for their particularities and dignity.

Fairness

Fair distribution of material and symbolic resources and adaptation of services according to differentiated needs to ensure that all have an equal chance to realize their potential, meet their aspirations and fully participate in collective life.

Shared commitment

Commitment by society to recognize and acknowledge the contribution of all and individual commitment of each and everyone to actively participate in Québec life.

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Access to knowledge

Availability and transparent transmission of information and knowledge that is readily accessible, significant, relevant, compelling, adapted to needs and available in real time for all of society in order to foster equal opportunity; to give immigrants the tools they need to move forward autonomously; and to provide socioeconomic partners the means to make informed decisions and reinforce confidence in public institutions.

Subsidiarity

Adequate distribution of power and responsibility to the appropriate level of authority, making sure that those in charge are as close as possible to the individuals and communities concerned by relying on a concerted network of partners who are deeply rooted in the communities.

Efficiency

Maximization of the impact of interventions by pooling and making optimal use of the allocated resources, and by the modulation and adaption of interventions to respond appropriately to the needs of individuals and communities.

The challenges and strategic choices

The foundations and vision of the new policy are structured by three key interconnected challenges that Québec must meet to consolidate its action in immigration, diversity and inclusion. These challenges are the core of the policy and of the resulting actions. Each one involves several strategic choices that present findings, actions previously undertaken and questions to better circumscribe the issue, guide the consultation process and orient the government's choices.

First challenge
An inclusive society that allows for full participation through collective and individual commitment

Because Québec adheres to the ideal of liberal democracy, it must be inclusive. It must strive for the full participation of people of all origins and thus ensure that no one is left out, on the basis of real or alleged ethnocultural differences, in keeping with the guidelines imposed by the common public culture.

Societies that do not concern themselves with inclusion foster marginalization and identitarian closure, fertile grounds for mounting social tensions. Conversely, an inclusive society that relies on participation tends to be more socially cohesive, more economically prosperous and more politically stable, and thus to act as guarantor of liberty, solidarity and security.

An inclusive society is based on shared and mutual commitment: society's collective commitment to recognize and value the contribution of all and to support the integration of immigrants and, in return, the individual commitment of each person to actively participate in collective life. This is why collective and individual efforts are required to build a Québec made rich by its diversity, and that evolves and innovates through the participation of all its talents.

Strategic choice 1.1
Recognized diversity and open, active intercultural exchanges

The recognition and fair representation of ethnocultural diversity are essential so that people of all origins can identify with and be recognized as full-fledged Quebecers, as much by their similarities as their differences. The diversification of the population challenges our capacity for dialogue and intercultural encounters through which are woven the bonds of trust and solidarity essential for building an inclusive society.

There has been an ongoing debate surrounding recognition, acceptance and belonging in a context of ethnocultural diversity since Québec chose to assert itself as a welcoming and pluralistic society open to immigration. This debate, which bears upon fundamental issues of justice, equality, equity and solidarity, received special attention in the policy statement on immigration and integration, *Let's Build Québec Together* (1990) and in the Government policy *Diversity: An Added Value* (2008). These policies and the associated action plans gave way to a wide variety of actions in several areas at the national, local and regional level.

> **Some recent actions**
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> ■ The annual Québec intercultural week [Semaine québécoise des rencontres interculturelles], which aims to promote harmonious intercultural relations, encourage the understanding and exercise of rights and responsibilities as well as highlight the contribution of immigration and diversity on Québec's development. *Accueillir… pour grandir et s'ouvrir* [welcoming others so we can open up and grow] was the theme for 2014.
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> ■ In 2011 and 2012, the launch of *Toutes nos origines enrichissent le Québec* [all of our origins enrich Québec], which aimed to raise awareness among the population in general and employers in particular regarding the contributions made by immigrant Quebecers.
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> ■ The Charles-Biddle Award, given for the exceptional contribution of an individual who immigrated to Québec and whose personal or professional engagement contributes to Québec's cultural and artistic development on the national or international scene. The winners of the most recent editions are: Kim Thuy (2014); Zab Maboungou and Boucar Diouf (tied) (2013); Rodney Saint-Éloi (2012) and Diego Herrera, alias Yayo (2011).
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> ■ On a daily basis, numerous community organizations all over Québec carry out projects to bring together people from different backgrounds in social, cultural, leisure and sports activities.

Recognition of ethnocultural diversity and intercultural understanding

Despite the openness generally shown by the Québec population, negative perceptions of people with different ethnocultural origins continue to persist. Consequently, recognition of diversity and adherence to a pluralistic view of Québec society are reduced. It is therefore necessary to maintain information, awareness and intercultural rapprochement efforts and to better direct them to promote knowledge and understanding of Québec's pluralistic reality.

The positive message conveyed by government awareness-raising initiatives on the contribution of ethnocultural diversity is appreciated, but consultations with partners suggest that it mainly reaches audiences that are already aware of or familiar with ethnocultural diversity, so its influence remains limited. For this awareness-raising message to reach a larger audience, increased commitment is needed from other actors in society, particularly the media, which has a significant influence on perceptions.

Common public culture

The guidelines of collective life in a context of diversity are a source of concern. A segment of the Québec population perceives accommodations of differences as contrary to societal choices and social progress, especially with regard to gender equality and the religious neutrality of the State. Taking into account these legitimate concerns is very important to avoid their exacerbation and thus harming social cohesion.[57]

Quebec has a common public culture that delimits the reach of the principle of diversity recognition and acts as a bulwark against the idea that respect for differences justifies practices contrary to the fundamental principles of Québec society. This common public culture is based on a common civic framework composed, in particular, of the Charter of the French Language, which recognizes French as the language of public life and the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which enshrines the fundamental principles of Québec in particular, democracy, gender equality and the prohibition of discrimination, in addition to the principle of religious neutrality of the State and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The ethics of dialogue

In a diversified society like Québec, public discussion regarding intercultural relations is inevitable. The quality of the mediation between differences in values and conflicts related to fundamental cultural preferences reflects a healthy democratic society, respectful of basic rights, including the right to be different. Establishing a dialogue between these differences and society's ability to mediate through

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[57] PAPADEMETRIOU, Demetrios G. *Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration*. Washington, Migration Policy Institute, 2012, p. 1.

democratic deliberations, with due respect for the rights and dignity of all, lead to innovative solutions that contribute to social cohesion.

Public debate on intercultural relations often tackles sensitive and even polarizing topics, and sometimes results in controversy. There are effective checks and balances to ensure that democratic debates respect the fundamental rights and equal dignity of individuals. However, they must be reinforced and more widely known. It is also appropriate to promote attitudes that are both receptive and open to intercultural dialogue.[58]

Fair representation of diversity

Fair representation of diversity is very important because it sends a powerful message of inclusion and increases the participation of ethnocultural minorities in social, cultural, economic and political life in Québec. However, there are still very few individuals from ethnocultural minorities, particularly visible minorities, Aboriginals and Québec's English-speaking historical minority, in public or private leadership roles in society.

Moreover, the presence of Quebecers from ethnocultural minorities in the collective consciousness is crucial because these people have contributed to building Québec society throughout its history. Cultural life is a powerful expression of the way a society feels about and views the world and thus contributes to shape its collective representations and its ability to plan for a common and inclusive future. The impact of the cultural and communications industry on perceptions is even greater for people who are exposed to ethnocultural diversity mainly through mass media and culture.

By the numbers

Representation within the Québec public service

6.5%

Rate of representation of individuals belonging to a cultural community among regular public service staff in March 2012, compared to 2.2% in March 2003 (Source: Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor)

GOING A STEP FURTHER…

Québec society may be diverse, but there are still negative perceptions between ethnocultural groups. Commitment to pluralism and recognition of diversity are put to the test.

1. How do we improve knowledge and understanding of Québec diversity and make the whole population more aware of the contributions of ethnocultural diversity to Québec? What kinds of activities would be most effective?

Recent debates shed light on the concerns of a segment of the population regarding the common rules of collective life in a context of increasing diversity. As a result of its history and aspirations, Québec has a solid, proven common public culture that should be reaffirmed and better promoted among the population as a whole. Some controversy has been observed regarding intercultural relations, especially since the arrival of social media, which could be mitigated if public discussions about intercultural relations were focused on listening, exchange and mediation.

2. How do we increase awareness of the various components of common public culture and better promote them? Which key elements should be the object of a strengthened promotion strategy? For example, how do we ensure a common understanding of the principle of gender equality in an intercultural context? How do we maintain and foster healthy ethics of intercultural dialogue in social media and other forums to encourage social inclusion and everyone's participation in these discussions? Should we formalize Québec interculturalism? If so, what would be the best way to do it?

Despite efforts made, people from ethnocultural minorities remain underrepresented in leadership roles in Québec society, in the media and within the cultural industry.

3. What other strategies do we need to adopt to increase representation of diversity in leadership roles and in the cultural domain, namely mass media and advertising?

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[58] INNERARITY, Daniel. *Éthique de l'hospitalité*. Québec, Les Presse de l'Université Laval, 2009, 250 pages.
See, also:
MACLURE, Jocelyn. *Récits identitaires. Le Québec à l'épreuve du pluralisme*. Montréal, Québec Amérique, 2000, 220 pages.
GAGNON, Alain-G. *L'Âge des incertitudes : Essais sur le fédéralisme et la diversité nationale*. Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2011, pp. 175-186.

Strategic choice 1.2
Inclusive institutions and communities

An inclusive society that acknowledges its diversity must adapt its institutions and environments (work, education, health and social services) so that all people have access to them, participate in them and contribute to them equitably. It requires adopting practices that guarantee respect for basic human rights and favour participation in society. Beyond institutions, this adjustment relies on the mobilization of all Quebecers.

Intercultural adaptation practices, including the advisory service on reasonable accommodation requests, consideration of ethnocultural diversity and institutional adjustments are recurrent areas of intervention in Québec's policies and action plans for managing ethnocultural diversity. This is done by implementing various measures and courses of action, particularly in the public sector.

The actions taken by government departments and their partners since the 1990s confirm positive development overall and increased awareness, by key actors, of the challenges associated with the adaptation to ethnocultural diversity in institutions and communities. However, to address persistent challenges, it is necessary to pursue and improve on the movement begun by government departments, their partners and, more broadly, civil society, in developing inclusive institutions and communities.

Some recent actions

■ In 2014, creation of an interdepartmental working committee involving government departments and organizations with a role in the skills recognition process to facilitate the socioprofessional integration of immigrants.

■ In 2014, unveiling by the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport of a reference framework to support schools in the reception and integration of immigrant students.

■ In 2011, creation and online publication by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale and the ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations of the *Diversité+ kit*, accompanied by a reference framework on managing ethnocultural diversity in businesses and the document titled *Gestion de la diversité ethnoculturelle – Recueil des programmes et services offerts aux entreprises* [managing ethnocultural diversity – collection of programs and services available to businesses].

■ In 2009, creation by the government of the position of Commissionnaire aux plaintes en matière de reconnaissance des compétences professionnelles [commissioner on complaints regarding the recognition of professional skills]. Attached to the Office des professions du Québec [Québec professions board], the Commissioner's mission is to ensure fair, effective and efficient access to professions governed by a professional order.

■ In 2008, establishment by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse [commission on human rights and youth rights] of the advisory service on reasonable accommodation mainly intended for employers and decision makers who deal with reasonable accommodation requests related to working conditions and the provision of services.

Systemic obstacles to socioprofessional integration

As well as having an impact on the inclusion of immigrants, issues related to the insufficient recognition of skills obtained abroad also have a significant economic impact. While it is difficult to put an exact figure on this impact, some authors put the losses associated with the underutilization of immigrant skills in Canada annually at more than $10 billion.[59]

To develop their potential and participate in the sustainable development of their community, all Quebecers must be able to access a job commensurate with their skills and achieve their full potential. However, the socioprofessional integration problems experienced by immigrants, particularly women and people from visible minorities born in Québec or abroad, call for the establishment of more targeted strategies, with more observable and lasting benefits.

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[59] REITZ, Jeffrey G., Josh CURTIS, and Jennifer ELRICK. "Immigrant Skill Utilization: Trends and Policy Issues." *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, February 2014, vol. 15, pp 1-26.

When it comes to professional integration problems for immigrants trained abroad, those related to the recognition of skills are the ones that come up most often. The Québec government must continue to pay steady attention to this issue and engage all actors in the labour market and, among them, the organizations that govern professions and trades as well as professional orders.

Recognition of the skills of internationally trained individuals

Depending on the professional integration goals of internationally trained individuals, different organizations are responsible for assessing and recognizing their skills. If an internationally trained individual wants to obtain authorization to practise a regulated profession or trade, the professional orders and other regulatory bodies are responsible for recognizing qualifications or skills.

However, when a internationally trained individual wants to practise a non-regulated profession or trade, which is most often the case, employers are responsible for evaluating the individual's skills for hiring purposes. If internationally trained individuals want to pursue studies in Québec, the teaching institution is responsible for evaluating and recognizing the training received abroad.

In recent years, significant progress has been made in terms of access by internationally trained individuals to professions regulated by a professional order. The leaders of professional orders have adopted principles for the recognition of equivalence to ensure that their policies and procedures for recognizing skills are fair, objective and transparent. Moreover, nearly 30 professional orders have designed innovative tools to improve their processes for assessing and recognizing skills. Other tools have been designed to better inform immigrants of the conditions for accessing regulated professions and trades and encourage them to submit their request while they are still outside the country.

The number of requests for recognition of equivalence of credentials and training received by professional orders has increased significantly in recent years. In nearly half of cases, the applicants submitting a request for equivalence receive partial recognition of equivalence. This is accompanied by a prescription for training, indicating what knowledge and skills need to be acquired in order to practise in Québec. Usually, applicants are asked to take one or more courses, sometimes a whole bridge training program, complete an internship, take one or more exams or successfully complete a combination of these requirements. It is hard to determine exactly how many people who obtain partial recognition of equivalence successfully complete this prescribed training and therefore receive a permit to practise their profession. One of the problems applicants might face is the sometimes significant costs of completing the various steps of the process.

Internships and bridge training can significantly contribute to facilitating the professional integration of internationally trained individuals, but it can sometimes be difficult to gain access to them. Some of the systemic obstacles to overcome to facilitate this access are matching the prescribed training to the content of existing courses, the heterogeneity of training needs, the capacity of limited-enrolment study programs, the structure of regular training programs, which can limit the possibility for applicants to enter the program when they would like, and the impossibility of forming a cohort when the number of students is insufficient.

Moreover, learning French can be a considerable difficulty for some immigrants who want to obtain a work permit from a professional association. In accordance with the Charter of the French Language, it is mandatory for applicants who practise a profession regulated by a professional order to demonstrate knowledge of the French language appropriate to practising that profession. A sufficient knowledge of French is also necessary to successfully complete exams, internships and bridge training.

Another persistent challenge is the fair assessment of skills, especially those gained through experience. Tools have been designed by some organizations and employers to evaluate these skills. However, some employers, especially small businesses, are not adequately equipped to carry out such evaluations.

The *Évaluation comparative des études* (comparative evaluation of studies) issued by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion can help potential employers assess an applicant's training, but its usefulness is still sometimes misunderstood. This tool makes it possible to compare studies done outside Québec to Québec education levels and training fields, but does not constitute a formal framework for recognizing equivalence.

Despite recent advancements, it is important to document persistent problems in the evaluation and recognition of skills by regulatory bodies, as well as employers, to clearly identify which actions to take and to choose appropriate tools based on the desired outcome.

By the numbers

Recognition of skills

15%

Approximate proportion of active immigrants admitted to Québec between 2009 and 2013 who want to practise a profession regulated by a professional order in Québec.

20%

Approximate proportion including other regulated professions and trades (elementary and secondary school teachers and construction trades, etc.)

5,251

Number of requests for admission addressed to professional orders from internationally trained individuals in 2011-2012 compared to 754 in 2000-2001.

(Sources: Office des professions du Québec and Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec)

Inclusive institutional and community practices

The increasing diversity of the Québec population requires that efforts be made to take into account differentiated needs in the overall services offered to ensure fair and equitable access to institutions and organizations. Schools in particular have seen the proportion of students of immigrant origin, i.e. students born abroad or in Québec with at least one parent born outside Québec, nearly double since the end of the 1990s.[60] To promote student success and retention, the school network must prioritize actions to address the new realities in all regions of Québec.[61] The health and social services network must develop services that address, among other things, the problems faced by youth members of ethnocultural minorities and the sedentary habit problems of newly arrived immigrants.[62] The justice and public safety sectors must also consolidate their inclusive practices so that, for example, police forces better reflect the diversity of the population or so that assistance services for immigrants are better adapted to their needs. People in positions of authority in these areas are exploring different courses of action that might be used in their field of activity, but also in other institutions and communities, such as intervention support, training, hiring a diversified labour force, adapting services, partnership, and sharing and circulating information.

Beyond adapting services based on the mission of each institution, intersectoral coordination and collaboration are also important ways of establishing integrated and efficient services.

> **Equal access to employment programs**
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> An equal access to employment program (EAP) aims to correct situations of inequality faced by certain groups of people in the workforce, especially in public agencies with at least 100 employees, including municipalities, government departments and government agencies, and in private-sector businesses with 100 employees or more and a government contract or grant worth $100,000 or more. Target groups include visible minorities, ethnic minorities, Aboriginals, women and people with a disability. Despite EAPs, the underrepresentation of ethnocultural minorities in many areas of employment is still troubling. Yet the legal and administrative tools seem adequate. It seems that the complexity of implementing and following up on EAPs discourages employers and limits their impact.

Intercultural and anti-racist training

Initial and ongoing training in ethnocultural diversity is a key element in developing inclusive institutions and communities. After several years of development, it remains limited overall to front-line workers and public-sector practitioners, leaving out managers, including human resources departments and senior executives. Moreover, there is little assessment of training content, implementation strategies and the more successful approaches.

Harmonious and sustainable cohabitation in living environments

Common spaces where people interact or meet are crucial for allowing everyone to participate and contribute fairly and safely. In that regard, the involvement of people working in communities and associations is crucial, as is local and regional coordination to ensure that public services are adapted to the realities of the regions and cities, which are key sensitive locations where cultural and political transformations occur as a result of contemporary migrations.[63]

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[60] QUÉBEC. MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, DU LOISIR ET DU SPORT. *Portrait statistique 2011-2012 des élèves issus de l'immigration, Formation générale des jeunes – édition 2013*. [Online], 27 pages [www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/references/publications/resultats-de-la-recherche/detail/article/portrait-scolaire-des-eleves-issus-de-limmigration/] (viewed on November 20, 2014).

[61] QUÉBEC. MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, DU LOISIR ET DU SPORT. *Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle.* [Online], [www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/educ_adulte_action_comm/14_00124_Rapport_pol_integration_scolaire_edu_interculturelle_2013.pdf] (viewed on November 20, 2014).

[62] GIRARD, Alain, and Pierre SERCIA. "Immigration et transformation des saines habitudes de vie. Le cas de l'activité physique chez des immigrants de première génération à Montréal." [Communication presented at the Canadian Public Health Association annual conference], Montréal, June 20, 2011.

[63] GERMAIN, Annick. "Une ville inclusive est-elle une ville sans exclusion? Lorsque la diversité vivifie ou fatigue…" From *Le développement d'institutions inclusives en contexte de diversité*, under the supervision of Marie MC ANDREW, Maryse POTVIN, and Corina BORRI-ANADON, Québec, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2013, pp. 27-43.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

After several years of development, intercultural and anti-racist training of staff and managers in institutions and organizations remains under-assessed and limited to a few aspects.

4.   Apart from offering training, what other methods could be used to make senior management aware of the importance of developing intercultural and anti-racist skills in various environments? What key concepts must be communicated when developing awareness training on cultural diversity and racial profiling?

To ensure fair and equitable access to institutions and organizations, it is sometimes necessary to adjust practices and services to take into account the ethnocultural diversity of the Québec population and the specific needs of immigrants. Intersectoral coordination and cooperation are also important ways of establishing integrated and efficient services to meet the requirements of an inclusive society.

5.   While Québec is experiencing an increase in its ethnocultural diversity, how do we increase consideration for the needs associated with this diversity in all areas (education, business, work, health, public safety, etc.)?

Immigrants and individuals from ethnocultural minorities face particular problems and barriers when trying to access jobs commensurate with their skills or aspirations and advancing in them. In the workplace, this diversity sometimes requires adjustments and the implementation of diversity management practices.

6.   How can we mobilize all the actors, employers, regulatory agencies and unions to introduce innovative measures to recognize skills and ensure real equality in the workforce for immigrants and ethnocultural minorities? To this end, how do we adequately inform and equip employers – particularly small and medium-sized businesses – to help them fairly assess the skills of internationally trained individuals and effectively and fairly manage ethnocultural diversity in the workplace? In that regard, what can the new interdepartmental committee on the recognition of skills and knowledge formed in 2014 do to facilitate the socioprofessional integration of immigrants? How can we better reach the hiring and representation targets of the equal access to employment program? How do we transform hiring practices so that they are free from discrimination?

Outside of the education and employment sectors, which are often discussed, all common spaces where people interact and meet must allow everyone to participate and contribute equitably.

7.   How do we promote initiatives by citizens and local associations to foster inclusive and participatory living environments?

Strategic choice 1.3
Individuals actively involved in Québec society through successful participation

When Quebecers of all origins participate in collective life, all of society benefits from the wealth of Québec diversity. This participation is multidimensional, encompassing, in particular, linguistic, economic, political, social, cultural, and community dimensions.

Since 1990, Québec has taken various actions to support the efforts of newcomers or people born here in successfully participating in Québec life. Regarding immigrants, the government increased its service offer to facilitate the immigration process, starting from abroad. Immigrants arrive here better prepared and thus able to integrate faster into their new environment. The government also tried to encourage greater participation by Quebecers of all origins in Québec's Francophonie as well as in economic, political, community and cultural life. It has done so through a variety of measures aiming to remove obstacles hindering their learning of French, their employment integration and their presence as business leaders and decision makers.

Despite the efforts made by these people and socioeconomic actors, immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities still do not always participate in keeping with their potential or their aspirations. The importance of engaging these individuals and to support them therefore needs to be promoted.

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Some recent actions

■ In 2014, establishment by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale of the *Dispositif de services intégrés pour les personnes immigrantes nouvellement arrivées* [integrated services for newly arrived immigrants], which aims to make the integration process for immigrants simpler, faster and more efficient.

■ In 2013, announcement of the Stratégie commune d'intervention pour le Grand Montréal 2013-2015 – *Le français, notre affaire à tous* [2013-2015 common intervention strategy for Greater Montréal – French is everyone's business] to renew support to help small businesses with francization, among other things, in coordination with the business community, unions and education sectors.

■ In 2012, unveiling by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, of a common standard to better structure education, consolidate French learning and evaluation and ensure a more coherent francization process for immigrants.

■ In 2011, adoption of Agenda 21C, which includes an objective whose purpose is to encourage, through arts and culture, intercultural dialogue between Quebecers and to increase opportunities for interaction between artists from all origins and Québec society to foster integration and inclusion and fight intolerance, discrimination and racism.

■ In 2005, launch of the Programme d'aide à l'intégration des immigrants et des minorités visibles en emploi [job integration assistance program for immigrants and visible minorities], which has since helped over 9,600 people, 40% of whom were women, get their first job in their field of expertise in Québec.

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Participation: a right and a responsibility[64]

All immigrants have to undergo an integration process. This process is multidimensional, multifactorial and diverse**.** Some people, as Francophones, will have an easier linguistic integration, while others will take several months before they are fully functional with regard to language. The same is true for other economic, cultural, social and political aspects. For immigration to be in line with the choices and needs of Québec, the immigration system relies on immigrants being engaged in the integration process from their country of origin, but also on the commitment of all actors in society, including ethnocultural minority organizations. However, integration is still a process that varies in length depending on the individual.

Although it can last a lifetime, integration is first and foremost a period of transition towards inclusion. It is a period that requires a high amount of learning and adjustment and that tends to level off over time. Although learning and adjustment are intense for immigrants, integration is a phenomenon that demands reciprocity because all of society is also involved in a process of learning and adjustment to the ethnocultural diversification of its population.

The integration process that immigrants go through when they move to another society requires a strong commitment from them and a will to acquire the knowledge needed to adjust to their new living environment. In Québec, this includes learning French as well as understanding and respecting common values. These are necessary adjustments for establishing harmonious intercultural relations and for everyone to fully participate.

Thus conceived, integration specifically concerns immigrants and calls on society to be welcoming. On the other hand, full participation calls on the whole population and requires society to be inclusive.

Thus, participation is here understood to be both a responsibility and a right. It is considered a right in the sense that no marker of difference can be allowed to act as an obstacle to participation. Participation rests on the ideals of equality and justice included in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Participation is also a responsibility in that it refers to the necessary solidarity of life in society characterized by interdependence. To exercise this right and assume this responsibility, it is essential to be able to count on the commitment of all actors in society.

Moreover, participation is premised on, and is inseparable from, the ability to act. Thus, it is not simply a matter of removing obstacles to participation, but also of working to equip people so that they can fully participate in society's future.

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[64] This conceptual approach to participation draws in arge part from GAGNON, Alain-G., Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE, and François BOUCHER. *Op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.

French as the language of integration and of social cohesion

Knowledge of the French language is clearly a prerequisite for intercultural dialogue and rapprochement between Quebecers of all origins. French is the vehicle that allows exchanges to take place between all Quebecers, regardless of their mother tongue or the language used in their private life. According to Michel Pagé, linguistic integration in Québec is defined by two elements: acquiring French-language competency and having a preference for French as the language of public use.[65] Moreover, the Conseil supérieur de la langue française has adopted the concept of French, language of social cohesion. This concept establishes a two-way relationship:

– The common language of public space is a factor that contributes to social cohesion;
– Social cohesion is a condition that fosters the learning and use of the common language.

Also, the concept of *French as the language of integration* is based on the fact that an "adequate learning of French guarantees easier access to finding and keeping a job, and opens useful avenues when pursuing studies [and helps access] essential services in French, communicate with members of Québec society and thrive in a language that is not one's own."[66]

Over the years, francization services have grown considerably in terms of accessibility and quality. For example, offering training adapted to certain areas of professional activity, such as in health, engineering and administration, helped accelerate employment integration for non-Francophone immigrants.

Even if the services offered improved and diversified over the years, reaching those who still scarcely use them, particularly non-Francotropes, e.g. people from Asia, remains a challenge. The importance of stepping up and diversifying actions to reach these people remains a priority in order to facilitate their socioprofessional integration.

For that to happen, employers have an important role to play. Several services are available to help businesses provide French training in the workplace.

Employment access, retention and promotion

Employment is one of the key dimensions of participation. Of course, employment helps people meet their needs and those of their family, but also to thrive and expand their social network.

Many programs and measures have been implemented to make it easier for immigrants to adjust to the Québec labour market and support the hiring of immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities. However, the unemployment rates for those two groups, particularly people from visible minorities, are still an issue. Knowledge of French alone does not guarantee integration in the workforce, as shown by the employment and unemployment rates of a certain number of Francophone immigrants.

In addition to systemic barriers like the recognition of skills, other obstacles interfere with access to the workforce, namely a lack of work experience in Québec, a lack of training, the language barrier, employers' lack of openness, and overqualification.

In certain government strategies, immigrants and ethnocultural minorities are sometimes presented as just one among other underrepresented groups in the workforce and, therefore, not necessarily in need of specific remedial actions. Moreover, the major differences between the problems faced by immigrants and those faced by visible minorities do not always seem to be taken into consideration.

Entrepreneurship as a means of economic participation

In 2010, a document from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that immigrants contribute to the economic growth of host societies by bringing new knowledge and skills. In OECD countries, entrepreneurship is slightly higher among immigrants than among those

By the numbers

Knowledge of French

73.9%

Knowledge of French, in 2011, by Anglophones and Allophones compared to 70.7% in 1991 and 75.5% in 2001

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[65] PAGÉ, Michel. *Politiques d'intégration et cohésion sociale. Op. cit.*, p. 3.
[66] QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA DIVERSITÉ ET DE L'INCLUSION. *Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes immigrantes adultes au Québec.* Montréal, 2011, p. 6.

born in the host countries, although the survival rate for these businesses is often lower than that for businesses established by people born in the country.[67]

However, it is known that immigrant entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs from many ethnocultural minorities encounter particular problems when starting a business, including the need to learn about Québec laws and culture and access to support measures. Services for potential entrepreneurs from ethnocultural minorities have developed considerably, but better coordination would help people benefit more easily from the services offered.

Cultural advancement and participation in cultural life

The participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in culture and communications favours the development of an inclusive and diversified Québec culture. However, recognition of professional arts practices stemming from ethnocultural minorities, like that of emerging artistic expression, remains a concern. This recognition can be facilitated by broader and more targeted distribution of information on funding programs for artists from ethnocultural minorities and organizations. This recognition can also be facilitated through training, support and the development of professional skills. The goal of these measures would be to facilitate access for immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities to professional networks, promote ethnocultural diversity in the programming of cultural institutions and in artistic and cultural productions, discover talent, and enhance Québec's cultural offer. Another avenue to explore is adapting the cultural offer to make it more accessible to immigrants.

Civic and social involvement and networking

Increasing the ability of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities, especially women, to participate more in public life, occupy decision-making positions and encourage their participation at all levels, is a challenge. Advancing women into decision-making positions remains an important factor in progress toward equality, but doing the same for immigrant women and women from ethnocultural minorities, including visible minorities, presents a significant challenge.

In general, daily interactions that result from involvement in various social networks should also be encouraged because they help develop beneficial social capital. Bonds of solidarity, trust and cooperation between people of different origins can be created as a result of meeting and sharing common experiences. According to Robert Putnam, "The core idea is very simple: social networks have value. […] social networks can be a powerful asset, both for individuals and for communities."[68] For example, studies and surveys have shown that a high proportion of available jobs are filled through personal contact networks.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

Knowing French, the common language of public space, is an essential factor for social cohesion. The Charter of the French Language aims to make French the normal and everyday language of work, education, communication, trade, and business.

8.   What can be done to ensure that immigrants and ethnocultural minorities acquire the French language skills needed to get a job that corresponds to their aspirations and professional qualifications? How do we encourage employers to participate in efforts to make French the normal and everyday language of work?

The economic participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities depends on access to jobs that correspond to their qualifications and entrepreneurship. Despite efforts, the participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities is often lower than that of the general population.

9.   How do we increase the rate of economic participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities, especially women? How do we extend initiatives regarding access to bridge training, internships and mentorships for internationally trained individuals?

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[67] ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT. *Open for Business: Migrant Entrepreneurship in OECD Countries*. Paris, OECD Publishing, 2010, 312 pages.
[68] PUTNAM, Robert D. Interview in the *OECD Observer*, no. 242, March 2004, p. 14.

The inclusive nature of Québec must also be reflected by the participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in cultural, political and social activities.

10. What strategies would encourage the cultural, civic, political and social participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities?

Strategic choice 1.4
A society that is free of prejudice, discrimination, intimidation and racism

Québec has long been engaged in the prevention of discrimination and the protection of the rights set out in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. However, people still encounter discrimination and prejudice, and even certain forms of intimidation and racism. This is particularly the case for members of ethnocultural minorities born within and outside Québec, immigrants, and Aboriginals. The exclusion that results from racism and discrimination illustrates the need to take strong action against these phenomena because it deprives Québec society of the full potential that many people could contribute.

Discrimination and racism have an impact on the health of individuals, particularly on their self-esteem and psychological well-being. It is therefore important to prevent and intervene appropriately, while taking into account the complexity of discrimination situations. Some people, such as immigrant or Aboriginal women, senior immigrants or sexual minorities experience what is called intersectional discrimination.

> **The Government policy to promote participation of all in Québec's development,** *Diversity: An Added Value* **and its 2008-2013 action plan**
>
> One of the objectives of this policy was to combat prejudice and discrimination based on colour, religion or ethnic or national origin. Various initiatives were implemented such as producing information documents for temporary and farm workers and guides for immigrants presenting their rights and emphasizing the principle of gender equality. Training sessions on rights and responsibilities are available in various milieux, as are training sessions on racial profiling for police. Redress mechanisms also saw significant improvements and victim support projects were implemented.

Raising awareness of the impact of prejudice, discrimination, intimidation and racism on people and society

Racism takes many forms, from offensive remarks and insults to harassment, intimidation and physical attacks. Everyone can be affected by discrimination and racism, either as perpetrators, victims or witnesses, particularly at work, at school and in cyberspace. Although the prejudices and stereotypes that often lead to this behaviour are common, it is important to understand that these are false judgements and that we must not let these prejudices guide our social relationships.

Intimidation, racism and direct, indirect and systemic discrimination prevent people from fully participating in the development of Québec society. These attitudes can also lead to self-exclusion by victims and their loved ones, a situation that gets in the way of building an inclusive society and weakens social cohesion.

To combat discrimination and racism, awareness and education are convincing ways to prevent and intervene, as are sustained efforts to encourage intercultural dialogue and rapprochement, which allow people to get familiar with differences and counter prejudices and stereotypes. As a result, these differences may appear less significant and less threatening.

Human rights education and the support of victims of intimidation, discrimination and racism

Québec's legislative commitment to fighting discrimination and racism follows the adoption of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms in 1975. This commitment has been reiterated over the years, particularly in 1986 with the unanimous adoption by the National Assembly of the Québec government's Declaration on Intercultural and Interracial Relations and the Government policy to promote participation

of all in Québec's development, *Diversity: An Added Value* and its 2008-2013 Action Plan. Regarding intimidation, the *Act to Prevent and Stop Violence and Bullying in Schools* (CQLR, chapter 19) was sanctioned in 2012. The purpose of this Act is to provide a healthy and safe learning environment for children so they can develop their full potential, protected from any form of intimidation or violence.

The respect for rights and their exercise are premised on the knowledge of the law. Yet not all Quebecers have sufficient knowledge of the laws, and of their rights and responsibilities. This lack of knowledge can lead to repeated discriminatory and racist behaviours and ideas. Victims may not know the remedies available to them, and that limits their ability to exercise their rights.

Monitoring and preventing hate propaganda and crimes

While hate propaganda and crimes are infrequent, their severity is fully revealed by the profound impact they can have on victims and their loved ones. Hate crimes are often motivated by personal characteristics such as colour, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation, which are important elements of victims' identities, thereby increasing the psychological harm.

Hate propaganda is particularly troubling on the Internet and in the social media, where racist remarks are making a comeback and given a legitimation of sorts by the viral effects of the Internet.

Preventing racial profiling

Racial profiling refers to any action taken by one or more people in a position of authority with respect to a person or group of persons for reasons of safety, security or public protection, that is based on factors of real or alleged membership, such as "race", colour, ethnic or national origin or religion, with no real motive or reasonable suspicion, and that results in the person or group being exposed to scrutiny or differential treatment. Racial profiling also includes any action by persons in a position of authority who apply a measure disproportionately to segments of the population because of, among other things, their real or alleged racial, ethnic, national or religious affiliation.

This racial and social profiling relies on presumptions based on prejudice, myths and stereotypes. In concrete terms, it manifests as particular scrutiny and more frequent inspections of people from visible minority groups. Young members of visible minority groups living in poor neighbourhoods are greatly affected by this phenomenon because these repeated behaviours generate a feeling of harassment. Preventing racial profiling relies, among other things, on improving relationships between the police and local communities, increasing youth awareness and providing initial and ongoing training to interveners in police services.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

Despite multiple awareness-raising, education and intercultural rapprochement efforts, discriminatory, intimidatory and racist attitudes persist. Therefore, increased efforts are necessary.

Awareness-raising and education are convincing ways to become familiar with differences and aware of prejudices.

11. How do we make the population more aware of the consequences of prejudices, discrimination, intimidation and racism on individuals and society as a whole?

Not all Quebecers have a sufficient knowledge or understanding of laws and of their rights and responsibilities. Victims may not know the remedies available to them, and that limits their ability to exercise their rights.

12. How do we make more people aware of the laws, rights and responsibilities concerning equality and anti-discrimination? How do we intervene while paying careful attention to intersectional discrimination, for example, on the basis of ethnic origin, religion and sex?

Members of visible minorities, particularly youth who live in poor neighbourhoods, are greatly affected by racial profiling because this repeated behaviour generates a feeling of harassment.

13. In addition to the training that has already been offered to police officers for many years, what other methods could be used to increase awareness of the impact of racial profiling and the importance of developing intercultural skills?

Although hate propaganda and crimes are infrequent in Québec society, the consequences are very significant for the victims. Currently, hate propaganda is particularly troubling on the Internet and in social media.

14. How do we react to manifestations of racism on the Internet? How do we mobilize the population to foster respect and civility on social media? What proactive steps do we take to dispel this phenomenon?

Second challenge
Immigration that reflects societal choices

Faced with the slowing growth of the working-age population (i.e. persons aged 20 to 64), Québec must, to contribute to the vibrancy of its economy, select immigrants who present the socioprofessional profiles that would best meet the needs of the labour market and facilitate their integration. Immigration also fosters innovation and productivity for businesses and local communities.

As the only majority Francophone community in North America, Québec has made a priority of immigration's contribution to the vitality and continuity of the French language. Welcoming Francophone immigrants who meet Québec's needs requires attracting strategic talents and raises concerns about their long-term settlement given an international environment characterized by fierce competition and the internationalization of education. To foster the diversity of Québec society, Québec has also chosen to maintain an immigration flow with a balanced distribution of regions of origin.

Moreover, Québec has made family reunification one of the fundamental principles of its immigration policy because of its positive impact on attracting immigrants and on the long-term settlement of immigrant families in Québec. It has also shown its commitment to international solidarity by welcoming people in distressful situations.

Strategic Choice 2.1
A competitive immigration system that makes it possible to attract, select and promote the long-term settlement of strategic talents that contribute to the vitality of the French language, prosperity and diversity

As far as immigration is concerned, one of the main challenges that Québec faces is finding the right balance between immigrant selection and the various immigration policy objectives. The profile of the immigrants selected is mainly determined by the objectives of ensuring the vitality of the French language, prosperity and diversity of origin, which requires some arbitration. Thus far, the complementary nature of immigration programs has facilitated this arbitration. In fact, Québec, like the leading immigration countries, has a variety of programs to respond to various situations and meet various needs: whether through permanent immigration, acceptance of temporary specialized or low-skilled workers, selection of business people or skilled workers, attraction of foreign students or facilitation of the transition from temporary to permanent status.

Québec has made the enduring vitality of the French language a priority and measures have been implemented, especially, francization services available prior to admission, to raise the proportion of Francophone immigrants among those selected by Québec.

Regarding the contribution of immigration to the prosperity of Québec, experts do not agree on the scope of the economic impact of immigration.[69] There is agreement, however, in thinking that this impact could be more positive if Québec took better advantage of the contributions that immigrants can make. To do so, improving the selection and integration of immigrants must be a priority.

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[69] Brahim BOUDARBAT et Gilles GRENIER, *Impact de l'immigration sur la dynamique économique du Québec. Op. cit.*, pp. 50-70.

As for the demographic challenges, the recent projections published by the Institut de la statistique du Québec,[70] which looked at maintaining a relatively high immigration level, recalled that the perspective of a population decline in Québec is no longer considered a possibility if the recent demographic tendencies continue. The baseline scenario indicates that Québec's population could reach 9 million in 2029 and exceed 10 million in 2061 as a result, in particular, of immigration which will become the primary source of population growth.

However, certain demographic challenges are even more pressing. Québec society is still faced with issues related to an ageing population, the renewal and growth of the working-age population (i.e. persons aged 20 to 64) and the regional distribution of the population. These challenges must be well documented so that informed decisions can be made when arbitration is necessary.

Moreover, diversity in immigration source countries helps to foster the integration of immigrants. In fact, diversity in the source countries of immigrants is deemed to contribute to openness about diversity and intercultural harmony.[71] The Québec government wants to ensure that immigration diversity is maintained by taking action to inform, promote and recruit in different regions of the world where there are potential candidates who meet Québec's needs as a result of their knowledge of French, their training and their skills.

> **Some recent actions**
> - In August 2013, changes made to the skilled worker selection grid, which helped to reinforce requirements regarding knowledge of French and to update the scores granted to candidates based on their field of training.
> - In 2012, entry into force of a simplified priority processing of applications from employers looking to hire temporary foreign workers in specific in-demand specialized professions to quickly respond to needs expressed by employers. In 2010, creation of the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (Québec experience program) which facilitates the transition from temporary resident status to permanent resident status for foreign students who graduate in Québec and specialized temporary workers with a job in Québec.

Attraction and selection of immigrants who meet Québec's needs

In the past few years, international migration patterns have changed significantly. In particular, migration flows in general have gone up, temporary stays have increased and the competition for strategic talents has intensified. These changes, coupled with the growing mobility of highly skilled workers, present challenges to fostering the long-term settlement in Québec of immigrants who can contribute to the lasting vitality of the French language as well as to Québec's prosperity and diversity.

Furthermore, the recent strengthening of requirements regarding knowledge of French may seem hard to reconcile with other important needs of Québec society, particularly the recruitment of candidates with training and skills corresponding to labour market needs and the diversification of immigration pools. Although Québec continues to focus on ensuring the diversity of sources of immigration, these new requirements are likely to foster a concentration of candidates admitted from mostly French-speaking countries.

One way to reconcile these various objectives would be to focus efforts to promote immigration to Québec differently. Promotional efforts have evolved over the past few years. They aim to provide accurate, realistic information regarding Québec, without attempting to elude the potential obstacles to immigration and integration. Promotional efforts could increasingly be directed at Francophile candidates in either non-Francophone territories or in territories with a significant number of Francotropic individuals, i.e. individuals with affinities for the French language. Because learning French is easier and more natural for people from these countries, their adoption of French as the language of public use would be greatly facilitated.

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[70] INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC, *Perspectives démographiques du Québec et des régions, 2011-2061*, édition 2014, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 2014, 124 pages.

[71] Alain-G. GAGNON, Micheline MILOT, F. Leslie SEIDLE et François BOUCHER. *Op. cit.,* p. 25.

However, Québec lacks the notoriety that its main competitors on the international stage enjoy. This presents a challenge in attracting immigrants who will best meet the needs of Québec society. To remain attractive, Québec will have to count on a dynamic economy, an effective immigration system and an inclusive society and bank on promoting its competitive advantages such as its quality of life and safe living environments.

The skilled worker selection grid is Québec main lever to modify the composition of immigration to reach its objectives. The current immigration application system, however, has limitations. The ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion accordingly intends to implement an innovative model for the management of immigration applications resting on the "expression of interest".

Management of immigration applications based on the "expression of interest"

Québec plans to implement an immigration application management system based on the "expression of interest" as currently used in Australia and New Zealand and, just recently, in Canada. This type of system makes it possible to continuously select immigration candidates who are best equipped to contribute to the vitality and growth of the labour market in Québec. Implementing this system will help reduce processing times and prevent the build-up of case files while better responding to regional labour needs. It should also help employers and territorial organizations take part in the immigration process.

Accordingly, candidates looking to immigrate to Québec will have to "express their interest" by submitting an application online and meet a limited number of access criteria to be included in the application bank. The applicants most likely to meet Québec's needs will, then, be invited to submit a formal immigration application, in accordance with a pre-established order of priority. Expressions of interest have an expiry date, after which they are no longer valid. Thus, the volume and rhythm of invitations are controlled based on the selection objectives set out in the annual immigration plan and the application processing capacity.

The commitment of economic circles to increase the contribution of immigration to Québec's prosperity

There seems to be a growing international trend to rely on actors like companies and territorial organizations to define society's immigration needs. Québec is no exception and is also making this shift. Some analysts believe that immigration systems that give companies and other societal actors a bigger role in the selection of candidates can be positive, because immigration then becomes a responsibility of society as a whole. Indeed, it seems desirable to make the Ministère and all socioeconomic actors jointly responsible for expressing labour market needs, identifying the socioprofessional profiles sought and, consequently, ensuring the capacity to attract and select immigrants who will help foster the vitality of the labour market.

However, sustainable economic development does not solely rely on addressing employers' short-term needs through immigration, but also rests on increasing productivity, the search for innovation and improving working conditions for the local workforce.

The contribution to prosperity of temporary workers

Employers increasingly rely on temporary workers, an option which often proves to be a more flexible solution than permanent immigration to meet urgent labour needs. The Programme de l'expérience québécoise (Québec experience program) has been a fruitful strategy to encourage temporary workers in specialized occupations to settle in Québec permanently. Indeed, individuals who have had a previous stay in Québec show a better economic performance after obtaining their permanent resident status.[72] This also allows Québec businesses gain long-term access to these skilled workers. It is also suggested to increase the contribution of employers with regard to the francization and integration of temporary workers and their families in order to facilitate their successful long-term settlement in Québec.

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[72] LACROIX, Guy. *L'intégration en emploi des immigrants de la catégorie des travailleurs qualifiés au Québec, 2002-2009*.Québec, Centre universitaire sur le risque, les politiques économiques et l'emploi, 2013, 61 pages.

Moreover, the contribution of temporary foreign workers, whether specialized or not, to Québec's economic strength merits to be recalled. For many businesses in several sectors of activity, these workers are essential. Protecting the rights of these workers and ensuring employers' compliance with their obligations is a challenge that warrants particular attention. It is indeed essential to ensure that these workers enjoy fair working conditions and overall treatment.

Immigration's contribution to new capital and the creation of a more dynamic and innovative entrepreneurial base

The long-term settlement of immigrant investors is an important challenge for Québec, as for many immigration countries. Indeed, only a small minority of these people settle in Québec for the long-term. Various measures have accordingly been taken over the years, including welcoming and support services, to foster their long-term settlement. In addition, since August 2013, immigrant investors with a working knowledge of French are not subject to application caps, since knowledge of French is recognized as a retention factor in Québec. Despite the currently low retention rate, it should be remembered that the investment revenues generated by this program help support economic development projects and job integration measures for immigrants and members of visible minorities.[73]

Moreover, Québec faces major succession and entrepreneurial vitality issues, and immigrants often present good entrepreneurial potential. Québec could, however, make better use of immigrant entrepreneurship to support innovation and the economy as a whole.

The internationalization of education

The presence of foreign students in Québec is an impetus for the education and research network. This presence is seen as helping to diversify the sources of funding for education and to position Québec in international research networks, in addition to generating significant economic benefits. However, Québec faces fierce competition in attracting foreign students.

Foreign students are excellent candidates for eventual permanent immigration. They are well integrated in society and likely to more easily find a job with their diploma obtained in Québec. Efforts are made to promote the Programme de l'expérience québécoise that facilitates the transition from temporary resident status to permanent resident status, particularly for foreign students who graduate in Québec and have advanced intermediate knowledge of French.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

The selection of skilled workers rests on a delicate arbitration aimed at determining the relative weight of various, and seemingly contradictory, goals to be taken into account. For example, a better match between the selection of immigrants and the specific needs of the labour market may result in a diminution in the number of admissions. Similarly, an increase in the proportion of persons with knowledge of French at the time of admission could limit the capability to select candidates with skills sought in Québec's labour market or it could bring about a decreased diversity of immigration origins. This arbitration must also take into account the international immigration pool and the limits of Québec's attractiveness for potential immigrants, given the competition from other countries of immigration.

15. How do we bolster Québec's competitive position in order to attract an immigration that is both diversified and Francophone while still addressing economic and social needs?

It is planned to more closely associate economic circles to the assessment of economic needs and the selection of skilled workers.

16. How do we get economic circles more involved in immigration and immigrant integration strategies?

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[73] Between 2000 and 2012, the revenues generated by investments from immigrants in the investor subcategory helped the Government of Québec support, for a total amount of $585.8 M, development projects submitted by small and medium-sized businesses and allocate, since 2005, some $35 M to the Employment Integration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities, helping over 9,600 people get a job in their field.

Temporary migration is an increasingly popular solution to help meet urgent and temporary labour needs of Québec businesses.

17. How do we make sure that the recruitment of temporary workers really does contribute to Québec's economic vitality? How do we protect the rights of low-skilled temporary foreign workers? How do we make sure that the recruitment of temporary workers is not made at the expense of increasing productivity and improving working conditions?

The long-term settlement of immigrant investors is an important challenge for Québec and this, even though the investment revenues generated by this program help support economic development projects and job integration measures for immigrants and members of visible minorities. Moreover, Québec is facing major challenges relating to entrepreneurial strength, and immigrants are often seen as having good entrepreneurial potential.

18. Could Québec make better use of the contribution of immigration to capital flows and the creation of a more dynamic and innovative entrepreneurial base?

The presence of foreign students contributes to the vitality of the educational system in Montréal, the Capitale nationale and Québec's various regions.

19. How do we increase Québec's attraction for foreign students and foster their long-term settlement?

Strategic choice 2.2
An attachment to the principle of family reunification and a will to share with the international community the reception of refugees and to respond to other humanitarian situations

Individuals in the family reunification category must be the subject of a sponsorship undertaking in order to immigrate. The rights and responsibilities of both sponsor and sponsored must be clearly understood. Humanitarian immigration refers to the value that society gives to international solidarity and the reception of people fleeing war and the threat of persecution. Québec is proud to meet its humanitarian commitment and cares about establishing reception conditions adapted to the situation and needs of people.

Some recent actions

■ In June 2013, adoption of the Plan d'action du gouvernement du Québec pour l'accueil et l'intégration des personnes réfugiées sélectionnées à l'étranger [Government of Québec action plan for the reception and integration of refugees selected abroad].

■ In 2011, implementation of departmental guidelines *Une passerelle vers un avenir en santé* [gateway to a healthy future], calling for an assessment of the well-being and physical health of refugees requesting asylum upon arriving in Québec.

■ In February 2010, implementation of the Programme spécial de parrainage humanitaire [special humanitarian sponsorship program], which enabled the reception of close to 5,300 Haitian earthquake victims by December 31, 2013.

Understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals benefitting from family reunification

Responsible for managing sponsorship undertakings, it is up to Québec to process sponsorship applications from people hoping to be reunited with their spouse, children, parents or grandparents who are not permanent residents. Beyond the importance of processing these applications with celerity, it is incumbent upon Québec to ensure that guarantors respect their undertaking and to systematically inform guarantors and the sponsored of the scope of this commitment. Once the commitment is accepted, it is also important to encourage immigrants to use the services available abroad to prepare their integration. To make sure that the sponsorship does not cause certain groups, particularly women, to become vulnerable, information on the services available in the event of abuse must be transmitted to both guarantors and the persons they are sponsoring.

Conveying the importance of integrating and fully taking part in collective life is key. If some of the individuals sponsored do not wish to quickly integrate the labour market because they want to take care of their family, knowledge of French may prove important to help them exchange with members of the host society and avoid becoming isolated. It is necessary to make sure that both guarantors and the people they sponsor properly understand their responsibilities and the scope of the commitment. Integration is just as important as financial considerations.

Resettlement of refugees in Québec

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that there are 51 million refugees, people requesting asylum and individuals displaced within their countries. Of these people, 11.7 million fall under the UNHCR's jurisdiction. To a fraction of these people and families will be offered the option of continuing their lives in safety in a country other than their country of origin or the asylum country where they have lived as refugees for months and sometimes years. For 2015, the UNHCR estimates that there are 960,000 people in the world eligible for resettlement in a new country, a return to the country of origin or integration in the country of asylum not being an option. However, the number of places available in countries offering resettlement programs, including Canada, hovers around 80,000 a year.[74] It goes without saying that this number is clearly insufficient, but given its population, Québec's contribution is quite remarkable. By way of comparison, Europe welcomed 5,500 refugees in 2013 while Québec was able to resettle and integrate within its territory close to 1,750 individuals, including 697 refugees who were the subject of a collective sponsorship. Yet, this effort is little known by Québec's own population.

Under the *Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*, Québec has undertaken to welcome refugees and other people in similar situations in a proportion equal to its demographic weight in Canada.

Refugees selected abroad now have a different profile from those selected in the early 1990s. For about seven years now, reception agencies and health partners have observed that refugees required more support. It should be clear that refugees are welcomed into Canada even with major health problems (the federal legislation was amended in this regard in 2002). As well, more refugees are resettled in Canada who have spent years in camps or suffered major trauma as a result of the fierceness of conflicts and difficult conditions in the reception countries.

In response to these difficulties, Québec adopted, in 2013, an action plan for the reception and integration of refugees selected abroad (the *Plan d'action pour l'accueil et l'intégration des personnes réfugiées sélectionnées à l'étranger*) to better coordinate its interventions and adjust its services to their specific needs.

However, there are flaws in the reception structure itself. In the early 1990s, the goal was to resettle refugees across Québec, perhaps because of the success of the collective sponsorship program for boat people and their reception in some 200 localities. Today, it must be acknowledged that it is increasingly difficult to assemble the many conditions conducive to adequate reception and maintain the necessary expertise, particularly with regard to health care upon arrival, in a high enough number of cities when some of them only welcome a few dozen refugees a year.

Quick, targeted response to immigration applications for protection and humanitarian reasons

Québec's immigration system makes it possible to quickly and specifically respond to emergency situations. As such, Québec has the power to select individuals, either already in Québec or abroad, for the following humanitarian reasons: family and emotional ties with a resident or a candidate selected by Québec; individual already integrated in Québec; risk to physical security or of serious harm in the event of the persons' return to their country of origin.

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[74] OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement needs 2015*. Geneva, 2014, [online], www.unhcr.org/543408c4fda.html.

Québec has demonstrated its humanitarian commitment by selecting individuals in vulnerable situations and responding to emergency situations (e.g. special measures following the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 and the earthquake in South Asia in October 2005, the special humanitarian sponsorship program for Haiti following the earthquake in 2010 and special measures following the typhoon in the Philippines in November 2013).

Sponsorship of individuals in distressful situations by a group of people or an organization

Québec has sole responsibility over the Programme de parrainage collectif [collective sponsorship program] since 1997. Between 2009 and 2013, resident groups and organizations (corporations) have sponsored close to 2,500 refugees. The quick and substantial response by Québec organizations for the sponsorship of Syrian refugees and the commitment by at least three new sponsorship organizations are indicative of Québec society's deep commitment to international solidarity.

The contribution of organizations and groups of people to Québec's humanitarian effort is essential and should be more widely known. These people and organizations also need to be equipped to properly support sponsored refugees in their integration.

Services available to individuals requesting asylum

Federal cutbacks have led to a significant decline in the number of applicants for asylum. In Québec, in 2013, fewer than 2,500 people requested asylum. In the three years before that, the annual volume averaged 4,800 people. The prompt processing of certain cases helped some people obtain their status more quickly. The acceptance rate is also slightly higher than in the past. In order to speed up their integration, it is important to properly inform these individuals about the services available pending approval of their status and afterwards.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

Individuals in the family reunification category need to be sponsored under a sponsorship undertaking to immigrate to Québec. Those who stand as guarantors for a family member are responsible not only for the financial needs of the person they sponsor but also for their integration.

20. How can we ensure that guarantors play a bigger role in the integration process of the people they sponsor? How can we better inform guarantors and the people sponsored of their rights and responsibilities?

Québec is responsible for selecting refugees abroad. Also, the immigration system makes it possible to respond to emergency situations for humanitarian reasons. The Québec population's will to express its solidarity was recently demonstrated by the remarkable commitment of organizations engaged in the reception of Syrian refugees under Québec's collective sponsorship program.

21. How can the government better promote Québec's contribution to international solidarity and the refugees' and sponsored immigrants' contribution to society?

22. What are the conditions to be met by host communities in order to better meet the needs of refugees?

Strategic choice 2.3
An efficient immigration system that values the autonomy of individuals in the immigration process

A person or family's immigration project is a process that involves several steps. These steps must be such as to be undertaken with celerity and be fairly easy to complete. In this regard, the commitment and determination of immigrants to ensure their own success is key. Information technology has proven useful in establishing self-serve mechanisms that promote the autonomy of individuals. Today it is possible to design processes where individuals can get access to all of the information and services they need to successfully carry out their immigration project by themselves. In a world that runs on megadata

providing easier access to a large volume of information, people need to be able to treat this information with discernment and to have a targeted, rather than general, access to it.

To speed up and facilitate the immigration process, key steps can be taken by immigrants while still abroad, such as learning French, evaluating and comparing the education received with Québec academic benchmarks, undertaking the process to access regulated professions and trades and prospecting for potential employers. Successfully integrating a new society also requires knowledge of its inner workings and of the social structures in place to undertake the first steps toward settlement, as well as an understanding of its history, values and founding principles. Therefore, it is important to act as a facilitator by providing the tools and opportunities to undertake these steps from abroad. For those who are unable to take these steps and those with greater needs, refugees or seniors, for example, the services that Québec offers must help them achieve their full potential by being flexible, accessible, motivational and adjusted to their needs.

Some recent actions

- In 2012, launch of the Service d'intégration en ligne (online integration service) which aims to support immigrants with a Certificat de sélection du Québec (Québec selection certificate) and help them start their integration process while they are still abroad or after they arrive in Québec to help them successfully integrate Québec society more quickly.

- In 2012, addition of a personalized action plan in the guide titled *Apprendre le Québec* (learning about Québec), which helps immigrants prepare their immigration project with information on topics associated with settlement, adjustment to the workforce and knowledge of the common values of Québec society.

- In 2010, implementation of a major project to transform the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion's departmental processes to continue to offer quality services and improve efficiency with limited resources. The first phase saw the implementation of a new process optimizing the validation of candidates' statutory, professional and academic documents. As well, the database for the comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec was optimized into a single reference tool for comparing foreign diplomas with those issued within the Québec school system.

- In 2009, implementation of the Déclaration sur les valeurs communes de la société québécoise (statement on the common values of Québec society), which immigrants are required to sign to show that they understand the scope and meaning of these values and that they agree to respect them, as well as learn French if they do not already speak the language.

- In 2008, launch of the online francization service to help immigrants who hold a Certificat de sélection du Québec (Québec selection certificate) improve their skills in French, abroad or in Québec. These courses are also an opportunity for immigrants to familiarize themselves with Québec society, its culture and its values.

Simpler, speedier procedures

Following the increase in the number of applications for immigration, measures were taken to keep processing times in check and ensure that the profile of the immigrants selected for admission better suited Québec needs. In particular, a cap on applications submitted in the economic category was introduced to limit the number of new applications that could be submitted annually. This allows for better selection planning and speedier processing of applications.

A number of projects have been undertaken to institute fair, effective and efficient selection process subject to a quality assurance program. One of these projects aims to systematically issue to immigrants in the skilled worker subcategory, before they arrive in Québec, a comparative evaluation of studies done outside Québec at the same time as their Québec selection certificate. This will help to streamline the process and speed up the integration of immigrants. A microsite through which individuals can submit online an application for a Québec selection certificate and a system that will automate certain aspects of the review of applications are in the process of being implemented. These developments will simplify procedures and speed up the review of files.

Further streamlining is also planned. For example, refugees recognized following an application for asylum in Canada and their family members who have remained abroad, will be exempted from certain formalities to give them quicker access to government services and speed up the family reunification process.

Accurate and relevant information regarding the immigration project

Since 2000, the way in which information is provided to immigrants has considerably changed. From direct communications through written documents and one-on-one meetings with an immigration officer, the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion slowly moved toward an approach using information posted online. To promote the autonomy of immigrants, measures like the Service d'intégration en ligne (online integration service) and the online version of the guide *Apprendre le Québec* (learning about Québec) were implemented to round out the information contained on the Immigration-Québec website.

A special effort was made to have Québec's common values known. In addition to requiring immigrants to sign the *Déclaration sur les valeurs communes de la société québécoise* (declaration on the common values of Québec society), information on the common values of Québec society is conveyed in multiple ways and information activities help foster a better understanding of how these values are embodied in real life. A guide titled *Equal in every way!* prepared by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine on gender equality is also made available to immigrants.

Information plays an essential role in the integration process. The risks associated with information bias, i.e. information that is not quite accurate and circulated by various sources – particularly information in the media and on social networks – can hinder integration. The government and socioeconomic actors are thus faced with an important challenge to not only transmit complete and transparent information but to correct information biases.[75]

To ensure that the information conveyed is both complete and transparent, the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, working in conjunction with the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, have undertaken to learn more about the process immigrants go through from the moment they receive their Québec selection certificate to the time when they find a job once in Québec. The communication approach focuses on the immigrant's journey, which implies that the right information is provided at the right time, based on each person's profile. To achieve this, a better understanding of immigrants' needs is required.

Requirements for earning selection points

To select the people whose socioprofessional profile is best suited to contribute to the vitality of the Québec labour market, take part in its development and foster quick, successful job integration, the selection grid for individuals in the skilled worker subcategory is based on factors and criteria that serve as predictors of a candidate's chances of participating fully in Québec society and settling here for the long term.

In particular, skilled workers are selected based on the medium-term job prospects associated with the training that candidates already have. The selection process gives added weight to diplomas obtained in Québec or recognized as equivalent by professional orders or other regulatory bodies, and also takes into account known obstacles to the recognition of skills. This, however, does not in any way, diminish the importance of addressing these difficulties. To ensure a better match between the results of the selection process and the economic integration of the individuals selected, the assessment of job prospects must evolve in sync with labour market needs. For some countries – Australia, New Zealand and, to a certain extent, Canada – one way of ensuring this balance has been to integrate job qualification recognition mechanisms in the skilled worker selection process. This requirement is more or less extensive depending on the profession and the country, ranging from a simple evaluation of the candidate's diploma without binding effect on regulatory bodies, to obtaining an authorization to practice.

Furthermore, the requirements for points for the knowledge of French criterion in the selection grid were recently increased. The goal is to facilitate and speed up the social and professional integration of immigrants, their long-term settlement and foster social cohesion. However, candidates who have a socioprofessional profile that matches Québec's needs but who do not meet the selection requirements due to insufficient knowledge of French, may be granted an extension to improve their language skills

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[75] BÉJI, Kamel, and Anaïs PELLERIN. "Intégration socio-professionnelle des immigrants récents au Québec : Le rôle de l'information et des réseaux sociaux." *Relations industrielles*, vol. 65, no. 4, 2010, pp. 562-583.

To facilitate the acquisition of sufficient knowledge of French, the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion helps candidates access French classes abroad through agreements with some 125 language schools, mostly from the Alliances Françaises network. The ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion even covers certain costs associated with learning French abroad.

Many other immigration countries have adopted similar requirements, although the knowledge level required and the stage at which this requirement is imposed within the immigration process varies from country to country. Accordingly, to obtain a permanent or temporary resident status or naturalization, knowledge of the host country's language must be demonstrated through language tests. In Canada, unlike in Québec, knowledge of French or English is a qualifying requirement for the selection of skilled workers.

Learning French, job integration procedure and personalized orientation from abroad

By the numbers

Service d'intégration en ligne (SIEL) [online integration service]

6,000 (approx.)

Number of people, to date, who have undertaken their integration process from their country of departure through the SIEL

Francisation en ligne (FEL) [online francization]

19,000 (approx.)

Number of immigration candidates who, to date, have taken the FEL course from abroad

Over the past few years, the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion has completely revised the way it operates and moved toward stepping up its actions to help prepare immigrants while still abroad. It wanted not only to maximize the impact of its actions and foster the speedier integration of immigrants, but also to ensure that the latter had a realistic view of their immigration process.

With regard to the requirements for accessing regulated professions and trades, various tools – including online evaluation tools – have been created in the past few years to better inform immigrants. In particular, immigrants are encouraged to submit their request before leaving their country. Numerous professional orders have seen a growing proportion of applications from people trained abroad submitted before they even arrive in Québec.

Finally, a personalized action plan is now available to help individuals kick-start their integration process while they wait for their visa. The Service de francisation en ligne (online francization service) helps them expand their knowledge of French, while the Service d'intégration en ligne (online integration service), accessible to people with sufficient knowledge of French, helps them better understand Québec and gives them a realistic picture of the process they will have to undertake.

Addressing specific needs to overcome obstacles

Despite the tools designed to help better prepare immigrants while still abroad, some individuals will still hit roadblocks after arriving in Québec. Some may have greater needs, like those who are further away from the labour market and those who will experience a culture shock. The ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion provides funding to community partners to offer support services for the settlement and integration of newly arrived immigrants. These partners have gained solid expertise over time. Well-rooted in their community, they work closely with other community actors, particularly in the health, education and employment sectors. Since 2014, these organizations must be certified to receive funding. This certification recognizes and highlights their management abilities, the benefits of their activities for immigrants and society, and their influence in the local community.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

Québec is engaged in a major effort to improve its immigration system with a view to speeding up the processing of applications, ensuring that the profile of immigrants better reflects labour market needs and simplifying processes. As well, thanks to information technology, candidates can obtain targeted information to help them take the first steps toward their integration while still abroad.

23. The requirements in the selection grid aim to meet Québec's objectives, i.e. the vitality of the French language and prosperity, by ensuring the speedy integration of immigrants. Should other criteria be considered to facilitate and hasten the participation of immigrants?

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24. Immigration candidates need basic knowledge to better plan for and take steps to ensure their integration. What critical knowledge should be transmitted to them and what is the best way of communicating this knowledge? How do we encourage and maintain their commitment to common values, the reality of gender relations in Québec, the importance of the French language for Québec society, job prospects in Québec's regions, and the language requirements of the labour market?

25. Despite their efforts, some immigrants have trouble integrating their new society. How can Québec better pinpoint the needs of those individuals who require more support to help them participate fully in society?

Strategic choice 2.4
A significant contribution to the vitality of the regions

Despite an increase, over the past years, in the proportion of immigrants settling outside the Greater Montréal Area (GMA), the goal of fostering their long-term settlement in the regions is still riddled with challenges. The fact that some immigrants know very little about Québec before they arrive makes it more difficult to promote its various regions.

In order to induce immigration candidates to settle in the regions as soon as they arrive, efforts have been made over the years to highlight the opportunities available to them in various regions. The skilled worker selection grid favours candidates with a validated employment offer from an employer outside the GMA. However, the number of candidates with a validated employment offer from an employer (either within or outside the GMA) is still very limited.

More compelling options have been considered by some countries, such as granting temporary resident permits with an obligation to settle in a certain area for a specific number of years. However, such options raise concerns with regard to respect for the principle of free movement. As well, such measures would send a mixed message regarding the regions' appeal, suggesting that restrictive measures are needed to force people to settle there.

Other measures have been implemented to foster the secondary migration of newly arrived immigrants, relying mostly on their job integration. But these efforts have also encountered obstacles for it is not easy to try to convince families newly established in Montréal to move and start again the whole process of settling in a new city.

Furthermore, it is clear that immigration's demographic, economic, cultural and social contribution to the development and vitality of the GMA is not only significant but necessary. However, the particularities and challenges brought about by the high concentration of immigrants should also not be underestimated.

Some recent actions

■ Partnerships established with territorial organizations aiming to foster the mobilization and coordination of local actors.

■ Inaugural *Journées Québec* recruitment mission in 2008 to help Québec-based companies recruit specialized workers in sectors of activity where there are short-term needs that cannot be met by local labour. 2014 saw the 11th edition of the *Journées Québec* recruitment missions.

■ Collaboration established since 2006 between organizations outside the Greater Montreal Area (GMA) acting in coordination with four Montréal organizations to foster the long-term settlement of immigrants outside the GMA.

A global strategy coordinated with territorial organizations to promote the potential of the regions

The issue of immigration's contribution to the occupancy and vitality of territories has often been raised, mostly from the perspective of a more even distribution of immigrants or the "regionalization of immigration." But shouldn't immigration be viewed as an asset that contributes to the occupancy and vitality of all territories, including the Montréal area? Local and regional communities are becoming

increasingly aware of the importance of managing diversity and preventing racism and discrimination, but that doesn't change the fact that there the presence of Quebecers from ethnocultural minority groups is greater in some communities than in others. Their social and cultural characteristics, the length of their presence in Québec and how much they participate in the local and regional community life also vary widely. Because of their differences, communities do not perceive to the same degree the potential presented by these individuals and the contribution they can make to their social, economic and cultural development.

To foster the contribution of immigration to the occupancy and vitality of territories, it is therefore important to develop strategies that take into account the needs of the communities and are coordinated with territorial organizations. The latter's responsibilities and their proximity to the population, make them important stakeholders. Land-use planning, policies and social, economic and cultural action plans are all tools that help mobilize local driving forces to develop and sustainably shape collective life. Hence the added importance for these policies and action plans to take into account the challenges associated with immigration, diversity and inclusion.

Regional coordination is crucial to ensure that immigration contributes to the vitality of Québec as a whole. However, experience has shown that it is sometimes difficult to engage the territorial organizations in areas where there is little ethnocultural diversity. Many partners in the areas concerned argue that there is a need to raise awareness, educate and strengthen intercultural ties among the general population, employers and workers, while also taking into account the specific needs of some immigrant women and women from ethnocultural minorities.

Québec is moving towards decentralizing its approach to identifying immigration needs by relying on new actors, like businesses. Territorial organizations are also key actors that can be called upon to help determine regional labour market needs and select economic immigrants. These organizations are among the best suited to determine their immigration needs and implement solutions to the specific challenges facing them, particularly with regard to integration, intercultural relations and inclusion. Given the specific issues they face and their respective status as Québec's metropolis and Québec's capital city, Montréal and Québec should be the object of special attention.

Contribution of immigration to entrepreneurial activity in the regions

Immigration does not contribute to Québec's economic development only by addressing labour market needs in the regions. Immigrants also participate in Québec's economic growth through their entrepreneurial activities, regardless of whether they were selected under the businesspeople subcategory.

Indeed, immigration can stimulate entrepreneurial vitality in the regions, foster innovation and increase Québec's reach. However, this requires a collaborative vision of regional economic development based on notions like productivity enhancement, innovation advancement and promotion of entrepreneurship.

Contribution of temporary workers and foreign students to the vitality of the regions

Temporary foreign workers help meet employers' pressing and occasional needs when there is no local labour available. The success of the *Journées Québec* recruitment missions reflects the increasing appeal of this type of immigration for businesses. The *Journées Québec* are international recruitment activities organized by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion in collaboration with various partners in Québec and Europe to meet the specialized labour needs of Québec businesses mainly located in the regions.

As well, the presence of foreign students in Québec is an impetus for the education and research network and generates significant economic benefits. This presence helps educational institutions increase their reach at the international level and contributes to the maintenance of training programs. Since 2012, foreign students who graduate in Québec can get an open work permit, allowing them to work for the employer of their own choosing, in the position they want, provided they meet the eligibility criteria set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

To encourage foreign students and specialized temporary workers to permanently settle in Québec, the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (Québec experience program) helps facilitate, under some conditions, the transition from temporary to permanent status.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

Taking local community needs into account and coordinating with territorial organizations helps foster a greater contribution from immigration to the occupancy and vitality of territories. Their responsibilities and proximity to citizens make territorial organizations important stakeholders in this regard.

26. How can we better define and take into account the immigration needs of the regions, particularly those facing labour shortages in certain sectors, as well as those of Montréal and Québec City? What can those communities who express immigration needs do to be more welcoming and inclusive? How should territorial organizations, employers and employer associations be involved in determining labour market needs?

Third challenge
Responsible, coherent, effective governance

Strong governmental action in immigration, diversity and inclusion requires a governance framework that will help achieve objectives in a cost effective manner and in coordination with all of the actors concerned through a mainstreaming approach.[76]

If a policy is not based on a coordinated overall effort, it runs the risk of being unable to put words into action or effectively realize its vision. Also, a policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion supported only by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion or that concerns only the government would send the wrong message that ethnocultural minorities are on the margins of society. On the contrary, ethnocultural minorities are an integral part of society and are thus entitled to be taken into account in comprehensive action aiming for the well-being of all Quebecers.

As such, forceful and efficient participative governance calls for the engagement of all government departments, organizations and partners to contribute to the achievement of objectives and ensure their ongoing monitoring and assessment. One of the challenges is to mobilize, support and foster the engagement of community partners to take ethnocultural diversity into account, based on their specific needs and with respect for their autonomy, in everything they do. Greater transparency and the distribution of powers and responsibilities to appropriate authority levels should be encouraged, while striving to bring partners as close as possible to the people and communities concerned. The Ministère must ensure strong leadership in this regard.

In addition, the governance framework should ensure relevant, effective and efficient interventions. A better understanding of the situations and needs of individuals, institutions and communities, along with coherent and complementary actions based on continuous quality improvement and performance management are essential conditions for effective and efficient government leadership. The development and measurement of indicators, combined with the optimal use of information and communications technology, can also help ensure more efficient actions and a more relevant response to actual needs.

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[76] Mainstreaming refers to the effort needed to meet the needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities through the involvement of various societal players as part of initiatives, social programs and policies aimed at the population as a whole rather than considering them separately from the needs of the general population. This approach is increasingly favoured in Western democracies. In this regard, see:

COLLETT, Elizabeth, and Milica PETROVIC. *The future of Immigrant Integration: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion*. Migration Policy Institute, 2014, 36 pages.

Strategic choice 3.1
A concerted commitment from all government departments, bodies and partners in various living environments and a mainstreaming approach to diversity in their action strategies

The inclusion and participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities are demanding collective responsibilities. The new policy will engage all of Québec society. This means that its implementation must be coordinated and coherent, and rely on new forms of exchange and collaboration between actors from the government community and, more broadly, those from society. It is also recommended to aim for a cross-cutting approach that views immigrants and members from ethnocultural minorities as an integral part of society, and not as a separate category because of their sometimes differentiated needs.

Mobilizing and engaging government departments and community partners in taking the needs of a diverse population into account

It is sometimes more helpful to consider the challenges associated with diversity and inclusion within their overall context, without reducibly targeting only immigrants or ethnocultural minorities. The implementation of measures aiming to meet the needs of the population as a whole but still taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable, minority and marginalized populations – including immigrants – is more likely to promote an inclusive and cohesive vision of society.

From this standpoint, the mainstreaming approach to diversity can adopt two perspectives. The "indirect" perspective proposes to integrate priorities regarding the inclusion of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in overall social policies addressing issues that all more vulnerable people face, regardless of their place of birth. The "direct" perspective, however, which may complement the first, calls for specific objectives to be set for immigrants within the various social policies in place.

The mainstreaming approach to diversity can be realized:

– through a coherent, national and local discourse on a vision aiming for public bodies to take ethnocultural diversity into account;

– through governance mechanisms implemented to ensure effective coordination between the various government actors and levels of government;

– through the reform or adaptation of existing policies by including priorities associated with integration and inclusion.[77]

Coordinating civil society and local community actors to develop welcoming communities

According to the subsidiarity principle, powers and responsibilities should be delegated to the appropriate authority levels. Civil society and local community actors are at the forefront when it comes to the development of welcoming communities.

Because of their intimate knowledge of the realities of their environments, territorial organizations play an important role in building welcoming communities and an inclusive society.[78] In fact, the involvement of Québec cities in the Council of Europe's Intercultural cities (Montréal) and the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (Brossard, Gatineau, Longueuil, Montréal, Québec, Saguenay, Saint-Justin and Sherbrooke) shows the important role that cities play in the area of intercultural relations. Coordinating with these organizations on issues such as cultural development, gender equality and intercultural relations, is an opportunity to ensure that the differentiated needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities are taken into account in the overall needs of local populations. However, this consideration and the implementation of actions depend on local and regional initiatives which tend to be scarcer in areas with less ethnocultural diversity.

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[77] *Ibid.*

[78] ROCHER, François, and Bob W. WHITE. *L'interculturalisme québécois dans le contexte du multiculturalisme canadien*. IRPP Study no. 49, Montréal, Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2014, pp. 28-32.

However, it is important to make sure that the division of responsibilities between the many actors involved does not cause integration and inclusion efforts to become fragmented, or lead to a lack of coordination and unevenness in the application of actions. Coordination is, therefore, of prime importance, relying on both the commitment of territorial organizations and the leadership from the government.

Strong departmental leadership and coherent government action

For a policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion to be coherently realized in the field, the government must first lead by example and find ways to become more effective and efficient. Government departments and agencies must also set an example as an employer and governing bodies by their ability to take into account differentiated needs in the services they offer. Government departments and agencies are accordingly called upon to take part in the action plan and involve their partnership networks. The ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, for its part, will continue to serve as leader for the other government departments and agencies and share its expertise with them.

A strong, coherent commitment by the government is a key condition for other actors – namely local and regional communities – to become actively involved in the development and implementation of concrete measures. Thanks to the government's leadership and coordination of the various actors, the differentiated needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities will be better understood, thus making an effective and efficient response possible. This expected commitment of all partners is a key condition for the policy on immigration, diversity and inclusion to come to life in communities and to urge Quebecers of all origins to take active part in building welcoming communities and an inclusive society.

GOING A STEP FURTHER...

The mainstreaming approach to the needs of a diverse population in programs and policies addressing issues of a more general nature is a promising strategy that makes it possible for ethnocultural minorities to be considered as an integral part of society, not a distinct category with particular issues. However, this approach does not rule out the possibility that a targeted approach for immigrants or vulnerable persons might temporarily be required in some cases.

27. How should the programs available to the population as a whole be adjusted to take into account the particular needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities? How should social actors be engaged, territorial organizations in particular, in taking these needs into account in their actions and policies? How should the role played by territorial bodies be combined with that of the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and other government departments and agencies? Within the context of the discussions between the government and municipalities on redefining the relations between them, particularly with Montréal and Québec City, what role should municipalities play with respect to reception, integration, francization, intercultural relations and inclusion?

Strategic choice 3.2
Rigorously, responsibly implemented initiatives in a perspective of efficiency and ongoing evaluation to ensure their relevance

Policy expresses a government's firm intention to act on a public issue (e.g. health, education, employment, gender equality), by presenting the strategic choices it deems important and delineating the general division of responsibilities between the various actors involved. Given that these issues often concern several government departments and partners with various backgrounds, it is critical that a public policy establish a management framework providing effective leverage to reach the objectives set.

This framework must also establish a coordinating structure and a follow-up and ongoing evaluation mechanism. It must also rely on statistics and research data to monitor the progress made, measure the benefits of the measures implemented and ensure their relevance.

Coordination of the policy

The establishment of a coordinating structure not only sends a clear message regarding the government's will to ensure a policy's implementation, but also allows for more effective and coherent realizations by facilitating the exchange of information. Fostering exchange and synergy between initiatives helps strengthen the partners' capacity for analysis, innovation and action, making them better equipped for translating priorities into long-term solutions.

Follow-up and assessment of the progress made

Notwithstanding the efforts made, a better knowledge and understanding of the participation and exclusion of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities is needed for actions to be relevant, effective and efficient. In the same way, the inadequacy of socioeconomic indicators to determine Québec's actual capacity to welcome and integrate immigrants, along with the lack of data on the public opinion regarding ethnocultural diversity, hinder the implementation of effective strategies to counter prejudice and foster harmonious intercultural relations.

That is why a strategy is in the plans to measure the various aspects of participation and to provide the new policy with a monitoring and program evaluation framework.

These monitoring and evaluation tools will be created as the new policy and its action strategy are developed. Accordingly, a procedure to systematically collect and analyze data and the environment, including a measurement strategy, anticipated methodologies, appropriate research and performance indicators, will be undertaken from the outset. Obtaining information on clients' needs is also crucial. Needs assessments allow for fairer choices regarding the means to be implemented in order to meet these needs. Because the availability of conclusive information is crucial for informed decision-making, this process will also tackle the issue of the dissemination of knowledge on the policy's impact.

Given the importance for government departments, organizations and community partners to take diversity into account to adjust their planning and actions to build an inclusive Québec, making information on immigration and diversity in Québec more readily available would help. Making a scorecard available online would make it easier to incorporate diversity in the decision-making process. So would adding to existing scorecards, such as those on sustainable development or the occupancy and vitality of territories, data broken down by immigration status, ethnic group status or visible minority status. The promotion of best practices would also be encouraged with a view to emulation.

One of the shortcomings of the data available is intersectional discrimination. To correctly assess the situation and act effectively, more in-depth analysis is required of how the various factors that create inequality come into play. Obstacles to Quebecers' participation in collective life are also in need of a finer analysis. Women's and men's different needs with regard to equality and full participation will have to be taken into account.

With these tools, government will ensure strong accountability for the policy and its action strategy, which will enhance the transparency of government's actions.

Research partnership

The systematic collection and analysis of data and the environment require the establishment of research partnerships. A partnership between government departments and bodies would allow for a better sharing of data sources and a more harmonious coordination of the indicators developed or to be developed. Partnerships with the academic community and research chairs (both national and international) would also provide access to data that is often harder to access, as well as increase research dividends. Within the context of growing demand for the calibration of indicators and measurements (used for statistical monitoring and in research), such partners provide access to additional information allowing for comparative assessments.

Electronic service delivery

Time and again information technology has proven quite useful for both sharing information and knowledge and to facilitate service transactions. In fact, the Internet is a powerful tool for transmitting specific, accurate information on diversity and inclusion to the general population, helping to eliminate the prejudice and stereotyping that stand in the way of the full participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities. Its use to showcase the diversity of Québec society and as a platform for respectful debate and the exchange of best practices could be further examined.

In the context of ongoing revision of practices, it is important to maximize the use of information technologies while taking into account the fact that some people might be less familiar with these tools. Efficient electronic information, transaction, promotion and public relations tools provide a more personalized, participative and coherent response to people's multiple needs. This provides for a more efficient service offer, allowing for the reallocation of resources to better meet the needs of vulnerable individuals.

GOING A STEP FURTHER…

When a public policy involves several government departments and partners, additional coordination is needed to provide more specific, relevant information to measure expected benefits and make adjustments as required.

28. What kind of governance model should we contemplate for the new policy? How do we ensure periodical monitoring and a better sharing of information to adjust actions based on the changing environment and the results yielded? Given the importance of having access to conclusive data, how do we foster research partnerships?

29. How do we account for the issue of intersectional discrimination? Should we, in certain situations, broaden the gender-based analysis to address diversity and equality for other groups, including immigrants and ethnocultural minorities?

30. How can we make an even better use of information technology to ensure more efficient services and better meet our clients' needs?

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Appendix
List of Points for Consideration

First challenge
An inclusive society that allows for full participation through collective and individual commitment

Strategic choice 1.1
Recognized diversity and open, active intercultural exchanges

Québec society may be diverse, but there are still negative perceptions between ethnocultural groups. Commitment to pluralism and recognition of diversity are put to the test.

1. How do we improve knowledge and understanding of Québec diversity and make the whole population more aware of the contributions of ethnocultural diversity to Québec? What kinds of activities would be most effective?

Recent debates shed light on the concerns of a segment of the population regarding the common rules of collective life in a context of increasing diversity. As a result of its history and aspirations, Québec has a solid, proven common public culture that should be reaffirmed and better promoted among the population as a whole. Some controversy has been observed regarding intercultural relations, especially since the arrival of social media, which could be mitigated if public discussions about intercultural relations were focused on listening, exchange and mediation.

2. How do we increase awareness of the various components of common public culture and better promote them? Which key elements should be the object of a strengthened promotion strategy? For example, how do we ensure a common understanding of the principle of gender equality in an intercultural context? How do we maintain and foster healthy ethics of intercultural dialogue in social media and other forums to encourage social inclusion and everyone's participation in these discussions? Should we formalize Québec interculturalism? If so, what would be the best way to do it?

Despite efforts made, people from ethnocultural minorities remain underrepresented in leadership roles in Québec society, in the media and within the cultural industry.

3. What other strategies do we need to adopt to increase representation of diversity in leadership roles and in the cultural domain, namely mass media and advertising?

Strategic choice 1.2
Inclusive institutions and communities

After several years of development, intercultural and anti-racist training of staff and managers in institutions and organizations remains under-assessed and limited to a few aspects.

4. Apart from offering training, what other methods could be used to make senior management aware of the importance of developing intercultural and anti-racist skills in various environments? What key concepts must be communicated when developing awareness training on cultural diversity and racial profiling?

To ensure fair and equitable access to institutions and organizations, it is sometimes necessary to adjust practices and services to take into account the ethnocultural diversity of the Québec population and the specific needs of immigrants. Intersectoral coordination and cooperation are also important ways of establishing integrated and efficient services to meet the requirements of an inclusive society.

5. While Québec is experiencing an increase in its ethnocultural diversity, how do we increase consideration for the needs associated with this diversity in all areas (education, business, work, health, public safety, etc.)?

Immigrants and ethnocultural minorities born in Québec face particular problems and barriers to jobs commensurate with their skills or aspirations and advancing in them. In the workplace, this diversity sometimes requires adjustments and the implementation of diversity management practices.

6. How can we mobilize all the actors, employers, regulatory agencies and unions to introduce innovative measures to recognize skills and ensure real equality in the workforce for immigrants and ethnocultural minorities? To this end, how do we adequately inform and equip employers – particularly small and medium-sized businesses – to help them fairly assess the skills of internationally trained individuals and effectively and fairly manage ethnocultural diversity in the workplace? In that regard, what can the new interdepartmental committee on the recognition of skills and knowledge formed in 2014 do to facilitate the socioprofessional integration of immigrants? How can we better reach the hiring and representation targets of the equal access to employment program? How do we transform hiring practices so that they are free from discrimination?

Outside of the education and employment sectors, which are often discussed, all common spaces where people interact and meet must allow everyone to participate and contribute equitably.

7. How do we promote initiatives by citizens and local associations to foster inclusive and participatory living environments?

Strategic choice 1.3
Individuals actively involved in Québec society through successful participation

Knowing French, the common language of public space, is an essential factor for social cohesion. The Charter of the French Language aims to make French the normal and everyday language of work, education, communication, trade, and business.

8. What can be done to ensure that immigrants and ethnocultural minorities acquire the French language skills needed to get a job that corresponds to their aspirations and professional qualifications? How do we encourage employers to participate in efforts to make French the normal and everyday language of work?

The economic participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities depends on access to jobs that correspond to their qualifications and entrepreneurship. Despite efforts, the participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities is often lower than that of the general population.

9. How do we increase the rate of economic participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities, especially women? How do we extend initiatives regarding access to bridge training, internships and mentorships for internationally trained individuals?

The inclusive nature of Québec must also be reflected by the participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in cultural, political and social activities.

10. What strategies would encourage the cultural, civic, political and social participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities?

Strategic choice 1.4
A society that is free of prejudice, discrimination, intimidation and racism

Despite multiple awareness-raising, education and intercultural rapprochement efforts, discriminatory, intimidatory and racist attitudes persist. Therefore, increased efforts are necessary.

Awareness-raising and education are convincing ways to become familiar with differences and aware of prejudices.

11. How do we make the population more aware of the consequences of prejudices, discrimination, intimidation and racism on individuals and society as a whole?

Not all Quebecers have a sufficient knowledge or understanding of laws and of their rights and responsibilities. Victims may not know the remedies available to them, and that limits their ability to exercise their rights.

12. How do we make more people aware of the laws, rights and responsibilities concerning equality and anti-discrimination? How do we intervene while paying careful attention to intersectional discrimination, for example, on the basis of ethnic origin, religion and sex?

Members of visible minorities, particularly youth who live in poor neighbourhoods, are greatly affected by racial profiling because this repeated behaviour generates a feeling of harassment.

13. In addition to the training that has already been offered to police officers for many years, what other methods could be used to increase awareness of the impact of racial profiling and the importance of developing intercultural skills?

Although hate propaganda and crimes are infrequent in Québec society, the consequences are very significant for the victims. Currently, hate propaganda is particularly troubling on the Internet and in social media.

14. How do we react to manifestations of racism on the Internet? How do we mobilize the population to foster respect and civility on social media? What proactive steps do we take to dispel this phenomenon?

Second challenge
Immigration that reflects societal choices

Strategic choice 2.1
A competitive immigration system that makes it possible to attract, select and promote the long-term settlement of strategic talents that contribute to the vitality of the French language, prosperity and diversity

The selection of skilled workers rests on a delicate arbitration aimed at determining the relative weight of various, and seemingly contradictory, goals to be taken into account. For example, a better match between the selection of immigrants and the specific needs of the labour market may result in a diminution in the number of admissions. Similarly, an increase in the proportion of persons with knowledge of French at the time of admission could limit the capability to select candidates with skills sought in Québec's labour market or it could bring about a decreased diversity of immigration origins. This arbitration must also take into account the international immigration pool and the limits of Québec's attractiveness for potential immigrants, given the competition from other countries of immigration.

15. How do we bolster Québec's competitive position in order to attract an immigration that is both diversified and Francophone while still addressing economic and social needs?

We plan to more closely associate economic circles to the assessment of economic needs and the selection of skilled workers.

16. How do we get economic circles more involved in immigration and immigrant integration strategies?

Temporary migration is an increasingly popular solution to help meet urgent and temporary labour needs of Québec businesses.

17. How do we make sure that the recruitment of temporary workers really does contribute to Québec's economic vitality? How do we protect the rights of low-skilled temporary foreign workers? How do we make sure that the recruitment of temporary workers is not made at the expense of increasing productivity and improving working conditions?

The long-term settlement of immigrant investors is an important challenge for Québec and this, even though the investment revenues generated by this program help support economic development projects and job

integration measures for immigrants and members of visible minorities. Moreover, Québec is facing major challenges relating to entrepreneurial strength, and immigrants are often seen as having good entrepreneurial potential.

18. Could Québec make better use of the contribution of immigration to capital flows and the creation of a more dynamic and innovative entrepreneurial base?

The presence of foreign students contributes to the vitality of the educational system in Montréal, the Capitale nationale and Québec's various regions.

19. How do we increase Québec's attraction for foreign students and foster their long-term settlement?

Strategic choice 2.2
An attachment to the principle of family reunification and a will to share with the international community the reception of refugees and to respond to other humanitarian situations

Individuals in the family reunification category need to be sponsored under a sponsorship undertaking to immigrate to Québec. Those who stand as guarantors for a family member are responsible not only for the financial needs of the person they sponsor but also for their integration.

20. How can we ensure that guarantors play a bigger role in the integration process of the people they sponsor? How can we better inform guarantors and the people sponsored of their rights and responsibilities?

Québec is responsible for selecting refugees abroad. Also, the immigration system makes it possible to respond to emergency situations for humanitarian reasons. The Québec population's will to express its solidarity was recently demonstrated by the remarkable commitment of organizations engaged in the reception of Syrian refugees under Québec's collective sponsorship program.

21. How can the government better promote Québec's contribution to international solidarity and the refugees' and sponsored immigrants' contribution to society?

22. What are the conditions to be met by host communities in order to better meet the needs of refugees?

Strategic choice 2.3
An efficient immigration system that values the autonomy of individuals in the immigration process

Québec is engaged in a major effort to improve its immigration system with a view to speeding up the processing of applications, ensuring that the profile of immigrants better reflects labour market needs and simplifying processes. As well, thanks to information technology, candidates can obtain targeted information to help them take the first steps toward their integration while still abroad.

23. The requirements in the selection grid aim to meet Québec's objectives, i.e. the vitality of the French language and prosperity, by ensuring the speedy integration of immigrants. Should other criteria be considered to facilitate and hasten the participation of immigrants?

24. Immigration candidates need basic knowledge to better plan for and take steps to ensure their integration. What critical knowledge should be transmitted to them and what is the best way of communicating this knowledge? How do we encourage and maintain their commitment to common values, the reality of gender relations in Québec, the importance of the French language for Québec society, job prospects in Québec's regions, and the language requirements of the labour market?

25. Despite their efforts, some immigrants have trouble integrating their new society. How can Québec better pinpoint the needs of those individuals who require more support to help them participate fully in society?

Strategic choice 2.4
A significant contribution to the vitality of the regions

Taking local community needs into account and coordinating with territorial organizations helps foster a greater contribution from immigration to the occupancy and vitality of territories. Their responsibilities and proximity to citizens make territorial organizations important stakeholders in this regard.

26. How can we better define and take into account the immigration needs of the regions, particularly those facing labour shortages in certain sectors, as well as those of Montréal and Québec City? What can those communities who express immigration needs do to be more welcoming and inclusive? How should territorial organizations, employers and employer associations be involved in determining labour market needs?

Third challenge
Responsible, coherent, effective governance

Strategic choice 3.1
A concerted commitment from all government departments, bodies and partners in various living environments and a mainstreaming approach to diversity in their action strategies

The mainstreaming approach to the needs of a diverse population in programs and policies addressing issues of a more general nature is a promising strategy that makes it possible for ethnocultural minorities to be considered as an integral part of society, not a distinct category with particular issues. However, this approach does not rule out the possibility that a targeted approach for immigrants or vulnerable persons might temporarily be required in some cases.

27. How should the programs available to the population as a whole be adjusted to take into account the particular needs of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities? How should social actors be engaged, territorial organizations in particular, in taking these needs into account in their actions and policies? How should the role played by territorial bodies be combined with that of the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion and other government departments and agencies? Within the context of the discussions between the government and municipalities on redefining the relations between them, particularly with Montréal and Québec City, what role should municipalities play with respect to reception, integration, francization, intercultural relations and inclusion?

Strategic choice 3.2
Rigorously, responsibly implemented initiatives in a perspective of efficiency and ongoing evaluation to ensure their relevance

When a public policy involves several government departments and partners, additional coordination is needed to provide more specific, relevant information to measure expected benefits and make adjustments as required.

28. What kind of governance model should we contemplate for the new policy? How do we ensure periodical monitoring and a better sharing of information to adjust actions based on the changing environment and the results yielded? Given the importance of having access to conclusive data, how do we foster research partnerships?

29. How do we account for the issue of intersectional discrimination? Should we, in certain situations, broaden the gender-based analysis to address diversity and equality for other groups, including immigrants and ethnocultural minorities?

30. How can we make an even better use of information technology to ensure more efficient services and better meet our clients' needs?

Immigration,
Diversité
et Inclusion

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