SPEAKING THE LANGUAGES OF CITIZENSHIP

by

Carsten Quell

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Carsten Quell (2000)
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.
Abstract

Pluralist societies, particularly those whose pluralism is the result of recent waves of immigration, are faced with a central challenge: how to respect the diverse origins of their citizens while building up their commitment to a new home? A discussion of liberalism and communitarianism with their opposing views on the nature, the boundaries and the role of community will highlight some of the contentious issues involved in trying to find an answer. Language, however, is not often discussed as an important aspect of creating a sense of community. One of the few exceptions is the work of Habermas on discourse and social change. Drawing on his theory, the focus of the thesis is turned to the discourses that are circulating in a real community faced with a redefinition of its communal identity: Ontario’s francophone minority. With the arrival of significant numbers of African and Caribbean francophones, the composition of francophones in Ontario is changing from a traditional minority of French Canadians to a diverse group of people, the foundation of whose sense of community is only beginning to emerge. As a result, not only is a long-standing minority faced with new questions of inclusion and exclusion, but also the Canadian state itself suddenly has to deal with the convergence of its traditionally separate policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Samples of discourse collected over a three-year period will be presented and analyzed to document the tensions in what might be called a community under review. In a final step, both from a theoretical vantage point and based on the available empirical evidence, it will be argued that a new foundation for citizenship should be explored that goes beyond liberalism and communitarianism. Building on the concept of a discourse ethics, it is argued that discourse should be considered as more than just a medium for discussing community.
The universal core of discourse, combined with its flexibility in responding to diverse manifestations of human communities, may provide the ethical foundation upon which pluralist societies can build a sense of deliberative democracy that binds its citizens to procedural standards without pre-empting concrete substantive decisions.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................... ii  
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................... vi  
Chapter 1 – Citizenship in Theory and Citizenship in Practice ........................................... 1  
  Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1  
  Data and Analysis ......................................................................................................................... 8  
  Epistemology and Methodology: Normative Inquiry and Participant Observation .................. 12  
  Ontario’s New Francophones ..................................................................................................... 19  
  How to refer to French speakers living in Ontario .................................................................... 21  
  Citizenship, Minorities and the Nation-State ............................................................................ 23  
  How Canada Accommodates Civic Diversity ........................................................................... 31  
Chapter 2 - The Components of Citizenship ............................................................................. 35  
  The Individual ................................................................................................................................ 35  
    Defining the Role of Citizenship within Democracy ............................................................. 36  
    The Legacy of Liberal Theory ................................................................................................. 41  
    Citizenship and Individual Identity ....................................................................................... 48  
  The Community .......................................................................................................................... 51  
    The Concept of Political Community ..................................................................................... 53  
    Universalism and Difference in the Creation of Community ............................................... 54  
    Justifying Communitarianism: Difference and Exclusion .................................................... 65  
    Justifying Liberalism: Universalism and Inclusion .............................................................. 72  
    Multinational Statehood ........................................................................................................ 77  
    Multicultural Statehood ......................................................................................................... 79  
    Globalization and Citizenship ............................................................................................... 94  
    Creating a Bilingual and Multicultural Framework in Canada ........................................... 98  
    Canada’s Legal Framework Between Liberalism and Communitarianism .......................... 101  
Chapter 3 - The Medium of Citizenship: Language and Discourse ......................................... 105  
  Habermas’s Approach to Discourse and Social Change ......................................................... 109  
  Habermas’s Critical Theory and Citizenship ........................................................................... 110  
  Habermas’s Theory .................................................................................................................... 115  
  Universal Pragmatics in Habermas’s Theory ......................................................................... 117  
  Discourse Theory in Habermas’s Theory ............................................................................... 122  
  Discourse as Ethics ................................................................................................................... 125  
  Discourse as Community ......................................................................................................... 129  
Chapter 4 - The Citizenship of Multiple Belonging: New Francophones in English-Canada  ........................................................................................................................................ 129  
  From Multinational to Multicultural: Francophones in Ontario (a Brief History) ............. 129  
  The Settlement Experience ........................................................................................................ 129  
    Immediate Needs of Newcomers ......................................................................................... 129  
    Meeting the Needs of Newcomers ....................................................................................... 129  
    Overcoming Barriers .............................................................................................................. 129  
  Francophone Players, Organizations and Events ..................................................................... 129  
    Marginalized vs. Mainstream Francophonie ........................................................................ 129  
    “Forum: nouveau départ” .................................................................................................... 129
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The January 1998 Forum</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Task- the First Planning Committee Meeting</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining Francophone Toronto – the Second Planning Committee Meeting</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The April Forum</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Consultations complémentaires”</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for the “Consultations complémentaires”</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ottawa Meeting of the “Consultations complémentaires”</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressures and Challenges:</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Positioning</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands for Change</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rencontre provinciale</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prelude</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports Submitted Before the Rencontre provinciale</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Committee (the working document)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum by the Groupes raciaux</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum by the Association féministe</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Committee (final report)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing the Discussion – the Opening Remarks</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discourses of Unity and Diversity</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unity Camp</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National-Provincial-Linguistic Identity Question</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unification Across the Ethnocultural-Lesbian-Communist Divide</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Manoeuvrability</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reconciler Perspective</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Diversity Camp</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 - The future of minority communities within multi-ethnic democracies</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalist Discourse</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communitarian Discourse</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discourse of Multiple Identities</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Potential for a Deliberative Democracy</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship in a Deliberative Democracy</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my supervisor, Normand Labrie, the other members of my thesis committee, Jim Cummins and Stacy Churchill, and to all members of the project *Prise de parole: La construction discursive de l'espace francophone en milieu minoritaire*. Their continuing help, insightful comments and encouragement have assisted me greatly in understanding the complex realities of francophones living in a minority context. Friends and family have provided crucial moral support and deserve tremendous gratitude as well. Above all, I would like to thank my wife, Alexandra. The stamina required for an endeavour of this kind is owed in no small part to her unfailing love and support.

---

1 The project “Prise de parole” is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Principal investigators: Normand Labrie, Monica Heller, University of Toronto, and Jürgen Erfurt, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main; Collaborators: Annette Boudreau and Lise Dubois, Université de Moncton). It is also funded by the Transcoop Program of the German-American Academic Council Foundation (Principal investigators: Jürgen Erfurt, Monica Heller and Normand Labrie), and the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (Principal investigators: Patrice Brasseur and Claudine Moïse, Université d'Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse, and Rada Tirvassen, Mauritius Institute of Education).
Chapter 1 – Citizenship in Theory and Citizenship in Practice

Introduction

If we were to take snapshots of busy public places in large cities of the Western World and compare them with photos taken twenty or thirty years ago, one of the noticeable changes would certainly be a remarkably more diverse composition of the population in these cities. Diversity brought about by immigration, however, is not a new occurrence. Between peaks of immigration lie wide valleys of consolidation: take the example of the city which, more than any other, has symbolized the experience of immigration to a new country. In 1920, forty percent of New York’s population were immigrants. This was when, for the first time, restrictions other than health conditions were imposed on potential white immigrants to the US. What followed was a long period of consolidation in which many established immigrants became American citizens while there were relatively few new arrivals due to difficult economic conditions and the Second World War. It is only now, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, that New York’s population is once again composed of thirty percent immigrants (Tautfest 1997). Canada’s situation has, if anything, been even more drastic: in 1913, the country admitted more than 400 000 newcomers, while in 1935 only 11 000 immigrants came to Canada. In recent years, Canada’s annual number of immigrants has climbed again to about 200 000. But while the numbers of immigrants may rise and fall, today’s immigration is not a mere reliving of the past. While at the end of the 1950s more than 85% of new immigrants came from Europe (30% from the United Kingdom), by the mid 1990s only 19% of new immigrants were European but a full 57% were from Asia. Furthermore, while earlier immigrants headed for sparsely populated areas to work in forestry, mining or agriculture, 93% of foreign-
born Canadians today live in the 15 largest urban areas. This has led to the remarkable situation that 42% of Metropolitan Toronto’s population, the most multicultural in all of Canada, has come from outside the country (half of those have come over the last fifteen years) and one out of every four Toronto residents speaks a language other than English or French at home (35% of Vancouver residents are immigrants and 22% of its residents speak a language other than English or French at home) (Carey 1997). One consequence has been that, as immigrants come from more diverse backgrounds, they are less likely to unquestioningly adopt the modes of cohabitation and citizenship proposed to them. When we compare the way in which immigration and societal diversity used to be seen (in the media, by policy makers, academics and the general public) with the way it is seen today, there is a shift in quality: both the taken-for-granted assimilation of immigrants in traditional immigrant countries (Australia, Canada and the US) and the equally taken-for-granted eventual repatriation of migrant labourers in self-styled non-immigrant countries (such as Germany) have given way to a complex reality in which the predictability and manageability of immigration patterns have waned.

In the face of this shift, public policy has found it increasingly difficult to respond to migration issues, especially since the recipes suggested for coping with the new diversity are often diametrically opposed: those who favour assimilation argue that by maintaining a diverse society one inadvertently creates a divisive society, pointing as proof to events as different as the civil war in former Yugoslavia and the threat posed by independence in Quebec (through which Canada is supposedly at risk of balkanization), while those who

---

2I am not, of course, suggesting that the phenomenon of multiculturalism is confined to the West. Given my focus on citizenship within a Western-liberal context, I will not, however, be considering non-
are in favour of pluralism, using the same instances of communal conflict, argue that only the recognition of diverse identities allows for peaceful conflict resolution and coexistence.

How can we decide which one of these paths to pursue, or are they merely false dichotomies? As one might expect, an answer requires both knowledge of the functioning of multicultural societies and a model that helps us to capture these realities conceptually. The problem faced by many countries today may be stated as follows: *How can a modern liberal democracy (such as Canada’s) develop a model of civic belonging which balances the demands for representation made by established and emerging new minorities with the need for a coherent form of citizenship?* This study attempts to contribute both knowledge and ideas on how the relationship between minorities and the state can be improved by rethinking the nature of specific minority membership and general civic belonging. Based on the recent work of Jürgen Habermas, I will suggest that human communication itself provides us with the core values of democratic procedure (a discourse ethics) and could thus be seen as the universal, civic glue holding societies together.

The main argument to be pursued here is as follows:

Canada is a liberal democracy historically founded on the model of a unified nation-state. At the same time, Canada recognizes and supports the demands for recognition by various minorities. In the past, the tension between unity and diversity was contained by granting recognition to a number of clearly identifiable minority groups. As I shall illustrate by taking a close look at some segments of Ontario’s francophone population, minorities
themselves are now discovering their own heterogeneity. This gives rise to a proliferation of new minorities and leads to two questions. Firstly, how can an overarching civic bond be maintained? And, at the same time, how ought the new minorities to be recognized? The answer to the first question, which will be argued here, is that the very process of debating issues of identity and belonging contains within itself the kernels of the civic commitment necessary to the unity of a 'post-national' state. The answer to the second question is that communities, rather than being regarded as groups of people, could be considered as discourses with which individuals identify. Both answers, if tenable, point to the centrality of open and unconstrained communication, not only as a medium but also as the purpose and ultimately identifying characteristic of a democratic state. Citizenship then becomes less the attachment to a particular community or state but the commitment to a communicative ideal of democratic procedure.

Building a notion of community that is based on unconstrained communication is, of course, not unrelated to the advent of globalization and the Internet. Even though one needs to carefully separate hype from reality, it is undeniable that the Internet has spawned entirely new forms of community – communities which, at least initially, exist purely on the basis of being linked in a virtual communicative network. Globalization, on the other hand, includes the phenomenon of people moving more quickly across greater distances while maintaining closer ties with their countries of origin than ever before. Ontario's francophone population presents, in many ways, a fertile ground for investigating these issues. Following the arrival in Ontario of a large number of non-French-Canadian francophones from the Caribbean in the 1970s and 1980s and from Africa in the early
1990s, divergent opinions have developed in Ontario's francophone community as to how the 'new' francophones ought to be integrated.

These new francophones do not fit easily into any of the pre-established categories. They are neither just another multicultural immigrant group (since they speak one of Canada's official languages) nor can they simply be regarded as new members of Ontario's Franco-Ontarian community (since they are mostly of non-European heritage and have no links with an ethnically, rather than linguistically defined French-Canadian heritage).
Even if it is always difficult for immigrants to win acceptance in a new society, the fact remains that any grievance felt by New Francophones against Francophones of Canadian origin constitutes an obstacle to their integration into the Francophone Community and encourages them to join the majority English society. Our interviews with Francophones of Canadian origin indicated, on the one hand, that the provincial leaders want to ensure Canadian francophonie is receptive to New Francophones; on the other hand, they are aware that major psychological obstacles to this receptiveness still exist among some members of their provincial constituencies. The immigrants, generally speaking, are not aware of just how much the Francophone and Acadian communities of different provinces have been forced as a measure of self-defense to strengthen the internal ties within their group and to reject external influences. On the other hand, native-born Canadians do not always grasp just how much racial differences can increase the psychological impact of rebuffs from persons already established in the country. (Churchill and Kaprielian-Churchill, 1991:89)

Churchill summarizes here quite succinctly the source of tension between new and established francophones. What complicates the situation even further is the fact that the historical role of the state in supporting francophone minorities has created an impression among francophones of old stock that such support is to be used mostly for the benefit of French-Canadians since, for most of Canada’s history, the French speakers have been descendants of European settlers. In reality, though, francophoneness is an entirely
separate matter from ethnicity so that state support for francophone activities is as much available to yesterday's francophone immigrant from Africa as it is to francophones with a family history in Canada that goes back centuries. In spite of the difficulty of sharing limited resources, however, the arrival of new francophones has also had a very positive effect for all francophones: it has bolstered the numbers of francophones overall and given added weight to demands for more state funds to be made available for francophone causes.

Unlike traditional French-Canadian francophones, however, newly arrived francophones also have a second option of belonging to Canadian society. They can opt to become a multicultural group defined by place of origin rather than by language. Feeling rejected by traditional francophone society, this is, indeed, what many new francophones do. They send their children to English schools because they feel integration will be easier in the English-Canadian world, even if, for the parents, it means giving up part of their linguistic heritage. Such slipping-away of French speakers into English-speaking multiculturalism does, of course, in the long-run hurt the interests of all francophones.

In terms of integration into the Canadian political system, the situation of these new francophones could thus be characterized as one of unresolved 'civic fit' since at least two moulds of citizenship are available to them: becoming a multicultural group or joining the francophone minority community. This quandary is intriguing both on a theoretical and an applied level.

When I compared the insights gained through my direct involvement as a participant-observer in francophone events with the theorizing on multiculturalism and citizenship, it
became apparent that the Canadian model of distinguishing between multicultural and official language minority groups does not provide sufficient inspiration on how a minority like Ontario’s new francophones could find a place in the political structure of Canadian society. Thus, apart from merely understanding the current tensions between old and new francophones, the second objective of my investigation is to propose a new way of looking at minorities and at the meaning of citizenship in the hope of being able to suggest the outlines of a concept which will satisfy both the interests of community recognition and those of state cohesion. And while the francophone community is important on its own terms, the adaptations we can observe here may have implications for other communities as well. The emergence of global communication networks, for example, signals the end of traditional channels of communication, which used to make it possible to restrict access to information. Citizenship under past circumstances could be shaped through the communication potential available to the citizens. In many multi-ethnic contexts today, however, people may be citizens of one country but have affiliations and intense contact with other communities beyond that country. This makes their civic link more tenuous and voluntary, giving rise to a type of citizenship that is optional rather than inevitable. The francophone community in Ontario is a small-scale example of the types of changes that are looming in much larger contexts. Trying to understand what it means here will therefore allow us to anticipate these larger implications.

Data and Analysis

The data that will be presented here were collected between 1996 and 1999. They stem from government publications, francophone media and personal interviews. The largest portion of data resulted from my participation in a series of semi-public events, which are
discussed below. Data collection took place as part of a project entitled *Prise de Parole : la construction discursive de l’espace francophone en milieu minoritaire en Amérique du Nord* at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. The Principal Investigators of the project were Jürgen Erfurt, Monica Heller and Normand Labrie. Funding for the project was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the German-American Academic Council Foundation and AUPELF-UREF (Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française – Université des réseaux d’expression française). In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of people, organizations and events have been changed. Any reference to documents, even publicly accessible ones, which contain the real names of such people, organizations and events, had to be omitted in order not to compromise such confidentiality.

The first semi-public event during which data gathering took place was organized by a number of francophone groups and institutions from a variety of backgrounds (educational, social, health, recreational). Its objective was to set up a structure that would facilitate co-ordination and joint action among francophone groups in Toronto. As participant-observer, I attended the main one-day event as well as three preparatory meetings over a period of three months. All discourse samples below identified as *Planning Committee* are taken from the three preparatory meetings while those identified as *Forum: nouveau départ* are taken from the main event (see “Forum: nouveau départ, p. 129).
The second event where data gathering took place had a clearly educational focus. As part of province-wide restructuring of the primary and secondary education system in Ontario early in 1997, Franco-Ontarian educators and parents had held a meeting in May of 1997 (not the source of data here) in which they had discussed their visions for the future of francophone schools in Ontario. That meeting had been attended almost exclusively by French-Canadian francophones, giving little consideration to the needs of students of non-French-Canadian background. Some members of the ethnocultural francophone communities (les Groupements ethnoculturels), i.e. mostly francophones of African or Caribbean origin, had felt that their own ideas about the future of French schooling in Ontario should be discussed and made public. Consultations were envisioned for the spring of 1998 in Windsor, Toronto, Ottawa and Sudbury since there are significant francophone ethnocultural communities in these locations. Funding was obtained from the Department of Canadian Heritage and four one-day public hearings in each of these cities took place. As an observer, I attended three of these hearings. The data presented in “Consultations complémentaires” (starting on page 129) are taken from the largest of the four hearings, which took place in Ottawa.

The final event from which data were drawn was a province-wide gathering of francophone organizations (referred to here as Rencontre provinciale, see p. 129). That meeting displayed the most dramatic confrontation between old and new francophones in the province. Its main objective had been to devise a new formula for distributing federal funds among francophone organizations in Ontario. Given that the existence of many organizations depends on federal support and that a change in the way this money is distributed would play a key role in their future, it came as no surprise that the gathering
was rife with tension and acrimonious debate. For a researcher, it presented an unparalleled chance to observe the dynamics among some of the key players in Ontario's francophonie.

In addition, I worked on a project at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Social work in 1998/99 (George and Mwarigha 1999). The objective of the project was to gather information on service delivery to immigrants in the Toronto area. My role in the project was to help organize focus groups in French in order to find out more about the specific problems of francophone newcomers in Toronto. Prior to each focus group meeting, I conducted telephone interviews with potentially interested participants (35 interviews in all).

In addition, a series of interviews with francophones was conducted by myself and members of the project Prise de Parole, which also serve as sources of data here. The recordings of interviews and events were transcribed and subsequently analyzed for any explicit or implicit references to community, identity, belonging and the role of the state. It should be stated that the data reported on here is very much a sample from a particular time period (1996-1999), during which I collected as many documents and participated in as many meetings as possible. Data gathering involved a sequential process of decision making in which leads to new data sources were followed up as they became available. Thus, new events and contact persons were established through an ever widening network of already established contacts. What has emerged is a corpus of qualitative empirical data, shedding some light on the current state of the relationship between new and old francophones in Ontario.
One important element in the data-gathering process was how I presented my own person. While the fact that I was working on a university project helped to assure the people I contacted of the legitimacy of my research, it turned out that another factor allowed me to participate in meetings and interview people with relative ease. The fact that I am neither anglophone nor francophone nor, indeed, Canadian but German, having come to Canada only in 1995, meant that I was not regarded as a stakeholder in the relationship among francophones or between anglophones and francophones. The value of being 'not part of the game' was driven home to me during one of my first contacts, which I shall briefly summarize here. I had introduced myself as a university student doing research on the current state of Ontario's francophonie. The person I was interviewing did, at a certain point, make a remark that implied that I was anglophone Canadian. When I corrected her and said that I had come to Canada only recently from Germany, she smiled and asked whether this would mean that I would then be conducting this type of research without, in fact, having any personal attachment to any of the groups involved. I agreed. This, she then said, would allow her to speak more openly since she would not have to be afraid of making a remark which might offend me as a francophone, an anglophone or a Canadian. It was thus that I realized the extent to which my own ethnic and linguistic background was advantageous in obtaining honest views from the people with whom I was interacting. In subsequent interviews, I made a point not only of introducing myself as a university student working on a research project but, if the situation permitted, also of alluding to my own background.
Epistemology and Methodology: Normative Inquiry and Participant Observation

Can a sociolinguist do research on citizenship, and, if so, how? Finding an answer to this question is, in many ways, more difficult than answering a closely related but subtly different question: can a sociolinguist do research on social identity, and if so, how? The second question is easy to answer because, among other things, sociolinguistics aims to inform us how language as a social phenomenon is indicative of a speaker’s identity. But if we understand citizenship to be a part of people’s identity, it is not difficult to make the small jump to sociolinguistic research on citizenship. Citizenship is a type of identity. What makes it difficult to use as an analytical concept, though, is the fact that it carries with it a normative content: we all have some ideas about the values of citizenship. This is why we cannot talk about “good identity” in the same way that we can discuss what “good citizenship” means. Or can we? The two concepts are not nearly as distinct as they might appear at first glance:

“The socially derived identity was by its very nature dependent on society.

But in the earlier age recognition never arose as a problem. General recognition was built into the socially derived identity by virtue of the very fact that it was based on social categories that everyone took for granted. (…) What has come about with the modern age is not the need for recognition but the conditions in which the attempt to be recognized can fail. That is why the need is now acknowledged for the first time.” (Taylor 1994:35)
The concept of identity (like the concept of citizenship) cannot be understood without certain normative assumptions. Part of these assumptions is that it is good to have one's identity recognized since individuals whose identity is not recognized have one of the necessary conditions for a full expression of their identity withheld from them. Since recognition is vital to identity, it is questionable whether, over the long run, anyone is able to maintain an identity that is based solely on solitary conviction. If, however, in order for one's identity to flourish, a positive, in the sense of non-oppressive, social context is required, it makes little sense to view identity as independent and residing within the individual. Identity includes social recognition. Likewise, citizenship cannot be practised in isolation. The only difference is that concepts of citizenship are quite clearly linked to historical and normative perspectives while identity appears more universal and less normatively "tainted". But this appearance is, in my view, deceptive: identity and citizenship are closely related concepts. While identity may appear to assume only the existence of some universal kind of social organization and citizenship clearly assumes that of a particular Western political organization, there is no qualitative difference since any social organization contains "political" objectives against which identity needs to be defined, thus assuming "citizenship"-quality of some (but not necessarily Western) type.

While within philosophy and political science it is quite acceptable to be openly normative, most sociologists, linguists and sociolinguists regard normative theorizing as undesirable and instead strive for an adequate description and a convincing explanation. Normativism is seen as raising the spectre of reification, which may lead one to interpret abstract and value-laden concepts (such as citizenship) as concrete realities. Thus, one might argue
there can be a theory of identity but there cannot be a theory of citizenship as citizenship is a particular ideological version of identity.

I do not share these anti-normative fears. I believe that a social science that attempts to shut out normative judgements acts in the mistaken belief that it should mirror the objectivity of the natural sciences. There are many good reasons why the type of inquiry undertaken in the social sciences is quite different from the natural sciences (consider arguments advanced to this effect by such diverse social scientists as Giddens (1996), Heap (1995), Popper (1994, 1957) and Searle (1984)).

Habermas makes clear the need for a normative approach to issues of society by arguing that, unlike the objectified attitude which we can take towards naturally constituted entities, a society's reality is internally bound up with normative claims:

"The social reality, which we refer to through regulative speech acts, is intrinsically bound up in an internal relationship with normative validity claims." (Habermas 1983:71)

Sociology, Habermas (Habermas 1996:55) claims, achieves only a partial understanding of the social world because it is trying to understand it as an objectified system rather than focusing on the fact that it is a system which, unlike the natural world, does not exist independent of its description but is constituted in the process of trying to understand and describe it. He takes the position that the social world only becomes accessible from the vantage point of the participant. As such, the social world is historically and ontologically

---

3 "Die gesellschaftliche Realität, auf die wir uns mit regulativen Sprechhandlungen beziehen, steht bereits von Haus aus in einer internen Beziehung zu normativen Geltungsansprüchen." (Habermas 1983:71)
of a different quality than the world of objective natural facts that can be approached from the observer perspective. The social world is interwoven with the intentions, beliefs, practices and languages of its social actors.

Therefore, if we agree on a description, expressed in a statement, of a fact concerning the physical world we may or may not fulfil the truth conditions for that statement (i.e. the statement is verifiable regardless of those expressing it). But in the case of statements about the social world, any discursively reached agreement about a particular state of social affairs does not refer to independently existing facts but rather justifies and explains why we should regard something as a social fact. In other words, the norms we use to consider the social world are not like independent truth conditions but are tied in with the nature of the evaluators, who automatically become its participants. In an interview with T. Hviid Nielsen, Habermas elaborates further on this distinction and the difference between a philosophical and a sociological approach (Habermas and Dews 1992:256/57):
An interesting difference consists in the fact that holding sentences to be true does not affect the dimension essential to the truth of sentences, namely the existence of states of affairs. By contrast, holding norms to be right directly affects the dimension of action regulation which is essential to them. (...) The moral theorist naturally chooses a normative standpoint; he shares the standpoint of the addressees of a norm, who take part in discourses of grounding and application. In this perspective, we must initially abstract from existing traditions, habitual practices, and current motives – in short, from the ethical customs established within a society. On the other hand, the sociologist is in the first instance interested in these ethical customs. But he takes up the attitude of a participant observer. We cannot simultaneously take up the third-person standpoint of the addressee of a norm and the third-person standpoint of a sociological observer. You are presumably thinking of the complicated case in which someone interprets in one attitude the knowledge which has been acquired in another attitude. This is the case with a sociologist, who measures a descriptive account of a belief in legitimacy against the grounds which could be adduced for the legitimacy of the actual social order which he observes, for the perspective of possible addressees. (...) One must keep these different viewpoints, and their distinct objects, separate. However, such differentiation does not support the argument for a sociological short-circuiting of moral theory. (Habermas and Dews 1992:256/57)
Even as social scientists we are part and parcel of the normative world that we are investigating and we cannot extricate ourselves from it at will and assume a neutral observer perspective. Rather than investigating how people are prevented from realizing their true interests by a haze of false discourse (in the sense of a Marxian false consciousness), Habermas suggests that we should take a look at discourse itself to discover whether it contains contradictions or is, as he puts it, "capable of rational grounding" (Habermas and Dews 1992:257).

Habermas makes it quite clear that, even in the realm of socially constituted norms, it is not true that 'anything goes'. Within the structures of human communication lie the criteria that allow us to evaluate the claims that are made in normative discourses all around us.

In adopting both a normative and an empirical approach, I am far from suggesting that there can be no scientific rigour in the social sciences. What I am saying is that we are bound to adopt normative stances when engaging in social science research and that it is better to make these stances explicit than to ignore them. The theory which usefully combines a sociological, linguistic and philosophical outlook is Jürgen Habermas’s *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (in English: Theory of Communicative Action, (Habermas 1984a; Habermas 1987)).

Thus, the present study is an investigation into the possibility of new citizenship models both from a theoretical-normative vantage point as well as from a practical-empirical one. The two are, in fact, not very different from each other when one attempts to answer the following question: how do francophone newcomers to English Canada establish a sense
of identity within the fabric of Canadian civil society? Any answer is bound to contain a previously established idea of how newcomers should establish themselves as citizens. However, rather than merely addressing the theoretical question of what ought to be the case, this study also presents some empirical data on how new immigrants do talk about what they feel their place within Canadian society is and/or should be.

Ontario’s New Francophones

Most immigrants to the English-speaking Canadian province of Ontario see English as a key element in gaining access to Canadian society. However, a certain number of immigrants choose a different route. Coming from francophone countries (mostly in Africa and the Caribbean), they opt to actively seek out the French minority in the province as a way to integrate into their new country. They wish to continue to live and work in French, they join francophone associations and send their children to francophone schools. In the course of doing so, they engage in two distinctly different activities: on the one hand, they become a part of the long-established French-speaking community’s struggle to maintain itself as a distinct group. As such, they seek to become a part of Canada’s French legacy, i.e. one of the so-called two founding peoples of Canada; a designation which encompasses a number of constitutional and other legal rights across Canada as well as inside Ontario. On the other hand, however, they are a group of immigrants in the general multicultural fabric of Canada. And even though Canada has adopted one of the most explicit multicultural policies in the world, the rights which can be claimed under this policy (especially language rights) are quite distinct from those
which apply to what is sometimes referred to as the two charter groups, i.e. English or French Canadians. This situation places francophone immigrants in civic territory where they are faced with an option. They are obviously immigrants, a fact that would place the maintenance of their cultural identity within the scope of multiculturalism. On the other hand, though, they are francophones, which makes the maintenance of their language a concern that they share with French Canadians. Potentially, at least, they belong in two groups that the Canadian polity has tended to treat as quite distinct. As a result, new questions of civic identity are being posed in the interplay of multiculturalism and official bilingualism.\(^4\)

Being or becoming a Canadian citizen when you are, for example, a recent francophone immigrant from the Congo who lives in Toronto puts you in two important relationships with the Canadian state and Canadian society. You are a member of an ethnocultural group in Canada’s most multicultural city and you are able to draw on the rights and services available to one of Canada’s official language minority communities: Ontario’s francophones. Of course, you may decide not to access the network of Franco-Ontarian associations but this has nothing to do with the opportunity to send your children to French-speaking schools or to demand a court hearing in French. The way in which immigrants reconcile the competing visions of multiculturalism and bilingualism and formulate their own version of Canadian citizenship stands to reveal a great deal about

\(^4\) This designation is contested since it depicts the founding of Canada solely as a matter arising from the settlement by European colonial powers and ignores the presence of Canada’s indigenous population completely.

\(^5\) Considering immigrants from francophone Africa to be only francophones does, of course, mask the fact that, in addition, many of them speak African languages. Calling them ‘francophones’ does, however, appear justified since French is the major language of public life, including education, in their home
how citizenship may need to be reformulated within Canada’s political structure, which
aims to be liberal, democratic and multicultural.

Before moving on, we need to clarify an important terminological issue. The diverse
segments of Ontario’s francophones all have their very own ideas about what unites or
divides them. And before we can speak of a francophone community, one needs to check
whether such a group is, indeed, assumed to exist by all francophones.

**How to refer to French speakers living in Ontario**

A problem that runs through this study is how one should refer to the people who are its
main empirical focus. One commonly used term is Franco-Ontarians. This term, however,
is highly contested since some use it to refer only to ethnic French-Canadian francophones
while others use it in the more linguistic sense of referring to anyone who speaks French in
Ontario. For the purpose of clarity in the presentation, a tripartite distinction will be
drawn between a) francophones of French-Canadian heritage, b) francophones who have
migrated to Canada from a European country (and for whom this European country is, in
fact, their country of origin) and c) francophones who have migrated to Canada whose
origins are in Africa, Asia or the Caribbean. I am fully aware that some people may take
issue with these distinctions. However, it should be clear that these distinctions cannot
always be unambiguously attributed and that groups and individuals may consider
themselves to belong to more than one of the groupings suggested by these distinctions.
Furthermore, they only have the value of a heuristic device and suggested themselves
during the time that the research was conducted. I do not wish to suggest that they are in

---

countries and, upon arrival in Canada, serves as the major language of communication among
immigrants from francophone Africa.
any way immutable, particularly since the objective of this investigation is to suggest new ways of dealing with heterogeneity. With this proviso, I shall use the term *Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent* to refer to the first group, *European francophones* to refer to the second group and *new francophones* or *ethnocultural francophones* to refer to the third group. Given its heterogeneity and centrality to this study, I shall consider the last group in more detail.

Many terms are being used in the auto-designation of Ontario’s new francophones: *groupements ethnoculturels, minorités raciales, afro-francophones or groupes ethniques et multiculturels*. These terms are not mutually exclusive. There is considerable overlap and sometimes confusion as to their adequate use. For the purposes of this study, the term *new francophones* shall refer to

*francophones who are themselves or whose parents are not of European-Canadian or European origin but have come to Ontario mainly from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean and a large number of whom are non-Caucasian, i.e. belong to what is commonly referred to as a visible minority.*

This characterization is unable to capture all possible cases (e.g. a black child adopted by a white Franco-Ontarian family could be identified as either new or traditional francophone). In addition, it needs to be stressed that an individual’s self-identification should take precedence over any external classification. Thus, the terms discussed here are used because they have arisen within the examined discourses. Moreover, it is necessary to establish the reasons why many new francophones wish to be considered as separate from Francophones of French-Canadian descent or white francophones of European origin.
Among such reasons is cultural origin but also discrimination and racism. The latter have led many new francophones to organize themselves in groups that are separate from traditional francophone groups.

The picture that emerges is a highly complex one. One of the fundamental issues that anyone dealing with French speakers in Ontario has to confront is whether or not there is actually any justification for terminologically including all francophones in one common name – whatever that may be. In the same sense that Anderson (1983) poses the question of the imagined character of nations, we might ask in whose interest it is to assume that there is a unity of francophones in Ontario. As Martel (1997) has pointed out, the historical unity which used to bind all French-Canadians vanished in the late 1960s with the emergence of a distinct Québécois identity vis-à-vis a, much weaker, notion of francophones hors Québec. Today, we can observe among Ontario’s francophone groups both those who are in favour of only a very loosely organized francophonie and those who have traditionally advocated and benefited from the notion of la communauté franco-ontarienne and who would like to see this unity continued into the future.

Citizenship, Minorities and the Nation-State

Historically, citizenship has been very much associated with attachment to one and only one nation-state and we need to explore the origins and interdependence of the terms nation-state, citizenship and minority before being able to suggest how they might be reconceptualized. At the risk of oversimplification, one could say that as much as there can be no citizenship without a state, there can be no minority without the idea of a nation. If the state represents some form of authority and/or protection, the citizen is that over
which such authority and/or protection is exercised. Citizenship characterizes the relationship between state and citizen. Thus, without reference to a state, citizenship loses its significance. Similarly, minorities only come into existence because some other, larger group (e.g. the nation) identifies itself on the basis of arbitrarily selected characteristics that it does not share with members of the minority (language, ethnicity, religion, etc.). Whereas the link between state and citizenship is a structural one (rights and duties), the link between nation and minority is based on more or less randomly selected criteria (a different language, ethnicity or religion can be just as easily focused on and used to argue for difference as it can be ignored in order to assume a common nationality). Considering all this, it is surprising that nation and state should ever have come to be so intimately linked to produce the term 'nation-state'. There are, of course, historical reasons for this linkage.

The nation-state as political community is closely connected to the idea of liberal rights such as life, liberty and property. Within this context, citizenship describes a relationship of reciprocity between the state and its members. The citizen observes his/her duties towards the state and the state grants rights in return. This relationship, however, was not considered to be possible between just any given individual and any given state. Thus, John Stuart Mill (Mill and Spitz 1975), for example, is known as one of the most important proponents of the concept of 'negative liberty', i.e. the absence of constraint and the duty of the state to uphold the individual's freedom. This refers, strictly speaking, only to the relationship between state authority and freedom of the individual citizen and has nothing to do with nationality. However, Mill also believed that such a relationship was only possible under the conditions of a shared nationality.
When a people are ripe for free institutions, there is a still more vital consideration. Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist. (...) The same incidents, the same acts, the same system of government, affect them in different ways: and each fears more injury to itself from the other nationalities than from the common arbiter, the state. Their mutual antipathies are generally much stronger than jealousy of the government. (Mill 1991:XVI)

The modern and liberal concept of state as the guarantor of freedom thus became inextricably bound up with a romantic concept of nation as a naturally constituted group of like-minded individuals, leading to the perception that in order to set up a democratic state one must first build the nation. Churchill (1996:271) shows how much the national is a part of the nation-state as he discusses several dimensions of the traditional nation-state:

*The “Nation” is made up of the “the People”, consisting of citizens who share (or submit to) a common accepted culture, derived from a common historical heritage, which includes one official language (exceptionally two or three) and a common accepted set of behaviours useful for participating in a modern society.*

In this tradition we see the ambiguous character of the nation-state. As state, it is modern and liberal since it supports a concept of citizenship that protects the autonomous
individual against a tendentially oppressive state. But as nation, there remains a strong emphasis on the perceived reality of a community as a cohesive and natural entity. It was not until the twentieth century that the contrived nature of the nation has come under intense scrutiny, even though, historically, the nation-state itself is a relatively recent development. As we see in Hobsbawm (1992), empires, confederations, and city states were far more common than the self-contained nation-state. Hobsbawm stresses the element of artefact and invention in making people believe that nations have existed since time immemorial. As he puts it:

'The modern sense of the word [nation] is no older than the eighteenth century, give or take the odd predecessor' (Hobsbawm 1992:3)

Hobsbawm (1992:9/10), also quoting from Gellner (1983:48/49), argues that nationalism, i.e. the instrumentalization of the nation, precedes the nation itself (for further discussion see also page 105).
Like most serious students, I do not regard the 'nation' as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity. It belongs exclusively to a particular, and historically recent, period. It is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the 'nation-state', and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it. Moreover, with Gellner I would stress the element of artefact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations. 'Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent … political destiny, are a myth: nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is a reality.' In short, for the purposes of analysis nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalism but the other way round.

If, however, nations are only imagined and, as I have suggested above, much of what a minority is hinges on the assumption of a nation, what would the future hold for minorities if nations were to disappear? Churchill points in the direction of new and exciting options for minorities as we observe the demise of the nation-state:

It is my conclusion that the philosophical matrix of the nation-state has come apart but that its unraveling provides the strands of development for the future. Properly exploited, those strands can lead to a still indecipherable but promising future for the cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic complexity that is humankind. (Churchill 1996:279)
Churchill then goes on to present both a definition and a typology of national minorities. He distinguishes between a. romantic and modern minorities, b. post-modern minorities, c. transitional/disenfranchised minorities and d. refugees, diasporas and transnational minorities. He observes that across all groups there are some shared objectives:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{a. recognition of identity in the allocation of symbolic and material resources} (...)
\item \textit{b. transition to a participating role as a citizen in a state} (...)
\item \textit{c. sharing of rights and responsibilities} (...) (Churchill 1996:281)
\end{itemize}

Interestingly, these objectives have much more to do with the role of the state and much less with the role of the nation. Accomplishing these objectives becomes possible only if the weight of the nation in the nation-state is reduced and that of the state enhanced. Citizenship acquires greater weight than national identity in the individual’s commitment to the nation-state. The successful integration of minorities could, therefore, be argued to depend, at least in part, on a flexible and contemporary definition of citizenship. Let us, therefore, now consider the meaning of citizenship in some more detail.

The theoretical starting point to nearly all discussions of citizenship is T.H. Marshall’s (1950) influential paper \textit{Citizenship and Social Class}. In it, Marshall traces the historical development and expansion of citizenship rights from civil/legal rights in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries (relating to the basic freedoms of personal liberty, freedom of speech and the right to a trial), to political rights in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century (culminating in the institution of democratically elected parliaments and councils) and finally to social rights in the 20\textsuperscript{th}
century (extended by the welfare-state to guarantee a minimum of material security for its citizens). In two important aspects, Marshall's model is no longer adequate: firstly, while Marshall acknowledged economic divisions within society, ethnically and culturally he treated it as a homogeneous group of people under the umbrella of the state, an assumption which is certainly no longer tenable (if, indeed, it ever was). Secondly, the development of a globalized capitalist system has, in many regards, curtailed the fiscal and political power of the state (Lash and Urry 1994). These two changes are forcing a redefinition of citizenship from two ends: at one end are the citizens whose civic point of reference is no longer just one state but who may belong to several states as well as to various national or ethnic groups within the nation-state. In modelling citizenship we must therefore take account of the fact that there are groups and individuals today that are characterized by multiple belonging and identity. At the other end is the state that is forced to look at ways other than welfare provisions of offering meaningful modes of citizenship in order to be able to justify its continuing role as a centre of citizen identification. These two changes clearly require an extension of Marshall's model, but opinions vary on how this should be done.

Bryan S. Turner (1997) suggests that following the era of the social citizen with social rights in the welfare-state, there will be the human being with human rights in a global capitalist space. In an optimistic assessment, he predicts that a body such as the United Nations and bilateral agreements between states will ensure peace and respect for human rights. More pessimistically, however, he sees the possibility that a number of small powerful economies will be imposing their interests through mechanisms such as the
World Bank or the International Monetary Fund\(^6\) without any interest in preserving the achievements of the welfare-state. Jan Pakulski (1997), on the other hand, sees less the demise of the traditional nation-state but rather a redefinition of its activities: the welfare-state, he argues, will be superseded by a state that promotes itself as a guarantor of cultural rights. Pakulski’s analysis, though developed against the background of Australian society, lends itself to an understanding of the Canadian situation in which similar collective demands are being raised to which the state responds by extending cultural rights, in the form of an explicit policy of multiculturalism that also includes granting rights to, for example, indigenous peoples and gays. Cultural rights, in his argument, provide

\[\ldots a\ new\ set\ of\ citizenship\ claims\ that\ involve\ the\ right\ to\ unhindered\ and\ legitimate\ representation,\ and\ propagation\ of\ identities\ and\ lifestyles through\ the\ information\ systems\ and\ in\ public\ fora.\ One\ can\ detect\ within\ them\ three\ sub-streams: the\ right\ to\ symbolic\ presence\ and\ visibility\ (vs\ marginalisation);\ the\ right\ to\ dignifying\ representation\ (vs\ stigmatisation);\ and\ the\ right\ to\ propagation\ of\ identity\ and\ maintenance of\ lifestyles\ (vs\ assimilation). \text{(Pakulski 1997:80)}\]

Of course, the state has always been involved in the promotion of identity through symbols. In most cases, however, this took place with a view to unifying the state and suppressing dissident and non-dominant groups. What is new is the fact that the state, by

\(^6\) Although he does not mention it, we can assume that the (currently suspended) negotiations on the MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment) are a part of this trend that threatens to seriously erode the manoeuvrability of the nation-state.
recognizing and even promoting its multicultural composition, makes itself the champion of diversity. In Canada, this process was initially prompted by Quebec's Quiet Revolution, finding its most visible federal impact in the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1969). Biculturalism, however, came to be seen as reductive and not adequately reflecting Canada's ethnic groups, thus leading to an official policy of multiculturalism.

How Canada Accommodates Civic Diversity

Given the heterogeneous makeup of the country, Canada has been actively engaged in pursuing a politics of pluralism, whether that consists in support for official bilingualism (which includes supporting official language minority groups across the country), in the granting of various degrees of autonomy to aboriginal groups (most spectacularly reflected in the creation of Nunavut or the signing of the Nisga'a Treaty) or in its policy of multiculturalism. Canada has committed itself not only ideologically but also financially to pluralism as public policy (Pal 1993). We are exploring here one facet within this picture of Canadian pluralism: the ways in which francophone immigrants settling in English Canada develop a notion of identity and belonging within Canadian civil society.

Newcomers from francophone parts of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean who arrive in English Canada are typically faced with an uncomfortable discovery. Before coming to Canada, many entertain the belief that Canada is a bilingual and multicultural country, a notion which, according to the accounts of many immigrants, Canada’s missions overseas do little to dispel. Upon arriving in a city like Toronto, however, these newcomers discover that, while it is certainly multicultural, the usefulness of the French language is
quite restricted. Since many speak little or no English, they may choose to orient themselves towards the few French-speaking institutions in the city, enrolling their children in francophone schools, making use of French health and social services, looking for jobs which require French and possibly furthering their education in French-speaking colleges.

Many of these francophone services and institutions were created and are publicly funded in order to grant the francophone minority in Ontario some institutional autonomy and thereby demonstrate the viability of living in French in English-Canada. They were therefore conceived for a long-established linguistic minority community but are now being increasingly utilized by, and are in some cases only viable because of, the newly established French-speaking immigrant community. Canada’s pluralist policies, however, did not originally envision such a scenario: on the one hand, the policy of multiculturalism finances programs to facilitate the integration of newcomers into Canadian society, while, on the other hand, the policy of bilingualism supports official language minorities, i.e. French-speaking Canadians in English-Canada and English-speaking Canadians in Quebec. But as the composition of francophone minorities in English-Canada becomes more ethnically diverse, the traditional distinction between bilingualism and multiculturalism begins to blur.\(^7\)

\(^7\) While provincial governments play an important role in the provision of services to immigrants, the major focus here will be on the federal level. It is at that level that the policy of bilingualism, for example, is situated. In addition, it is the federal level that was mentioned almost exclusively in the discourse of those who were interviewed or in the discourse of the meetings I attended. One explanation may be that the question of how newcomers acquire a role in the Canadian political fabric as new citizens is essentially one which refers to a general vision of what kind of country Canada wants to be and how this vision is supported by an inclusive type of citizenship. Provincial policies follow rather than initiate conceptualizations at the federal level. Thus, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for example, sets out the legal framework for schooling in an official language in a minority context.
Still, even some of the most recent literature on the role of language in Canada treats multiculturalism and bilingualism as completely separate sets of issues (Edwards 1998) (but see exceptions in Heller's (1994) work on education or Martel's (1995) article on the history of Franco-Ontarians). Using the discourse of immigrant francophones in Ontario as an example, it can be seen that a new, triangular relationship of state, multicultural groups and official language minorities is in the making. The central argument to be pursued here is that an understanding of the social reality of linguistic minorities can be aided by an understanding of how they make use of civil society concepts available to them. This requires us, in a first step (chapters 2 and 3), to discuss liberalism and communitarianism as important ideological underpinnings of Canadian civil society. In a second step (chapter 4), actual discourse data from francophone newcomers will be considered to show how liberal and communitarian civil society concepts are taken up by francophone immigrants in an effort to position themselves as new citizens.

---

Its provisions must then be implemented at the provincial level. It is, of course, possible that I would have obtained different results if I had focused on specific issues such as health, which fall almost exclusively into provincial jurisdiction.
In a final step (chapter 5), the very notion of community itself will be problematized: while communities are traditionally imagined as aggregates of similar individuals, the fact that one individual may belong to more than one (and possibly conflicting) communities, raises the question of whether it may not be better if communities were treated as communities of discourse rather than groups of people. Taking such a discourse rather than people-focused view of communities, a proposal will be made (based on ideas advanced by Jürgen Habermas) that suggests that civil society concepts such as liberalism or communitarianism ought to be complemented with a procedural ideal of coercion-free discourse.
Chapter 2 - The Components of Citizenship

In its very basic sense, citizenship is not hard to understand. It is a relational concept linking the individual person with one or more communities to which s/he belongs. Therefore, we need to understand and focus on three elements of citizenship: a. the individual b. the community and c. the relationship between the two. Exploring the individual is important because citizenship is a concept which regards the individual person as a bearer of rights – an idea which is historically contingent and needs to be understood in conjunction with the rise of liberalism. Exploring the community is important because the community is the ambient social environment within which the individual citizen exercises citizenship – which and how many communities an individual can simultaneously belong to is a central issue in this section, as it is throughout the entire argument made here. Finally, exploring the relationship between the individual and the community leads us to language and discourse. Language is, after all, not only the medium that links the individual to the community but it is also the very source for individual and collective identities. Without language, the individual cannot claim distinctiveness from others and a group of individuals cannot express its collective nature. Without speaking, there would be neither an individual I nor a collective We. Communication allows us to produce both community and individuality.

The Individual

First of all we need to understand that neither citizenship nor individual identity are givens that exist in any concrete sense. Rather, they are concepts that have been shaped by historical events and the evolution of political philosophy. How the individual person is conceived of and why s/he is now regarded as a citizen will be explored in three sections.
First, the concept of citizenship will be defined. Secondly, Liberalism will be discussed as a movement which has shaped, more than anything else, our notion of what a modern state should look like and what the place of citizens is within such a state. Thirdly, the notion of identity, which is often too easily taken for granted, will be problematized. In order for citizenship to make sense, the individual citizen must have some notion of who he or she is or who he or she wants to be. Saying that one has an identity assumes that one is not an inextricable part of some organic whole but that one recognizes a certain distance and separation between oneself and one's social surroundings. And if we do not think of ourselves as separate human beings, citizenship makes no sense. But where does this notion of individual identity come from? Have people always thought of themselves as separate from those who surround them?

Defining the Role of Citizenship within Democracy

The concept of citizenship dates back to the ancient Greek polis, which involved its members in a common discussion and decision-making process. As such, it demanded the active political participation of those recognized as citizens in public gatherings. Given today's mass societies in which such discussions under conditions of co-presence are no longer feasible, the active involvement of citizens is much less obvious. Whether an individual citizen keeps abreast of political developments or not is entirely up to him or her, and even what would appear to be the minimal extent of active participation, i.e. voting in political elections, is not a requirement in most countries (with the exception of countries in which voting is mandatory, such as Belgium and Australia). Making active citizenship a voluntary and personal decision is part of the liberal redefinition of citizenship.
in modern democracies. The state is seen as the overall guarantor of individual freedoms, which include the freedom not to do anything and still be recognized as a citizen:

*According to the liberal conception, once one has secured formal entry into the political community, one may be a citizen in good standing and yet do absolutely nothing after having attained membership: not vote, not participate in jury service, not read newspapers or keep oneself informed politically.* (Beiner 1995:114)

Obviously, no democratic state can survive widespread political apathy in the long run. Thus, while tolerating those who decide to withdraw from any type of political involvement, some kind of more active membership is what the state must foster to ensure its continued existence. But how much and what kind of political involvement does active citizenship require? The notion of citizenship proposed by Marshall (1950) in his classic work *Citizenship and Social Class* suggested that citizenship rights could act as an integrative antidote to the divisions created by class society. In a review of Marshall's ideas on citizenship, Giddens (1996:208-223) argues that this is evidence of the critical stand Marshall took towards Marxism. While acknowledging class inequality, he saw citizenship as an integrative dimension allowing universal involvement in the national community. Marshall's notion of citizenship was also strongly linked to the idea of the welfare state. While civil and legal rights would protect the individual from state authoritarianism and violence or coercion, welfare rights would ensure that society would
provide for citizens in situations of need or disability, without which effective use of civil and legal rights would be impossible.

But while welfare rights may appear merely as a natural extension of the basic civil and legal citizenship rights, theoretically they raise complex questions about what rights and obligations citizenship should include. From an extreme liberal point of view, the state should only provide the most basic framework for citizenship and not prejudice the way in which its members decide to regulate the distribution of material resources. Welfare as a right would then be seen as an illegitimate imposition on individual liberties. The argument runs as follows: civil and legal rights are rights to protect personal autonomy, while welfare rights allow the state to interfere (even though it is arguably for the individual's material benefit) in the lives of its citizens thus assuming a definition of what is good. This then raises an important moral issue: a society that provides legal equality and extensive welfare guarantees is seen by some as a minimum requirement to enable people to be active citizens, while others will see it as breaching the principle that only the individual shall make decisions about what is good or not, but not society collectively.

We are thus faced with two positions. There is the liberal point of view, according to which the state remains an aloof guarantor of basic freedoms:

- Individual members tolerate each other's ways of living so long as they do not infringe upon anyone else's rights. Where communal interests are concerned, individuals thrash out their competing visions on how to organize their communal spheres without the state's direct involvement.

---

* To illustrate this point, we can think of legal aid as a welfare right that ensures that persons of limited
In the alternative case, the link between state and its citizens is much closer.

- The state is not merely a guarantor of legal equality but does not shy away from taking a stand on issues of the good life and the society’s collective destiny. Citizens are called upon to discuss why and how they wish to live together and which historical, cultural or linguistic ends their community is supposed to serve.

Clearly, either one of these positions is undemocratic if taken to its extreme. Extreme liberalism would lead to a situation of anarchy in which the state’s withdrawal from public life gives rise to a kind of survival-of-the-fittest vigilantism, while a state that defines the good life in its most minute detail and commits its citizens to adhere to those definitions will end up in totalitarianism. What we are discussing, therefore, is a matter of subtle shades of grey rather than stark contrasts. However, this does not mean that these issues are trivial or purely a matter of preference. There are good reasons why the state should take a position on matters of the good life even within a liberal framework if we consider Ronald Beiner’s definition of citizenship:

means are able to rely on their constitutionally guaranteed equality before the law.
What is the difference between democracy and citizenship? Democracy is a mode of social and political organization within the political community. Citizenship is a form of attachment to the political community itself; it implies, as well, the capacity to give effect to this attachment through various kinds of competent social, legal, and political praxis. In the ideal case, citizenship is active membership in a political community where the very fact of such membership empowers those included in it to contribute to the shaping of a shared collective destiny. (Beiner 1995:105)

Beiner refers to the benefits of active citizenship, both for the political community as a whole and, in turn, for each of its members (empowerment to shape a collective destiny). Common to both components, I would suggest, is the central element of dialogue, i.e. both dialogue between citizens (which would also be included in an ultraliberal concept) but, importantly, dialogue also between the state and the citizen, in which the state acts as a kind of moderator that ensures everyone's voice (and not just the voices of the powerful) is heard.

It is easy to see where this citizenship concept meets with that of Marshall. Unless the state provides assistance in the form of welfare rights to those in need, a significant number of people will be unable to exercise their democratic rights as they require a minimum of existential security⁹. With the rise of the multicultural state, the question now

---

⁹ A telling example of the link between socio-economic status and voting patterns and the resulting skewed nature of democratic representation to the disadvantage of those who rely most on public assistance is provided in a review of patterns of voter participation and voter abstention (de Brie 1997 (May)). Referring to two recent publications (Toinet and Subileau 1993) and (Harwood 1996). Christian de Brie writes: “Les exclusions étant cumulatives, on ne s'étonnera pas que, même si l'abstention est rarement une pratique systématique, elle soit surtout le fait des citoyens dont les niveaux de vie et d'éducation sont les plus bas, les personnes seules, les plus jeunes et les plus âgées, les minorités
arises as to whether, in parallel to the granting of welfare rights, the state should extend cultural rights to groups on its territory. This is an issue that we cannot discuss without considering the genesis of citizenship. Therefore we first need to take a step back, in order to understand how cultural rights in multicultural democracies can be formulated as an extension to traditional citizenship rights.

The Legacy of Liberal Theory

Liberalism serves as the essential political creed in Western democracies. With its roots in Enlightenment thought, it is the dominant ideology of the West and unites diverse thinkers in their opposition to "political absolutism in all its forms, be they monarchist, feudal, military, clerical or communitarian." (Marshall 1994:290). While it is fairly easy to formulate what liberalism is opposed to, it is, however, much more difficult to define what liberalism actually supports. A centrepiece of any liberal ideology is certainly the existence of the inalienable rights of the individual: freedom of speech, of association and of religion, as well as the right to vote. Except for the right to vote, however, all these rights are rights against something, i.e. interference or oppression by the state or other citizens. Yet they do not state what values, if any, the state should promote. Taylor (1994) argues that modern liberal philosophy is characterized by a kind of rational sobriety that takes no...
position on substantive content and only lays down procedures to be adopted by the state. He uses a paper by Ronald Dworkin (1978) as a case in point:

"Dworkin claims that a liberal society is one that as a society adopts no particular substantive view about the ends of life. The society is, rather, united around a strong procedural commitment to treat people with equal respect. The reason that the polity as such can espouse no substantive view, cannot, for instance, allow that one of the goals of legislation should be to make people virtuous in one or another meaning of that term, is that this would involve a violation of its procedural norm." (Taylor 1994:56/7)

Dworkin’s position is that it is not a responsibility of the state to render us virtuous. The state should ensure that its citizens are dealt with and deal with each other fairly and equally without bias in the personal choices we make in arranging our lives. Underlying this notion of personal choice is the Enlightenment concept of personal autonomy, with Kant as one of its important sources. Translated into liberal citizenship ideology, this means that each one of us makes the autonomous choice of adhering to a particular political community whose procedural commitments we share and which otherwise leaves us to make our personal lifestyle choices. Habermas expresses this notion as follows:

"Modern constitutions owe their existence to a conception found in modern natural law according to which citizens come together voluntarily to form a legal community of free and equal consociates. This conception presupposes the notion of individual [subjektive] rights and individual legal persons as bearers of rights." (Habermas 1994:107)
This conception, however, is somewhat unrealistic: firstly, most of us do not choose a political community but are born into one. This is not to say that under duress we may not choose a different one if we can, but most people stay within the community into which they have been socialized from a very young age. Secondly, the idea that each one of us has attended some kind of *Urversammlung* (primordial gathering) assumes that our choice of adhering to a particular political community is made independently of and prior to our having learned about political communities. In fact, many of us are positively biased towards the political community within which we live because that is the kind of community in which we have been socialized.

If, as a consequence, we have to modify our understanding of personal autonomy, such a modification cannot but affect our understanding of liberalism since autonomy is a cornerstone in any liberal position. So what is wrong with a liberal assumption of personal autonomy? In order to find an answer to this question, we need to review further Kant’s position on individual autonomy. and Habermas (1996) provides a helpful critical review in this regard. He argues that Kant places too much emphasis on the autonomous free will of the individual. Political self-government, which in its original sense is a co-operative venture in which the individual merely takes part, becomes, in Kant’s conception, a matter of individual competency.
"Kant, on the basis of his transcendental background assumptions, attributes the free will to an intelligible Ego located in the realm of purposes. This is why the autonomous law making capacity, which is a co-operative venture in its original political sense in which the individual only takes "part", does end up again as the sole responsibility of the individual. It is no mere accident that the categorical imperative is directed at the second person singular and gives the impression that every person can carry out the required testing of norms in foro interno. (Habermas 1996:48, trans. CQ)\textsuperscript{10}

While Kant's insistence on the role of the autonomy of the individual has left its traces in liberal thought to this day, it is no mere coincidence that it is being challenged precisely at the moment when those of a liberal conviction are trying to come to terms with pluralist societies. Given a homogeneous sociocultural background, it may indeed be possible to mistakenly assume that an individual's autonomy allows him or her to freely decide with which community he or she wishes to associate. This is because, against the homogeneity of background, the impact of that background is barely visible. But in communities in which not everyone shares Kant's assumed Enlightenment background, the conceptual pillars upon which autonomy is built are no longer shared and must themselves be made explicit. It is at this point that Habermas (1996) presents an important critique of Kant's ideas: we need to remove the onus of devising a fair and democratic system from the

\textsuperscript{10} "Kant schreibt aufgrund seiner transzendentalen Hintergrundannahmen den freien Willen einem im Reich der Zwecke angesiedelten intelligiblen Ich zu. Deshalb legt er die Selbstgesetzgebung, die nach ihrem ursprünglich politischen Sinn ein kooperatives Unternehmen ist, an dem das Individuum nur "Anteil" hat, doch wieder in die alleinige Kompetenz des Einzelnen. Der kategorische Imperativ
individual and transfer it to the situated communicative context itself. We must, as it were, ensure that the conditions for communication are such that everyone, regardless of their particular identity, is able to participate equitably and thus can give their approval to the common project.
"Kant's reduction of an originally interpersonal notion of autonomy to the level of the individual alone may have occurred all the more easily since he did not sufficiently distinguish ethical issues from pragmatic ones. If one approaches ethical issues seriously from a point of internal reflection, one will come up against the need to interpret the cultural idiosyncrasies of the variable notions of self and the world among individuals and groups. Kant, being a child of the 18th century, still had a mode of thinking which was ahistorical, which explains why he skipped the layer of traditions in which identities are formed. He tacitly assumes that, in an effort to arrive at a moral judgement, everyone is in a position by the mere power of his or her own imagination to put him- or herself in the place of anyone else. If, however, the participants [in the discourse] can no longer rely on a pre-existing transcendental consensus concerning more or less homogeneous life circumstances and interests, a moral aspect can only be maintained under conditions of communication that ensure that everyone, even from his or her own particular interpretation of self and the world, can test the acceptability of a praxis which has been elevated to a norm." (Habermas 1996:49, trans. CQ)11

11 "Die individualistische Verkürzung eines intersubjektivistisch angelegten Autonomiebegriffs mag Kant um so eher unterlaufen sein, als er die ethische Fragestellung nicht hinreichend von der pragmatischen unterscheidet. Wer Fragen der ethischen Selbstverständigung ernst nimmt, stößt auf den interpretationsbedürftigen kulturellen Eigensinn des historisch variablen Selbst- und Weltverständnisses von Individuen und Gruppen. Kant, der als Sohn des 18. Jahrhunderts noch unhistorisch dachte, überspringt diese Schicht von Traditionen, in denen sich Identitäten ausbilden. Er geht stillschweigend davon aus, daß sich bei der moralischen Urteilsbildung jeder kraft eigener Phantasie hinreichend in die Lage eines jeden anderen versetzen kann. Wenn sich aber die Beteiligten nicht mehr auf eine transzendentale Vorverständigung über mehr oder weniger homogene Lebensumstände und Interessenlagen verlassen dürfen, kann sich der moralische Gesichtspunkt nur
Habermas suggests, in the face of a plurality of traditions in modern societies, that we adopt communicative rationality as a way of organizing social interaction to create a forum that is free from domination. The criterion for deciding whether such a forum has been successfully established is the communicative competence of its participants, i.e. the citizens of the political community. Let us consider how that changes the notion of a constitutive _Urversammlung_: its participants come to it with their prior experiences acknowledged (i.e. they are not in a state of assumed political ignorance and innocence) and, based upon the recognition of these experiences, are able to work out a common project because of their ability to communicate with one another.

Thus, they are able to make and question arguments from a position of equality. The only remaining and accepted authority is that of the force of the better argument. Suffice it to say at this point that Habermas suggests that any argument should be subjected to analysis on four counts: firstly, the empirical description of a state of affairs needs to be comprehensible, secondly, it needs to render a true empirical description, thirdly, it must offer an explanation and understanding to which, at least, the speaker must be committed and finally, it must be normatively valid, i.e. it must be justifiable with respect to the shared values in its societal context. The strength of this account lies in its procedural character: while outcomes (i.e. concepts of the good life) are not predetermined, the path towards reaching those outcomes is.

noch unter Kommunikationsbedingungen realisieren, die sicherstellen, daß _jeder_, auch aus der Sicht seines eigenen Selbst- und Weltverständnisses, die Akzeptabilität einer zur allgemeinen Praxis erhobenen Norm prüft.” (Habermas 1996:49)
**Citizenship and individual identity**

Up to this point, the focus has been on citizenship while the important issue of what a "citizen" really is has not been raised. Part of the answer lies in understanding who we are, i.e. what our identity is and, as a consequence, to what extent that identity publicly matters. In an enlightening essay on "The Politics of Recognition", Charles Taylor (1994:25-73) has addressed this question and I will summarize the main parts of his argument.

The argument, Taylor maintains, that individuals have a need for recognition of their identity is, historically, a very recent development. The rise of the democratic ideals of modernity brought about the replacement of honour as a sign of recognition with that of citizen dignity implying mutual and equal recognition of everyone in society. But how do we know what to recognize? When individuals wanted to know more about their identities and lived before the beginning of the nineteenth century, Taylor argues, they would look to God as a source. The divine root to one’s self subsequently came to be replaced with the idea of an authentic individual identity residing within oneself. It was assumed that being true to oneself meant connecting with one’s inner depths: the ideal of authenticity was born and with it came the idea that the only model of life to live by is inside us. Taylor argues that the ideal of authenticity is echoed strongly in mainstream modern philosophy with its overwhelmingly monological conception of human identity. But – and this is the essence of his argument – human beings are not monological but inescapably dialogical beings:
"This crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character. We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression. (...) But we learn these modes of expression through exchanges with others. People do not acquire the languages needed for self-definition on their own. Rather, we are introduced to them through interaction with others who matter to us - what George Herbert Mead called "significant others". The genesis of the human mind is in this sense not monological, not something each person accomplishes on his or her own, but dialogical." (Taylor 1994:32)

As much as the development of our identity (as well as any refusal or modification of it) is shaped through dialogue with others, the identity that one eventually feels comfortable with depends on being recognized in dialogue with those around us. An identity which goes unrecognized, i.e. remains completely private, cannot be truly said to constitute the fulfilment of one's identity. Furthermore, if how one thinks about oneself and how others think about one are not in agreement to a considerable extent, serious psychological harm is inflicted on the individual or a group of individuals.

*The projection of an inferior or demeaning image on another can actually distort and oppress, to the extent that the image is internalized. Not only contemporary feminism but also race relations and discussions of multiculturalism are undergirded by the premise that the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression."* (Taylor 1994:35/6)
Taylor’s argument to this point has afforded two crucial insights: identity is dialogically shaped and the recognition of such identity is a democratic requirement. The third crucial insight follows more or less directly from the previous two: recognition of identity in a pluralist society requires the recognition of the various groups which constitute the society since it is these groups that are directly involved in shaping the identities of individual citizens.

The importance of Taylor’s insistence on the dialogical formation of identity goes far beyond our individual understanding of who we are but affects directly how we conceive of our political community. Taylor points out that for Kant, the basis of human dignity was our status as rational agents, i.e. a universal human potential which is a capacity that all humans share. Given the fairly homogeneous cultural context Kant was familiar with, he may not have seen the importance that culture plays for identity formation (as Habermas’s remarks on Kant showed above) and thus was unaware that in a multicultural context it is not only potential but actually evolved cultures that demand respect.

"The demand for equal recognition extends beyond an acknowledgement of the equal value of all humans potentially, and comes to include the equal value of what they have made of this potential in fact." (Taylor 1994:42/3)

If we follow Taylor in his argument, we are led directly into current debates between different strands of liberalism. Proponents of difference-blindness (i.e. those who subscribe to a liberal stance) argue that equality is best achieved if we concentrate on our universal potential as human beings. According to Taylor, however, whatever potential
we have is defined and actualized within a particular culture. If that particular culture is a
dominant and powerful one, there is no problem but if it is one that is discriminated
against, our ability to command equal respect is seriously hampered. Thus, Taylor argues,
two different politics oppose each other: the politics of equal respect and the politics of
difference. While we may be intuitively disposed to favour the former (equal respect) over
the latter (difference), if we accept that identity is dialogically formed we will recognize
that a politics of equal respect is not neutral but also grounded in a particular culture.

"... the worrying thought is that this bias might not just be a contingent
weakness of all hitherto proposed theories, that the very idea of such
liberalism may be a kind of pragmatic contradiction, a particularism
masquerading as the universal." (Taylor 1994:44)

The implications of Taylor’s argument for the dialogic nature of identity are that it is only
a moderate politics of difference, or, as I would prefer to call it, a multicultural policy
respecting the groups of which a given society is composed, that can help create an
equitable society.

The Community
Now it is time to consider the sociopolitical context of citizenship. Whereas this was the
Polis or City-State in ancient Greece, today most people think of the nation-state as the
entity to which their citizenship binds them. There is, however, nothing natural about the
nation-state as the locus of citizenship. Rather, the nation-state is a stage of historical
development that we have become accustomed to think of as normal and inevitable but
which at this very moment in time is being seriously challenged by the dual forces of
globalization and regionalization. The history of ideas, especially enlightenment and liberalism, has played an important part in our acceptance of the nation-state as a certain civic default value. This section will show that as much as citizenship is historically contingent, so is the nation-state as the normal environment within which citizenship is exercised. Once this is understood, it becomes an easier task to imagine communities other than the nation-state as possible points of reference for citizenship. Indeed, there exist already in most places around the world important exceptions to the homogeneous model of the nation-state. There are virtually no nation-states that either do not contain other ethnic groups or communities within them or that are not themselves part of a larger community.

Below the level of the nation-state we find indigenous communities and communities which predate the founding of a particular nation-state (such as the English and French in Canada). Such a configuration Kymlicka calls (1995) a case of multinational statehood. But groups are not fixed once a state declares itself to be a state. Through immigration and natural demographic increase, after a state has been created, additional groups may form. Such a configuration gives rise to a multicultural state. Above the level of the nation-state are communities of specific purposes or allegiances (e.g. all Catholics in the world) but also communities that arise from the establishment of supra-national political organizations such as the European Union or NAFTA.

The Concept of Political Community

Communities come in many different shapes and sizes. The term “community” may apply to small, family-based clans as well as to millions of people around the world who belong
to a common faith or share particular moral convictions. Marshall (1994:72) defines community for the purposes of sociology as follows:

*The concept of community concerns a particularly constituted set of social relationships based on something which the participants have in common - usually a common sense of identity.*

Unfortunately, this definition is only of limited help since it introduces an array of terms whose meaning is not immediately obvious. However, we can retain an important and basic tension in the definition: community appears to be something that both *exists* and something that is *imagined*. Social relationships and things in common are more factual, while a common sense of identity has more of a transient and imagined quality. This apparent contradiction is not the result of a poor definition but is part and parcel of what community is all about: a community can be very concrete and factual, like an island community or a church community, but it is also something that arises through the shared desire of like-minded people. And if that shared desire and like-mindedness disappear, so does the community, even though its former members continue to exist as individuals.

Contradictions, however, do not end there. Contained in the very term community is the notion of commonality; there is something which the members of a community have in common. The nature of that commonality, however, is that it is something which is both inclusive and exclusive. Whatever trait or criterion we use to establish commonality, we will automatically include those who display that trait and criterion within our group and exclude those who do not.
Having looked at these parameters of community abstractly, we will now try to concretize and operationalize the term.

**Universalism and Difference in the Creation of Community**

While the meaning of community is far from clear and generally agreed, everyone would probably agree that, at the core of any community, there is always a tension between similarity and difference. Membership within a community arises because human beings decide or have come to believe that they have something in common which they do not share with outsiders. This defines the external boundary of the community. Internally, however, the same tension exists. Not all members of any given community are equal; some of them have more in common (in addition to the general membership) than others. Thus, for example, within a community composed of both men and women, women will constitute a subgroup. They share something in excess of the generalized membership, which excludes male members of that community. Thus, communities can be imagined as bounded but recursive concentric circles where no circle is completely homogeneous and any communal similarity is challenged by difference, both external and internal. In other words, the tension between similarity and difference is a crucial characteristic of communities, both in terms of their external boundaries and in terms of their internal make-up. The terms universalism and difference are used here to highlight, on the one hand, a particular feature of a liberal ethic (namely universalist assumptions) and, on the other, its corresponding feature in a communitarian ethic (namely assumptions about difference). If we now imagine communities as embedded concentric circles extending from the largest circle encompassing all of humanity to the smallest, which may only consist of a few people, assumptions about universalism vs. difference can be used to
justify at which point these concentric circles should acquire meaning that would entitle communities to identify themselves as such and set themselves apart from the rest.

In the absence of any objectively justifiable criteria of what constitutes a community, though, I suggest that these are issues which can only be decided in applied instances and through an understanding of the community members' desires or, as I shall argue in a more political-philosophical sense, through an understanding of the normative assumptions that are discursively made in proposing a sense of community.

We come here to a problem whose outlines will be sketched briefly here but whose full extent and consequences will be discussed in The Potential for a Deliberative Democracy (p. 129). As far as establishing any justification for the existence of communities is concerned, it is, in the final analysis, difficult from a liberal perspective to explain the genesis of any given community since a truly liberal world would be a world without borders. Similarly, the assumption of any universalist link between different communities is difficult for communitarians if they pursue a communitarian ethic to the end. What does this mean? Unless we assume that the sort of criteria that were listed above can actually be applied to determine what constitutes a legitimate community, we are faced with highly critical issues pertaining to the origin or the membership of community. Let us consider first the universalist difficulties with the concept of community and then take a look at the communitarian difficulties with the same concept.

Seen from a Kantian, universalist perspective, according to which everyone has the same right to belong to a community of their choice, a significant conceptual hurdle is the following: how can we determine, among all possible applicants, a subset of human beings
that could be legitimately regarded as subjects for the civic rights of a particular society? Merely postulating the potential for everyone to be a part of a community of equal citizens says nothing about who may make use of such a right with whom and when (and who would be excluded and why). To simply state that citizens constitute themselves as a community and thus set themselves apart both territorially and socially from ‘others’ is circular because it assumes rather than explains the origins of the assumed first gathering of the future concitoyens. In the words of Dahl:

\[
\text{To say that all people (...) are entitled to the democratic process begs a prior question. When does a collection of persons constitute an entity – ‘a people’ – entitled to govern itself democratically? (Dahl 1989:193)}
\]

Habermas argues that the, admittedly unsatisfying, answer is mostly historical coincidence occasioned by war and conflict. Nationalism, he argues, fulfils the function of lending justification to a process of boundary formation that would otherwise be patently accidental.
While republicanism reinforces our awareness of the contingency of these boundaries [the controversial boundaries of a state], referring back to the naturally evolved nation overcomes such contingency and allows the boundaries to be invested with an aura of artificial substantiality and to be legitimized through assumed historical references. Nationalism thus fills the normative void with an appeal to a so-called "right" to national self-determination. (Habermas 1996:168, trans. CQ)\textsuperscript{12}

Habermas goes on to point out that, at least in the republican-universalist conception, the right to self-determination of a group only arises when its members’ individual basic rights within the existing polity are being violated. Thus, self-determination is not an automatic right for a minority community, for example. Any overarching community that is sufficiently liberal ought first to be considered as capable of change from within in terms of accommodating its minorities. The argument assumes that any rupturing with the existing community simply for the sake of setting up a new community makes little sense. In other words: if my rights or the rights of the minority to which I belong are protected by the majority society, the additional right of separation and formation of a new state cannot be claimed. Kant’s universalist conception and proposal for a world citizenship does effectively point in this direction: ultimately nation-states ought to be overcome and the human-rights concept of personhood would become synonymous with a borderless world citizenship.

\textsuperscript{12} Während uns der Republikanismus im Bewußtsein der Kontingenz dieser Grenzen [der kontroversen Grenzen eines Staates] bestärkt, kann der kontingenzbewältigende Rückgriff auf die gewachsene Nation die Grenzen mit der Aura nachgeahmter Substantialität versehen und durch konstruierte
Now we turn to the communitarian position, where the issues are seen through quite a different lens. A communitarian perspective is, Habermas argues, far more sensitive to the needs of minorities. Here the possible infringement of the rights of a minority is not restricted to the infringement of the rights of individuals. Rather, even if individual rights are respected, the rights of the group as a whole may be violated. Thus, it is acknowledged that a particular form of life may become threatened by a dominant majority culture. Rather than looking at the rights-bearing individual, the communitarian perspective takes issue with the seemingly innocuous majority principle, which may prevent minorities from ever having their way simply because they do not possess the requisite numbers to force any decision in their favour among the overwhelming majority. The apparently neutral and democratic procedure of majority decision making is thus unmasked because the community or, as Dahl puts it, the 'political unit' within which it operates is not problematized.

The majority principle itself depends on prior assumptions about the unit:
that the unit within which it is to operate is itself legitimate and that the matters on which it is employed properly fall within the jurisdiction. In other words, whether the scope and domain of majority rule are appropriate in a particular unit depends on assumptions that the majority principle itself can do nothing to justify. The justification for the unit lies beyond the reach of the majority principle and, for that matter, mostly beyond the reach of democratic theory itself. (Dahl 1989:204)
Habermas (1996:172) adds to these ideas that individuals cannot be considered as ahistorical and asocial beings but that their embeddedness and rootedness in specific cultures must be acknowledged. Consequently, even the most neutral legal system will be to some extent tainted with some kind of ethical particularism that may be to the detriment of minorities. Here Habermas mentions explicitly the case of francophones in Canada. Reasonable grounds for secession from a communitarian perspective, Habermas argues, arise not so much because the minority is prevented from making the argument for independence but because through secession new majorities would become possible.

Regulating culturally sensitive areas such as an official language or the curriculum of public education (...) frequently reflects only the ethical-political self-concept of a majority culture whose dominance has evolved for historical reasons. Even within a republican community that nominally guarantees equal citizenship rights, such implicitly overwhelming regulations can give rise to a cultural battle by ignored minorities against the majority culture, as can be seen in examples such as the francophones in Canada, the Walloons in Belgium, the Basques and Catalans in Spain, etc. (...) Political issues which are embedded in a culturally sensitive context will not necessarily be debated differently after, for example, a secession has taken place, but they will be decided with different results; there aren't always new arguments but new majorities may arise. (Habermas 1996:173, trans. CQ)

\[13\] In der Regelung kulturell empfindlicher Materien wie der Amtssprache, dem Curriculum der öffentlichen Erziehung (...) spiegelt sich oft nur das ethisch-politische Selbstverständnis einer aus
Habermas warns, however, that secession in most cases does not offer a feasible solution as it recursively reproduces the same problems by creating new minorities. He suggests that pluralist democracies ought to opt for what he calls 'difference-sensitive inclusion' [differenzempfindliche Inklusion], granting group-specific rights. He argues that through difference-sensitive inclusion, minorities are given the ability to decide matters that are of particular concern to them by excluding the rest of society from voting on them. In the end, however, Habermas is too much of a universalist not to warn of the dangers of going too far down the communitarian road. He summarizes the dangers of too little universalism and too much communitarianism as follows:

However, the coexistence of and equal rights for various ethnic communities, linguistic and religious groups and ways of life must not be achieved by paying the price of fragmenting society. (...) On the one hand, the majority culture must disentangle itself from its fusion with a general political culture which is acceptable to all citizens; otherwise it dictates right from the start the parameters of any discourses through which the community develops a sense of self.

---

14 The rights given to francophone Ontarians in the area of education could be regarded as an example. Francophones who send their children to schools within francophone boards of education vote in school board elections which are completely separate from elections held for the school boards of the majority.
On the other hand, the ties of a common political culture, which tend to become increasingly abstract as more and more subcultures try to agree on the smallest common denominator, must remain strong enough in order for the civic nation not to disintegrate. (Habermas 1996:175, transl. CQ)

The preceding quote outlines very clearly the dangers which the liberal and communitarian regimes present and we shall, in a moment, turn to a more detailed discussion of these issues in Justifying Communitarianism: Difference and Exclusion (p. 65) and in Justifying Liberalism: Universalism and Inclusion (p. 72). For the moment, it is important to note that theorists who are more inclined to liberalism (such as Habermas) as well as theorists who are more inclined towards communitarianism (such as Taylor) agree that extremes of either position are undesirable because they would turn out to be undemocratic. There always needs to be a careful balancing of both positions. This is clearly illustrated when we consider how similar Habermas’s ideas are to those of Taylor. Consider how in the preceding quote Habermas warns of the dangers of a culturally insensitive universalism that is unaware of its own rootedness in a particular culture and compare this to Taylor’s warning “that the very idea of (...) liberalism may be a kind of pragmatic contradiction, a particularism masquerading as the universal” (Taylor 1994:44) (see Citizenship and

---

15 Freilich darf die gleichberechtigte Koexistenz verschiedener ethnischer Gemeinschaften, Sprachgruppen, Konfessionen und Lebensformen nicht um den Preis der Fragmentierung der Gesellschaft erkauft werden. (...) Einerseits muß sich die Mehrheitskultur aus ihrer Fusion mit der allgemeinen, von allen Bürgern gleichermaßen geteilten politischen Kultur lösen; sonst diktiert sie von vorneherein die Parameter der Selbstverständigungsdiskurse. Als Teil darf sie nicht länger die Fassade des Ganzen bilden, wenn sie nicht in bestimmten existentiellen, für Minderheiten relevanten Fragen das demokratische Verfahren präjudizieren soll. Andererseits müssen die Bindungskräfte der gemeinsamen politischen Kultur, die um so abstrakter wird, je mehr Subkulturen sie auf einen gemeinsamen Nenner bringt, stark genug bleiben, um die Staatsbürgernation nicht auseinanderfallen zu lassen. (Habermas 1996:175)
individual identity, p. 48). Habermas reconciles both concepts by developing the idea of a community of discourse which would have to be sufficiently thick to provide the glue which holds together the civic umbrella below which a variety of subcultures assemble in mutual recognition of the principles of democratic co-existence.

Before exploring liberalism and communitarianism in more detail, let us take a moment to place the present endeavour in a broader context. Based upon the discussion so far, it should have become clear why we need to go beyond a mere sociological analysis. For sociologists, the tension between similarity and difference as a crucial characteristic of communities is a matter which needs to be described and, as much as possible, to be explained. In our particular case, they might, for example, ask which forces have led to the current state of the francophone community, which interests are at play and how differences in power may have contributed to a community in which certain segments dominate others. For philosophers and political scientists, however, there is an additional and, in some sense, more basic concern: what justifies the setting up of a community in the first place and what justifies its continued existence? If, for example, we were to give absolute priority to the fact of our common humanity, nothing could then justify excluding outsiders from any given community. In fact, the very notion of ‘outsider’ would have to be dispensed with. Such radical universalism appears completely idealistic at first glance. The very concept of citizenship, for example, seems to rest on the premise that, as citizens, we have certain rights and obligations within a particular political community. War provides a simple illustration: in defence of our particular community we may be called upon to fight those from outside our community. But war also provides a counter illustration: international agreements such as the Geneva Convention and human rights
regimes in general point to the existence of a global human community which is posited precisely because it exceeds that of our particular nationality. And there is even a somewhat sinister reason to assume a global human community: unless we work on such an assumption, we would be unable to claim any legitimacy for trying those from outside a particular political community for war crimes or crimes against humanity, for example, since one cannot try those one does not deem to fall within the realm of humanity. What we have, then, alongside the notion of belonging to particular communities, is the notion of all human beings sharing their humanity as a common bond. On which grounds, though, do we at one point justify a view which considers all human beings to be subject to universally valid rights and sanctions and, at another point, draw much closer circles around us, conferring these rights and sanctions only on a fraction of humanity?

The seeming intractability of the last question had forced the world in the Westphalian era (i.e. following the 30-year war of the 17th century) to adopt a notion of sovereignty as its overriding principle for inter-state relations: because we, as moral agents of a particular place and culture, could not claim to know what ought to be universally valid (and thus imposed on everyone), it was considered best if it was assumed that sovereign political communities had the right to conduct their internal affairs without intervention from the outside. The world was thus supposed to consist of insular political communities, with absolute sovereignty inside and guided by principles of non-intervention in the affairs of other states.

The fact is, however, that the world at the start of the 21st century is far from being a system of internally homogeneous political islands with no outside concerns. The civil war
in Bosnia and, most recently, the Kosovo crisis have brought the presumption of non-intervention crashing down as a wholly inadequate concept that clashes with our most fundamental notions of common humanity. The concept of sovereignty, however, is not only threatened above the level of the nation-state (i.e. the principle of non-intervention is being rejected) but also below the level of the nation-state (i.e. the principle of national integrity is being scrutinized). Whether we consider recent developments in Northern Ireland, in Scotland or, as a classic example, in Quebec, it is clear that the mere insistence on the notion of sovereignty is no longer accepted as sufficient justification for maintaining any given status quo. Rather, a new perspective is emerging that any community at the sub-state level should not be kept inside a given state by force but only by its own democratic choice. What the erosion of the nation-state has brought is a renewed need to think about the constitution and boundaries of communities. If the nation-state is no longer the exclusive locus of civic affiliation, which other levels are there and how can we ensure that those other levels of community respond to the competing demands of being sufficiently open to everyone while maintaining sufficient closure to ensure the collective development of its members? Thus we enter one of the most difficult but also one of the most insightful problems discussed in political philosophy today: how to mediate between the competing and justifiable demands of difference and universality (the first of these being dealt with directly below, the second in the subsequent section). And by addressing this question in a principled fashion, we address indirectly also the issue of how the francophones of Ontario can deal with the opposing forces of unity and diversity. The remainder of this chapter will therefore explore in more detail a number of issues that will
cast the foundation for a better understanding of the pressures and opportunities faced by a modern minority like the francophones of Ontario.

**Justifying Communitarianism: Difference and Exclusion**

One of the basic tenets of modern liberalism is that all members of a given political community should have exactly the same citizenship rights. Such legal equality, however, can be both a blessing and a curse, depending on whether the norms underlying legal equality are externally imposed or are offered and accepted as a way out of a previous state of legal discrimination (in most cases, both will be true to some extent). Many states, which would consider themselves to be liberal, have pursued policies which have led to the assimilation of ethnic and other minorities but felt that these policies were justified as a way of ensuring citizens' identification with the overall political community. The communitarian challenge to liberal theory has been that the presumed citizen equality was, in effect, exclusionary as the citizenship models of the dominant majority were propagated at the expense of other models that may have been preferred by minorities. In the process of granting citizenship rights, there is a danger of steamrollering over culturally different groups in the name of equality (Linklater 1998:82/83). The most convincing case where the assimilationist effect of liberal democracies can be observed but where, for a number of years now, the tide has turned and the granting of special rights to culturally different groups is seen increasingly as justified, is the case of indigenous peoples. In cases where an area was colonized and an alien system of government imposed, it is easy to argue that those adversely affected by the change should be given special protection to be able to maintain the way of life they had practised prior to the
arrival of the newly dominant group. Linklater (1998:83) summarizes the position taken by Kymlicka (1989) on this matter as follows:

*If, for example, indigenous peoples are to protect their culture and promote their interests they have the right to regulate access to their land, to prevent outsiders from acquiring property in their territory and to exclude outsiders from participating in their elections. These qualifications of the liberal rights of free movement, property ownership and participation which should be possessed by all citizens are necessary (...) if vulnerable indigenous cultures are to survive.* (Linklater 1998:83)

Interestingly, the principle being invoked here to protect minority groups within a state (i.e. the right to exclude outsiders in the interest of the continuity of the group) is the same principle which countries may invoke with respect to their rights as nation-states within the wider circle of humanity. While, according to Walzer (1995b), states may recognize the moral principle of ‘Good Samaritanism’, which extends beyond the borders of an individual state, this principle is limited by the state’s interest in protecting itself from those who are hostile to its political beliefs or by its capacity to absorb outsiders without disrupting its economic, social and cultural conditions (Linklater 1998:80).
Most societies must not only consider tensions between citizenship and duties to the rest of humanity but also reflect upon the ways in which the dominant conceptions of citizenship exclude culturally marginal groups within national boundaries. A commitment to the right of communal self-determination requires measures to ensure that subordinate cultural groupings within nation-states possess appropriate levels of autonomy. (Linklater 1998:82)

Since its beginning, Canada has travelled a path of recognizing the existence of various communities on its territory and extended what Kymlicka (1995) calls group-differentiated rights to national minorities as a result of historical agreement.

For example, the group-differentiated rights accorded French Canadians in the original confederation agreement in 1867, and the group-differentiated rights accorded Indians under various treaties, reflect the terms under which these communities joined Canada. It can be argued that these agreements define the terms under which the Canadian state acquired authority over these groups. These communities could have exercised their self-determination in other ways, but chose to join Canada, because they were given certain promises. If the Canadian government reneges on these promises, then it voids (morally, if not legally) the agreement which made those communities part of Canada. (Kymlicka 1995:117)
Kymlicka implicitly draws a parallel here between Canada's aboriginal population and French Canadians. The trouble is, though, that what is somewhat unproblematic in the case of the aboriginal population, i.e. ensuring group survival, becomes highly problematic in the case of French Canadians. This is because, if French Canadians could, indeed, argue that history purchases them a privileged role in the Canadian federation, they could then easily argue that their group ought to be protected from non-Canadian francophones who would otherwise dilute the French-Canadian character of the French-Canadian community.

The argument in favour of recognizing difference can easily turn into a defence for the exclusion of others as much as the argument in favour of equality can lead to the denial of group-specific rights. Linklater (1998:187) refers to Phillips (1991:81-3; 1993) and Mouffe (1993) in criticizing concepts of liberal universalism but his argument can easily be turned around and used to criticize the recognition of difference. Consider his argument in defence of difference first:

There is a short step between acknowledging that all citizens are equal despite their differences to concluding that racial, gender and cultural differences do not matter at all. In short, to invite different groups to transcend their particularity and to work for the greater good is to issue a summons to submit to the hegemonic culture. One of the limitations of abstract, universalistic notions of citizenship is that they drive 'particularity and difference' into the private domain (Mouffe 1993:81).

But what is said in defence of difference could also be said in defence of universalism. This becomes obvious if we turn the above quotation around to argue for its exact
opposite (see footnote 16, below). Particularisms carried into the public arena can then easily be argued to constitute a threat to the egalitarian notions of a universal form of citizenship.

We are faced with a basic conundrum: too much emphasis on particularity endangers universality while too much emphasis on universality endangers particularity. Of course, there have been numerous attempts to reconcile these competing demands. Pakulski’s (1997) proposal for cultural citizenship rights has already been discussed above (see page 30). Kymlicka’s (1995) notion of group-differentiated rights points in the same direction. He argues that Marshall’s (1950) theory of citizenship is insufficient and suggests that rights in addition to those of common citizenship are necessary to respond adequately to the specific needs of subgroups within society:

---

16 Rephrasing the quotation in the following way, gives us an entirely different reading:
There is a short step between acknowledging that citizens are different to concluding that their commonalities do not matter at all. In short, to invite different groups to maintain their particularity and to work only for the good of their community is to issue a summons to ignore concerns beyond their particular culture. One of the limitations of culture-specific notions of citizenship is that they reduce the importance of ‘universality and humanity’ in the public domain.
Some members of these groups [blacks, women, religious minorities, gays and lesbians] still feel excluded from the ‘common culture’, despite possessing the common rights of citizenship. In each of these cases, groups have been excluded from full participation not because of their socio-economic status, but because of their socio-cultural identity – their ‘difference’. (…) Providing material benefits will not necessarily ensure their integration into a common culture, or develop a sense of shared loyalty to a common civilization. (…) These groups are demanding inclusion into the dominant national culture. (Kymlicka 1995:180)

This is as far as a liberal like Kymlicka is willing to go: he recognizes the need to respect and reflect difference. But for him this need is subordinate to the greater objective of creating a ‘common culture’ and ensuring the ‘inclusion’ of everyone into that ‘dominant national culture’. For a communitarian like Charles Taylor, it is this greater objective of a unified national culture that is unacceptable. Taylor argues that what Kymlicka wants to do is merely to overcome difference to achieve equality. This, however, does not respond to the desire of some groups within society to be equal while maintaining and even fostering difference:
Where Kymlicka's interesting argument fails to recapture the actual demands made by the groups concerned – say Indian bands in Canada, or French-speaking Canadians – is with respect to their goal of survival. (...) It doesn't justify measures designed to ensure survival through indefinite future generations. For the populations concerned, however, that is what is at stake. We need only think of the historical resonance of "la survivance" among French Canadians. (Taylor 1994:41)

Thus, even the most tolerant liberal theory faces an essential problem. Liberal theory assumes that by virtue of its tolerance everyone should be able in principle to accept it as a common civic roof. Taylor, however, insists that there are those who, for reasons of history and because of their desire to survive unassimilated, do not wish to gather below the common roof of liberalism. For them, the recognition of difference means remaining separate. From the point of view of ardent liberals, this is difficult to understand. After all, the desire of liberal theory has been to come up with a blueprint for society that is so broad and tolerant that no one could reasonably object to being a part of it. Developing such a theory, however, may actually be impossible, as Taylor (1994:44) has suggested. Since we always start our deliberations from within a particular culture, we simply cannot ever aspire to reach a universal concept for society. As already noted in the introductory section, the social contingency of individual identity makes it very difficult to grasp any universals through our culturally tinted glasses.
Justifying Liberalism: Universalism and Inclusion

As much as we can marshal good arguments to support the recognition of difference and the exclusion of outsiders from certain communities, so can we, of course, also support the opposite point of view: namely, that the common bonds of humanity ought to be stressed in the creation, perpetuation and eventual achievement of one global community. The concerns stressed by the universalist perspective apply to the same uneasy relationship as the communitarian perspective: the relationship between us and the outsiders both within and beyond the borders of our political community (where us refers to, as Linklater (1998:229) puts it, “all radical movements and perspectives which oppose unjust systems of exclusion across the world”). The difference between the universalist perspective and the communitarian perspective, however, is that the universalists do not ask what they can do to make sure that their community does not unduly impose itself on those who do not wish to be a part of it but rather what can be done to facilitate the entry of others into their community.

From a universalist perspective, the notion of a cosmopolitan community is not seen as a threat (to cultural difference as argued by communitarians) but as a response to overcoming the unjustified exclusion of outsiders from wealthy societies. This concept of extending the boundaries of political communities to all of humankind has existed at least since antiquity. This is evident in Epictetus’ remark about Socrates’ position on just that issue:
If what is said by the philosophers regarding the kinship of God and men be true, what other course remains for men but that which Socrates took when asked of what country he belonged, never to say 'I am an Athenian,' or 'I am a Corinthian,' but 'I am a citizen of the universe'? (Heater 1996:7)

The modern origin of the universalist perspective can, in part, be traced to Kant. He developed a concept of universal law that was based on ratiocination (i.e. introspective reasoning rather than outward dialogue). He argued that what could be established as universal law through individual human reasoning without logical contradiction could then become the basis for world citizenship. His fundamental point was that morality could be argued to have more than a particular basis in individual desires and that a universal basis for morality could be established through reason. Kant's ethics were based on a formal principle: "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." His categorical imperative, which is based on reason alone, is not restricted in time and place but applies to all rational beings, regardless of their wants and feelings.
This imperative asks us to imagine a world where everyone did in fact (as a matter of universal law) act on the same maxim when in the same situation. But the trick for Kant is not in imagining what kind of a world it would be if everyone acted in a like manner; it is to ask if I could will consistently both that I act on the maxim and that everyone act on the maxim. That is, we do not ask ourselves, Do I want to live in such a world? or Would such a world be a good place to live? or Would everyone be happy in such a world? Instead, we ask ourselves, Does this world make sense to me as a rational being? Is it even conceivable? Kant thought that we could answer this question by appeal to the dictates of pure practical reason. Contemporary proceduralists have opted for a different rationality test, albeit one that retains the idea that morally valid maxims would be chosen (willed) by agents acting rationally. Whereas Kant’s procedure asks agents to check their maxims against logical rules of consistency and certain “laws of nature”, modern procedures ask that maxims receive the endorsement of agents acting rationally under certain specified conditions. Agents are still asked, “Is a world regulated by your maxim conceivable?” but now the question turns on whether it is conceivable that rational agents would agree (...) to act according to this maxim. (Chambers 1996:28)

Thus, the issue of universal moral judgements has moved to issues of implementation since Kant. However, the possibility of arriving at such universal moral judgements is not challenged in principle by supporters of universalism.
Criticism of universalism, however, not only comes from communitarians but also from behaviourists and postmodernists. Richard Rorty (1989), for example, argues that human beings are not naturally endowed moral agents but that moral and political ideas are social products. If this were, indeed, the case, there would be no basis for looking to human reason as a source for universal moral judgement. Can any hard evidence be found for either position? Noam Chomsky (Burchill 1998) counters Rorty’s assertion not by positing as fact the existence of a common capacity for moral judgement on the part of human beings (the evidence from sociobiology is far from sufficient) but by arguing:

*Under reasonable assumptions, there is a ‘genetically inherited moral system’ that enters into the formation of our moral values (including varying concepts of justice). But as to its nature, we can say very little.*

*(Burchill 1998:8)*

Chomsky argues that we have sufficient indications that a genetically inherited moral system exists, otherwise the need to justify human action on moral grounds would not make any sense. According to Chomsky, from the worst atrocities which the world has seen to benign power struggles among siblings, the evidence is that moral justification appears to be a part of human action – and this even when those in power have no real need to dress their action in moral terms. Chomsky says:
Even at the extreme levels of human depravity, the Nazis did not boast that they just wanted to kill Jews, but gave crazed justifications – even that they were acting in 'self-defence'. (...) It is rare for someone to say, ‘Look, I want so and so, and I’m just going to do what I can to get it, no matter how much I hurt others’. Suppose little Johnny takes a toy from his younger brother. He rarely says ‘I want it, and I’m stronger, and no one is looking, so I’ll take it’. Typically, he says, ‘It really belongs to me, it’s unfair that he should have it, I’m giving him something better anyway, etc.’. If he doesn’t say it, he at least thinks it. It’s no different when Australian leaders steal Timorese oil. (Burchill 1998:9)

Saying that there are universal moral judgements does not, of course, give us any easy insight into what exactly they are or whether they are worth pursuing. What it does do, however, is to argue that there are no grounds to regard the confines of our own political and cultural community as absolute. Whatever the specific instantiation of the universal may be in our particular community, recognizing that the universal exists sets up ties with the rest of humanity which we cannot deny.

Still, even if we accept the common bond of humanity, how could we ever hope to operationalize it, given the many different political communities that exist in the world? Whoever attempts to set up globally valid moral principles must have been raised and educated in a specific moral community and as no one can step outside this experience, the evident danger is that dominant moral concepts, such as those of Western liberal
democracies, will push aside any alternatives. The outcome, as Taylor said, would be the
"particularism masquerading as the universal''.

What is the relevance of all this, though, for our examination of Ontario's francophonie?
In the case of Ontario's francophones, these themes might appear rather too grand to be
immediately applicable. As we shall see below, however, it is surprising to what extent the
debates surrounding the composition and future of the francophone community are,
underneath the immediate surface, centred around issues of how difference and exclusion
vs. universality and inclusion can be justified.

From the philosophical foundation we now move to a political typology for classifying
minorities (see Multinational Statehood below and Multicultural Statehood on p. 79)
before looking briefly at the effect of globalization on minorities (see Globalization and
Citizenship, p. 94) and then considering the specifics of the Canadian case in more detail
(see Creating a Bilingual and Multicultural Framework in Canada, p. 98, and Canada's

**Multinational Statehood**

Even though Australia, Canada and the US are often regarded as prototypical immigrant
countries, there is an important difference between Canada, on the one hand, and Australia
and the US, on the other. Canada is composed of two national groups acting as recipient
societies while there is only one in the case of Australia and the US\(^\text{17}\). Thus, in Canada,

\(^{17}\) Of course, in each of these countries, it must not be forgotten that there is an indigenous population
predating European colonization. This important fact notwithstanding, indigenous populations have
seldom acted as recipient societies for immigrants. However, with the establishment in Canada of the
self-administered territory of Nunavut (taking over part of the federally administered Northwest
Territories) with a majority native population, the case might arise of integrating immigrants to an
indigenous society.
according to Kymlicka (1995), we are faced with a multination state (in some ways similar to countries like Belgium, which are composed of two large national groups) in which, in addition, both groups deliberately act as host societies for immigrants. The groups on a country's territory can be differentiated according to whether they are a national group or an ethnic group, each of which gives rise to different legal privileges and modes of cohabitation. Kymlicka (1995: 11) explains that a nation in a multination state refers to a historical community occupying a given territory and sharing a distinct language and culture. The concept is closely related to that of 'people' or 'culture'. Nations may freely decide to join together to found a new state or, the more frequent case, be incorporated into a state as the result of conquest or the ceding of a national group by one imperial power to another.

What distinguishes these groups from immigrant ethnic groups is the fact that they often enjoy minority rights such as the right to self-government. In such cases, powers are delegated to national minorities, giving rise to a form of federalism. This does not mean that other groups may not enjoy state benefits in the form of financial support and legal protection for certain practices associated with their ethnic or religious groups. Importantly though, such groups are composed of voluntary immigrants (excluding the somewhat more complicated case of refugees) and their ethnic particularity is not aimed at setting up a parallel society18. They may, however, challenge the speed and extent of assimilation or integration that is expected of them by the host society.

18 With the exception of religious groups such as the Mennonites who have settled in Canada following a history of persecution and were allowed to set up their own communities.
A further difference between national groups and ethnic groups is the moment in time at which the state was founded: only groups that existed before that moment potentially qualify as a nation within a multination state. For all others who came later, the national stage is assumed to have been set. Through their immigration and adherence to the state, they have implicitly accepted the rules of the game, i.e. they accede to an existing political framework whose basic constitution they will not challenge.

While Kymlicka’s classification is certainly helpful, it does leave a number of questions unanswered. One of the most important ones is to what extent national groups’ entitlements are accessible to new immigrants. These entitlements are particularly important in those contexts in which a national group finds itself in a minority situation. Should new immigrants who declare that they wish to be a part of such a group be able to access those rights? In Canada, the situation is particularly interesting as regards rights to the schooling of immigrant francophone children in an English majority context, where they have an opportunity to access francophone schools, and immigrant anglophone children’s rights in the French majority context of Quebec, where they may not by law attend schools in English. Kymlicka’s classification, even though it is helpful at a broad conceptual level, needs to be modified to account for the dynamic character and the changing composition in real life of what he terms national groups.

**Multicultural Statehood**

“Multiculturalism” is a vague term. It refers to the perception of certain realities as well as to ideologies and policies. Let us begin with a definition of multiculturalism. Christine Inglis argues that
“three interrelated, nevertheless distinctive, referents of ‘multiculturalism’ and its related adjective ‘multicultural’ (…) can be distinguished (…): the demographic-descriptive, the ideological-normative and the programmatic-political.” (Inglis 1997)

The first of these three, demographic-descriptive multiculturalism, is used coterminous with “ethnocultural diversity”. It merely states the recognition of the existence on a given territory of more than one homogeneous group of people:

“The demographic-descriptive usage occurs where ‘multicultural’ is used to refer to the existence of ethnically or racially diverse segments in the population of a society or State. It represents a perception that such differences have some social significance - primarily because of perceived cultural differences though these are frequently associated with forms of structural differentiation.” (Inglis 1997, emphasis added)

It is clearly difficult to speak of factual realities with regard to the make-up of a society since cultural, ethnic and racial differences are socially constructed and do not exist in any natural sense. Inglis is right to point this out very clearly ("perceived cultural differences") and to link these differences to differences in socio-economic status ("structural differentiation"). As Heller (1995) points out, however, inequalities do not only exist in terms of material differences, they arise in the uneven distribution both of valued material and valued symbolic resources. There exists a symbolic marketplace that is dominated by those who possess coveted resources such as honour, status and prestige, and who have a great interest in “convincing participants that the values and modes of operation of the
marketplace are immutable and universal” (Heller 1995:160). Such symbolic differences can be particularly pernicious due to their innocuous appearance: exclusion can be practised on the basis of criteria which are almost impossible to attain unless one has undergone a particular type of socialization and education.

All of this has led some observers to the conclusion that to emphasize ethnocultural diversity only serves to perpetuate inequality. One of the strongest critics of multiculturalism as an obfuscation of inequality is Kenan Malik (1997). He suggests that the desire to celebrate difference hides and actually cements inequality and that multiculturalism is a maleficent concept like racism because it suggests that inequality is the result of natural difference.\(^{19}\)

It is questionable, though, whether such a frontal attack on multiculturalism is warranted. On very basic empirical grounds, multiculturalism cannot be dissolved into structural inequality as there are both instances of societies in which relatively small differences of power exist or ones in which they exist in an inverse relationship, i.e. where immigrants tend to be wealthier than the ambient dominant society. This is, for example, the case with recent wealthy immigrants from Hong Kong, who found themselves targets of public

\(^{19}\) “The inability of struggles such as the civil rights movements in the USA to transform the lives of the majority of African Americans has sapped the morale of anti-racists. Campaigning for equality means challenging accepted practices, being willing to march against the grain, to believe in the possibility of social transformation. Conversely, celebrating differences between peoples allows us to accept society as it is -- all it says is 'we live in a diverse world, enjoy it'. It allows us to accept the divisions and inequalities that characterise the world today. (...) The idea of multiculturalism, like that of race, is an attempt to come to terms with inequalities in a society that professes belief in equality. Whereas racial theorists used to say that social differences were the inevitable product of natural differences and there is nothing we could do about it, multiculturalists argue that they are the product of cultural differences and there is nothing we should do about it. But this is simply to rename inequality.” (Malik 1997)
outrage for constructing large houses in Vancouver suburbs. In a review article, Weinfeld points out:

"Studies of so-called "monster homes" in Vancouver reveal how conflicts over housing styles relate to cultural insecurities of non-immigrants and resentments of dominant white upper class groups. The cultures of immigrants are often seen as threatening the prevailing "symbolic order." (Weinfeld 1997)

Therefore, multiculturalism cannot be reduced simply to differences in power, even though such differences certainly need to be considered as a part of multicultural realities.

Another way in which "multiculturalism" is used, according to Inglis (1997), is in its "programmatic-political" sense:

---

20 The following news item reflects how the arrival of wealthy Hong Kong homeowners is seen by long-term residents as a failure to "fit in" when, in fact, the new residents appeared to be seeking the very qualities cherished by the local residents: "A pink-stuccoed pseudo mansion looms twice as tall as its understated neighbours and sports an architectural style that can only be described as, well, big. These "monster houses" built by recent Hong Kong immigrants are the most contentious aspect of Vancouver's Asian infusion." (...) "It's ugly," gripes Andrea Bishop, who lives nearby in a modest, pleasingly worn duplex. "It stands out from the rest of the neighbourhood. Monster homes are everywhere. They're on your running route. You see them on the way to work. You see them from the neighbourhood park." (...) Monster homes - some measuring up to 12,000 square feet - started showing up about a decade ago in suburban Richmond. But it's the urban encroachment of these "Richmond specials" or "Hong Kong palaces" that incites uncommon anger in a city renowned for its tolerance. "A monster's only a monster if it doesn't fit in with the homes around it," says city resident Alexei Marko. "People buy a house here because they like the neighbourhood, they like the front yard, they like the neighbours. You're not just buying square footage." Real estate agent Edmund Mak, who generates a third of his sales from Asian clients, says Hong Kong natives are attracted to Kerrisdale for the same basic reasons everyone else is: good schools, safe streets and well-kept homes." (Hodder 1997) The debate about so-called monster homes has also led to the mistaken assumption that all immigrants from Hong Kong are well-off. I do not wish to contribute to this false impression and cite these examples merely to underline that multiculturalism is about more than just differences of economic power. As the above example illustrates, symbolic aspects play an important role.
"In the programmatic-political usage 'multiculturalism' refers to specific types of programs and policy initiatives designed to respond to and manage ethnic diversity." (Inglis 1997, emphasis added)

What one might add here is that many programs that would be subsumed under Inglis's definition do not, in fact, use the term "multicultural" at all. This is often the case in countries that have traditionally not been immigrant countries but where a significant part of the population are permanent residents from other countries. The reason for the reluctance to call multicultural policies multicultural is closely linked to what Inglis refers to as "ideological-normative multiculturalism".

---

21 One particularly striking example is the fact that government officials and their offices in Germany whose responsibility it is to facilitate the integration of foreign residents are called "Austländerbeauftragte", lit. Commissioners for Foreigners. The only exception to this rule that I am aware of exists in Frankfurt, where the office is called "Amt für Multikulturelle Angelegenheiten", lit. Office for Multicultural Affairs, an office that performs many of the same functions as "Austländerbeauftragte".
The ideological-normative usage of multiculturalism is that which generates the greatest level of debate since it constitutes a slogan and model for political action based on sociological theorising and ethical-philosophical consideration about the place of those with culturally distinct identities in contemporary society. Multiculturalism emphasises that acknowledging the existence of ethnic diversity and ensuring the rights of individuals to retain their culture should go hand in hand with enjoying full access to, participation in, and adherence to, constitutional principles and commonly shared values prevailing in the society. By acknowledging the rights of individuals and groups and ensuring their equitable access to society, advocates of multiculturalism also maintain that such a policy benefits both individuals and the larger society by reducing pressures for social conflict based on disadvantage and inequality. They also argue that multiculturalism is an enrichment for the society as a whole." (Inglis 1997, emphasis added)

Thus, while many countries are multicultural in the demographic-descriptive sense of the term and have seen it necessary to adopt policies to manage ethnic diversity, they do not in fact use the term "multiculturalism" since this would involve an explicit acknowledgement of multicultural reality and a commitment to a vision that replaces a vision of heterogeneity as a threat with one of enrichment. It involves overcoming the reflex of assimilation or repatriation and requires a realization that newcomers will do two things simultaneously: retain some of their cultural heritage and become full citizens in their new country. In all of this, the Canadian experience is, of course, particularly interesting since
the Canadian government was among the first states to adopt an official policy of multiculturalism.

The role of the Canadian state in establishing a symbolic order has been well analyzed by Raymond Breton (1984:125). He argues that the construction of a symbolic order firstly entails a collective identity, a notion of "who we are as a people", which allows people to view society as their society. Secondly, the symbolic order includes the shaping of cultural traditions, which find expression in public institutions. Finally, language is a component of the symbolic order: while, as a communicative medium, it fulfils an instrumental function, the style of language use by public institutions signifies to individuals that they belong to their society. Breton then goes on to argue that Canada made quite an explicit break with the past by creating "new symbolic elements" and transforming the "existing collective identity" and its representation in an effort to "accommodate society's bi-national and multi-cultural composition". The restructuring of the symbolic order by allowing new players into the game did inevitably force others to give up what had hitherto been their uncontested territory. In Breton's analysis, this relates to the distribution of social status and recognition by the state. By promoting a multicultural framework, the state weakened the value of the British (or at least, Anglo-Canadian) model of identity. When compared with other countries, Canada was forced into this redefinition early on by internal political events, i.e. at a time when the welfare state was still a highly popular model and most other countries would have seen the granting of cultural rights as unnecessary and as possibly endangering national cohesion (as, indeed, many still do).
The granting of cultural rights, however, also has its detractors and we must be careful not to see Marshall's theory, or any proposed extension of the theory, as a necessary, evolutionary and cumulative consequence. What I wish to concentrate on is how cultural rights could threaten some of the civil/legal achievements of citizenship.

In an enlightening exchange of differing points of view on the compatibility of multiculturalism and women's rights, Susan Okin (1997) argues that the granting of rights to minority groups allows patriarchal practices of minority cultures within a liberal-democratic state to be perpetuated. Women are being victimized since the state is effectively abdicating its responsibility of working towards gender equity and is instead protecting oppressive practices disguised as cultural rights under the false mantle of tolerance. As examples of practices being thus protected, she cites clitoridectomy, polygamy and sexual harassment. In her dislike for cultural rights, Okin comes close to being an advocate of assimilation:

"In the case of a more patriarchal minority culture in the context of a less patriarchal majority culture, no argument can be made on the basis of self-respect or freedom that the female members of the culture have a clear interest in its preservation. Indeed, they may be much better off if the culture into which they were born were either to become extinct (so that its members would become integrated into the less sexist surrounding culture) or, preferably, to be encouraged to alter itself so as to reinforce the equality of women." (Okin 1997)
Reactions to Okin's argument came from both men and women and ranged from near-complete support to outright opposition. Sander Gilman (1997), for example, argues that Okin's opposition to female circumcision echoes the opposition to Jewish male circumcision about 150 years ago, which was steeped in anti-semitism, depicting circumcision as a repulsive practice of ritual mutilation. Gilman charges that Okin fails to see her own cultural practices as limiting and abhorrent to others who do not share her ideas of the Anglo-American world as the norm.

Robert Post (1997), in a carefully balanced contribution, reminds us that feminism must be open to accepting a multiplicity of gender roles if it is not to fall into the trap of promoting one particular vision as an objectively-defined and external set of criteria. "The feminist challenge to liberal multiculturalism thus forces feminism to sharpen its own normative claims." (Post 1997) Liberal multiculturalism itself, however, is not about a moral world of laissez-faire. Liberalism (as I shall argue later) has a deeply ingrained normative structure. Liberal multiculturalism, however, tempers this moral bias with an acknowledgement of the role that culture plays for a person's initial individual development and later ability to enter into an informed moral discussion. Not being allowed to grow up within the culture of one's family must be recognized as an act of cruelty (as has recently been acknowledged in Canada in the extreme cases of young children who were taken off "savage" native reserves and placed in the "civilized" care of Catholic boarding schools). Not being allowed to grow beyond the culture of one's

---

22 see The Boston Review (October/November 1997, 22-5): the lead contribution by Susan Moller Okin was commented on by twelve contributors plus a concluding response by Okin herself.
family, however, is also an act of confinement that the liberal state must oppose. Post outlines the dilemma nicely as he states:

"Within the perspective of liberal multiculturalism, therefore, culture both sustains and constrains individual freedom. This means that we may ask about any given cultural norm whether its enforcement should be interpreted as a precondition of choice, or instead as a restraint on choice. (...) The problem is particularly difficult because the oppressiveness of a culture cannot be evaluated merely by reference to contemporary notions of political and civil liberties. This is because such liberties are themselves the result of a long and complex historical evolution within the context of our own Western culture. (...) distinguishing between enabling and oppressive cultural norms is a fundamental challenge of liberal multiculturalism, a challenge that has yet to be successfully confronted." (Post 1997)

While I will attempt to explain in more detail the role that culture plays as a dialogue between individuals and their ambient social context and, therefore, its importance for the development of personal identity (with reference to Taylor, 1994), the question raised by Post remains difficult to resolve: how do we mediate between liberalism and multiculturalism when norms come into conflict? The argument I shall be making is that we need to fall back on the communication situation itself. Only if we can ensure that all participants in the discussion have the same right and opportunity to voice their opinions, can we create the necessary unbiased communicative premise for any normative decisions.
In other words, if the public discourse is already monocultural and univocal in favour of the dominant group, any subsequent normative measures will suffer from the serious deficiency that the discussion leading to them was biased in the first place, and its conclusions therefore unacceptable. As Elizabeth Frazer (1997) points out in her reaction to Okin’s paper (1997), the non-hegemonic public discussion must also ensure that the “voices and views” of members of minority cultures (such as women) “that hitherto have been silent and unarticulated” are given a space in public fora.

What should have transpired so far is the inseparable link between understanding ourselves and understanding our society: only by laying bare the assumptions upon which our notions of individual autonomy are premised, can we begin to understand the evolution of liberalism and Western democracies. And only such understanding will enable us to see in which sense the communicative practices that we can now observe in multicultural societies are signs of the way in which our conceptualization of liberal society and citizenship as an important component of multicultural societies needs to be modified.

Let me summarize the discussion up to this point:

To say that those of us who live in a Western democracy are living in a liberal political system has both descriptive and ideological content. Descriptively, it reflects certain realities: unlike other, authoritarian, regimes, a liberal system allows us, for example, to march down any public street handing out to passers-by leaflets stating that the head of government is a political fool. We can do this without fear of prosecution. If we cannot, the system is not a liberal one. To give this somewhat trite example as an illustration is
not to trivialize the point I wish to make: certainly there is more to a liberal society, but freedom of expression is one of its central and indispensable elements.

Yet if we try to understand the finer points of our political system, we must take a closer look at the ideological underpinnings of liberalism. For this, it is necessary to look at the historical and philosophical origins of liberalism. Having offered a brief discussion of the concept of individual autonomy as one central element to liberalism, and having shown that it falls short of recognizing that our identities are dialogically formed, we must ask ourselves whether liberalism as popular political ideology carries with it tacit assumptions which may need to be revised, especially in a multicultural context.

Traditional supporters of liberalism such as Dworkin (1978) want the state to go only so far as to guarantee a “procedural liberalism”, i.e. a commitment to fairness and equality without taking any substantive views on the ends of life. The state would thus be confined to ensuring that equality exists both between citizens and between the state and its citizens. However, such a concept of liberalism runs into trouble as soon as it is applied to daily life, as Beiner (1995:93) points out:

For instance, suppose we are obliged to arbitrate the conflict between the right to free speech and free assembly of a white racist and the right not to be harassed or victimized of a black or an Asian. How are we expected to weigh these claims simply on the basis of notions of formal equality, as Dworkin demands, without considering the substance of the needs and interests at stake, and the comparative worth of the substantive ends or purposes implied in each? (Beiner 1995:93)
What does this mean for multicultural policies in a pluralist country like Canada? Taylor (1994) suggests a more differentiated idea of liberalism that might be more appropriate in a multicultural context. He makes a distinction between "fundamental liberties", which must never be infringed, and "privileges and immunities" which, even though important, can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy. What Taylor has in mind here is the case of Quebec, where strong collective goals (the maintenance of a French-speaking society) can be combined with liberal principles if strong safeguards for fundamental rights are in place. Others, like the American Michael Walzer (1995a:149), spell out clearly how the new modified (nonprocedural and substantive) liberalism is to be applied in multicultural contexts:

"First, (...) the state should defend collective as well as individual rights; second, (...) the state should expand its official celebrations, to include (...) the history of all the people that make up the American people, third, (...) tax money should be fed into the ethnic communities to help in the financing of bilingual and bicultural education, and of group-oriented welfare-services." (Walzer 1995a:149)

Following on from Walzer's concrete recommendations on what the state should do and as a final point in this section, it is worthwhile glancing briefly at the criticism offered by sympathetic critics such as Jürgen Habermas. For him, there is simply no need for any collective rights to be guaranteed by the state:
"For from a normative point of view, the integrity of the individual legal person cannot be guaranteed without protecting the intersubjectively shared experiences and life contexts in which the person has been socialized and has formed his or her identity. The identity of the individual is interwoven with collective identities and can be stabilized only in a cultural network that cannot be appropriated as private property any more than the mother tongue itself can be." (Habermas 1994:129)

So far, this seems to confirm exactly the points made by Taylor on the dialogic formation of identity ("the identity of the individual is interwoven with collective identities") without conceding that this should give rise to any special protection by the state of the collectivities which are crucial in this process ("a cultural network that cannot be appropriated as private property"). But why this abiding fear that collective rights run counter to the nature of the liberal state? Habermas gives a clear answer consisting of two main arguments, both of which are, however, in my view, the result of a misconception:
“Cultural heritages and the forms of life articulated in them normally reproduce themselves by convincing those whose personality structures they shape, that is, by motivating them to appropriate productively and continue the traditions. The constitutional state can make this hermeneutic achievement of the cultural reproduction of lifeworlds possible, but it cannot guarantee it. For to guarantee survival would necessarily rob the members of the very freedom to say yes or no that is necessary if they are to appropriate and preserve their cultural heritage.”

(Habermas 1994:130)

Habermas’s first misconception is that cultural heritages are continued by winning new members by force of persuasion alone (“convincing”). If we take language as one example of a cultural heritage, we know how important support mechanisms, such as schools, can be in maintaining a non-dominant language. Furthermore, unless the language is given some independent source of value (e.g. it gives access to employment, becomes a criterion in career advancement decisions and/or it comes to be considered to have symbolic value according social status), no amount of wishful government intervention will yield appreciable results. Thus, while these support mechanisms cannot be assured without guarantees by the state, which is precisely the third point made by Walzer, they need to go further and become transformed into tangible resources. Habermas’s second misconception is that collective rights or guarantees would put the members of a minority into a kind of straitjacket. But this is simply an unfounded fear: any immigrant parent, for example, who does not wish to send his or her child to a school fostering the child’s first language can simply send him/her to any other public school.
What this section has shown is that liberalism and multiculturalism are not incompatible but that they can be modified in the direction of a more substantive liberalism adapted to multicultural societies without forfeiting any of the unquestionable merits of the liberal tradition. Liberalism's essentially individualist ideology is one that facilitates multiculturalism in a broad sense since it allows individuals to organize themselves into groups and associations without prescriptive state intervention. More narrowly, however, such a non-interventionist stance means that a liberal state is fundamentally disinclined to respond positively to groups demanding state support. If, however, such demands can be argued to be in the interest of all of society by creating a more equitable political community, the liberal state has the option of responding to ethnocultural diversity by adopting a multicultural framework. This point is particularly pertinent as regards the preservation of linguistic minorities.

**Globalization and Citizenship**

"Globalization" has become a major buzzword. It seems to refer as much to a sentiment as to a reality but one of its central components certainly is that of increasing global interconnectedness. Whether we fear for jobs, the environment or cultural autonomy or welcome the opportunities for international trade, environmental co-operation or cultural exchange, we express our recognition of the fact that very few human activities are now limited to a local or even national scale. Through incredible advances in communications technology, information is disseminated and is becoming available to more people and at a greater speed than ever before. Likewise people travel more often and greater distances than ever. This has not only affected business and tourism but also international
migration. Civil strife in one country no longer only affects neighbouring countries but refugee flows are now globalized. But even more planned flows of migration have been affected. Whereas migration used to be primarily a unidirectional event with migrants permanently settling in their new home country, residence patterns have become much more flexible. Return migration, dual residences and diasporas that remain closely linked with their centres have put a new face on the migration experience. We need only think of the Hong Kong Chinese who had come to Canada in advance of the 1997 hand-over of Hong Kong to China: their official status as permanent residents or citizens masks the fact that they have, in many cases, only taken temporary shelter and many intend to return to Hong Kong if political and economic conditions remain stable. Those who could afford it, maintained a residence in the former colony, and many stay in close contact with events in Hong Kong through Hong Kong media, which are widely available in Canadian centres of Chinese settlement. At the same time, many social, legal and economic services have become available in Chinese, thus reducing the need for reliance on non-Chinese service providers.24

The effect of globalization on citizenship has been analyzed by Stephen Castles (1997) who argues that

23 Its origin can be traced to the term “global village”, used by McLuhan (McLuhan 1964).
24 It is interesting to note in this context, if only as somewhat anecdotal evidence, that one of Canada’s major long distance telephone companies offers customer services in three languages: English, French and Chinese.
"... basing citizenship on singular and individual membership in a nation-state is no longer adequate, since the nation-state model itself is being severely eroded. Instead, new approaches to citizenship are needed, which take account of collective identities and the fact that many people now belong to more than one society." (Castles 1997)

Castles highlights three main aspects of the effects of globalization on citizenship:

- As economic life now transcends national borders and its control has, in many cases, begun to slip from the hands of national governments, the power citizens can wield through their vote for their elected representatives has been seriously eroded.

- The ideology of the autonomous national culture has been undermined: citizenship as the great motor of nation-building has given way to a much more pragmatic view of citizenship which frames a myriad of trans-national and sub-national identities but does not intend to offer a uniform identity to every citizen. Given the rise of both globalization and regionalism/re-ethnicization, Castles observes that “national culture is being squeezed between the global and the local.” (Castles 1997)

- While mobility of people is nothing new in history, it has taken on a new quality through its sheer scale and rapidity and the fact that source countries of migrants are increasingly ethnoculturally different from the recipient population.

Castles proposes that a theory of citizenship in a global society must break up the nexus of territoriality and belonging, i.e. it must differentiate between the state and the nation, leaving the latter behind. This is also true of one of the contexts being discussed here: the
composition and situation of the francophone population in Toronto is closely tied to the effects of globalization. While the francophone community in the city used to see its roots in what was perceived until the 1970s as a bilingual and bicultural Canada, it now finds itself in the most multicultural city of North America, faced not only with a majority anglophone population but with a population in which the largest ethno-linguistic group (Chinese) is more than five times its own size. In addition, its own ranks have become diverse (according to the 1996 census): nearly a quarter of francophones in Toronto are immigrants to Canada. In real terms, then, what Castles calls the "nexus of territoriality and belonging" has long been broken up here. Conceptually, the model of citizenship must be brought in line with this new reality. While it appears no longer possible to base citizenship on a restrictive, territorially based type of identity, it is not clear what it should be based on instead. Cultural identity certainly has a role to play in shaping individual and collective identity and must therefore not be ignored (see Citizenship and individual identity, p. 48). However, the political tradition of liberalism as the organizing principle of a typical western democratic state must also find a role somewhere in the process. And finally, Canada's bilingual character should figure in the equation. How it is all going to fit together, though, both in terms of what is being suggested politically as a citizenship model and what develops at the grassroots level in terms of individuals' identification with Canada, is what will be investigated below. Given the multiplicity of cross-cutting factors, what needs to be considered closely are the ways in which both francophone immigrants and long-established members of the Franco-Ontarian community talk about their relationship with each other and within the political framework of Canada. It is hoped that this will lead to a better understanding of the pitfalls and potentials of a concept of
citizenship that is not ethnoculturally restrictive but allows its members to use their citizenship as a bracket across their multiple identities and contribute to a globalized notion of civic responsibility.

Creating a Bilingual and Multicultural Framework in Canada

Since the late 1960s/early 1970s, the Canadian State has been involved in funding two types of groups with a special claim to representing an important part of Canadian identity: official language minority groups representing the Canadian linguistic duality and multicultural groups representing Canada’s multicultural composition. The Official Languages Act, which was passed in 1969, gave rise to funding for official language minority communities. Through such funding, the government attempted

   to help Canada’s two official language communities to live and work together harmoniously in the pursuit of national goals by providing opportunities for the Canadian public to understand and accept the French-English fact. (Secretary of State 1969:1) in (Pal 1993)

In 1971, Canada’s multiculturalism policy was unveiled and support for ethnic groups other than English or French began to be provided. That policy’s objective was to counter the impression that Canada had embarked on supporting only anglophones and francophones and ignored the contribution of other groups.
The 1971 policy affirmed in essence that while Canada would be officially bilingual it would never be merely bicultural and that it valued its multicultural character. The statement referred to a variety of government initiatives to support multiculturalism (...). The only substantially new program turned out to be core funding support to ethnic associations, on the model pioneered by the Social Action Branch and its support for OLMGs [Official Language Minority Groups; CQ]. While on the surface the policy seemed to contradict the government's emphasis on bilingualism, it actually was complementary. The prime minister and his senior advisers were well aware that a suggestion of official cultural duality would play directly into the hands of nationalist forces in Quebec. The combination of bilingualism and multiculturalism seemed to balance the need to accommodate Quebec without implying that there were simply two peoples – French and English – in Canada. (Pal 1993:115)

Neither the multiculturalism nor the bilingualism policies, however, considered the possibility for overlap, i.e. multiculturalism within OLMGs or the practice of official languages by multicultural groups. Thus, no provision was made for multicultural groups in a francophone minority context or minority francophones who belong to multicultural communities. The francophone minorities outside Quebec were assumed to be white Canadians of pre-Confederation French-Canadian extraction. Multicultural groups, on the other hand, were conceived of as post-Confederation immigrants who would integrate, at least in English Canada, with the anglophone majority, while maintaining some of their cultural and linguistic ties to their countries of origin. True to this conception, support for
Francophone minority communities were developed on the assumption that there would be in each province, with the obvious exception of Quebec, an association that represented francophones. Consider the definition of the grants program for Official Language Minority Groups of 1969 (as cited in Pal, 1993):

In most provinces there exists a Federation (Association, Society) which serves as the official representative and spokesman for the minority in its province. It is largely through these organizations that a federal social action program can best reach the people and has the best chance of finding acceptance for its policies and projects. (Secretary of State 1969:3)

Pal (1993) comments and cites the official text further:

The specific grant regulations (...) stipulated that normally only one organization in each province would be recognized as the "official federation, association or society representing the official minority in its province" (Secretary of State 1969:4)

In the case of Ontario, the organization which was thus bestowed an official title was the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO). Certainly, much has changed in the past thirty years and, with the arrival of significant numbers of francophone immigrants in Ontario in the 1980s, ACFO has had to recognize a certain diversity among francophones in the province. But it has done so only reluctantly and, as shall be explained in more detail below, for two principal reasons: a. there has always been an abiding fear among some minority Francophones of French-Canadian descent that the
privileged role of French may be lost if the francophone minority came to be regarded as just another ethnic group in the multicultural mosaic and b. the rapidly growing percentage of non-white, non-French-Canadian francophones in some parts of Ontario (e.g. in Toronto, every fourth francophone belongs to a visible minority while every third francophone was born outside of Canada (Centre francophone du Toronto métropolitain 1997)) may lead to the *multiculturalization* of the Franco-Ontarian community from within.

**Canada's Legal Framework Between Liberalism and Communitarianism**

Against the backdrop of community recognition outlined above, let us now consider the difficult balancing act that is being performed by the Canadian State in maintaining guarantees for individual rights, which are of prime importance in any Western-liberal democracy, while at the same time setting up a pluralist framework that gives recognition to both multicultural groups and English and French minority communities. The following two excerpts reproduce relevant sections of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada 1985) and the Official Languages Act (Government of Canada 1988). Sections tending towards liberalism are shown on the left; sections tending towards communitarianism are shown on the right.
The Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada 1985) states:

WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada provides that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination (...);

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Human Rights Act provides that every individual should have an equal opportunity with other individuals to make the life that the individual is able and wishes to have, consistent with the duties and obligations of that individual as a member of society (...),

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to (...)

(3.1.d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historical contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development; (...)

(5.1.g) assist ethno-cultural minority communities to conduct activities with a view to overcoming any discriminatory barrier and, in particular, discrimination based on race or national or ethnic origin; (...)

The Official Languages Act states (Government of Canada 1988):

( ...) WHEREAS the Government of Canada is committed to achieving,

with due regard to the principle of selection of personnel according to merit,

full participation of English-speaking Canadians and French-speaking Canadians in its institutions; (...)

The purpose of this Act is to ( ...) (2.b) support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and (...);

(43.1.g) encourage and assist organizations and institutions to project the bilingual character of Canada in their activities in Canada or elsewhere (...)

What these excerpts show is that, while stressing the unequivocal maintenance of standard Western-liberal safeguards for individual rights, Canada gives material and symbolic assistance as well as legal protection to multicultural and official language communities. As a result, a certain communitarian vs. liberal tension is built into the very fabric of Canadian civil society.

The Canadian government is, of course, not unaware of this tension and has, at times, responded very directly on how these concepts should be seen as compatible. It propagates a notion of citizenship that is based on diversity rather than uniformity and thus avoids suggesting anything but a very general citizenship mould. Comments made by Canada’s Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, Stéphane Dion, during a speech at the Collège universitaire de St-Boniface, Manitoba, in March 1997 are clear evidence of this:

*The ideal of multiculturalism is not an attempt to marginalize or diminish the importance of Francophone culture, as some Quebec separatists claim. Rather, it shows that our Canadian ideals, of embracing diversity, of saying that equality does not mean uniformity, that all people can have their own ways of being Canadian, are continuing to grow and develop. To say that Canada is multicultural, that all cultural groups have something important to contribute to Canada, does not mean denying the special contribution of First Nations, or of French and English Canadians at our country’s beginning.*
We can never use modern multiculturalism, the fact that we have many diverse groups today and not just two or three, as an excuse to restrict the use of French or the rights of Aboriginal peoples. For if it was not for our original experiences of accommodating differences, undoubtedly the experience of more recent immigrant groups to Canada would be one of more forced assimilation and Anglicization. The fact that Canada has long been bilingual has helped it to become multicultural as well. (...) There is no contradiction between French and English duality and multicultural diversity, but a powerful complementarity. We need to send a signal that all of Canada's diversity is accepted. We need to accept that there are different ways of being Canadian.” (Dion 1997)

While there may be broad agreement on the desirability of equity among all members of Canadian society, there is disagreement as to which road will lead to attaining this goal. While some voice an explicit preference for a liberal model of society (see Universalist Discourse on page 129), others feel that equity can only be achieved through a recognition of the specificity of the cultural and linguistic community to which one belongs (see Communitarian Discourse on page 129). Recognizing difference, however, can become complicated since one person may belong to several cultural and linguistic communities. The difficult issue of how to draw group boundaries and what to do with multiple identities is discussed in The Discourse of Multiple Identity on page 129. Before turning to these different discourses, though, we shall first consider the role of language as the medium through which these different positions are expressed.
Chapter 3 - The Medium of Citizenship: Language and Discourse

Now it is time to focus our attention on language as the medium without which the components of citizenship would sit like ships on dry land. After all, without language, or more precisely, without human beings talking about their ideas of belonging to one another, communities cannot exist. The central idea is that communication produces community. The reason why it is important to point this out is that in the 19th century, for example, the German romantic ideal of the nation claimed the exact opposite: in the ideology of the nation (not the state), belonging is not an act of declaring your membership but a matter of fate. You are supposedly born into a nation (thus the name) without having any say in the matter whatsoever. However, a feeling of national belonging does not arise from some genetic predisposition but requires comprehensive educational efforts to produce it. And this shows how crucial language and discourse really are in the creation of any sense of community.

Benedict Anderson’s work (1983) on the link between language and nationalism is one of the most insightful works in this domain as it shows how language is used to reshape the consciousness of societies. The main point of Anderson’s work “Imagined Communities” is that the emerging widespread use of print at the beginning of the 19th century helped create an “imagined community” that was crucial to the development of nationalism:
"I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (...) With a certain ferocity Gellner (1964:169) makes a comparable point when he rules that ‘Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.’ (Anderson 1983:15)

When considering language and citizenship, it is difficult to overstate the importance of this point since citizenship is both an instrument as well as an outcome of the national imagination. Furthermore, we can easily see how crucial the role of language is in the process: every time the word “Canadian”, for example, is used in the media (and received by a large, geographically and otherwise dispersed audience) it helps to (re)create the notion of a community. Whether we see this as a process of positive nation-building or, as Marcuse (1964:86) would argue, a process of mystification which covers up the real interests and alliances of segments of society, there can be little doubt that signifiers such as “Canadian” or “American” are widely used and generally held to mean something. But not only national labels become an important part in the collective imagination: what are held to be historic events also enter it and take on a substantive quality that would be unimaginable without the use of language. Anderson uses the French Revolution as an example:
"The overwhelming and bewildering concatenation of events experienced by its makers and its victims became a 'thing' — and with its own name: The French Revolution. Like a vast shapeless rock worn to a rounded boulder by countless drops of water, the experience was shaped by millions of printed words into a 'concept' on the printed page, and, in due course, into a model. Why 'it' broke out, what 'it' aimed for, why 'it' succeeded or failed, became subjects for endless polemics on the part of friends and foes: but of its 'it-ness', as it were, no one ever after had much doubt." (Anderson 1983:78/9)

Unless we always assume some nefarious intention behind the rise of ideological concepts, the 'it-ness' that gets created can also have a salutary effect. By talking about the world in certain terms, we take on board the connotations and underlying beliefs of these terms as well.

For example, Anderson traces the popularity of the nation-state model to the allure the concept held for communities or groups of communities which, although they had never considered themselves as nations, shared the experience of having been subjected to colonialism and now were looking for an appropriate model to gain or regain independence. However, by adopting the model of the nation-state, Anderson argues, a battery of concomitant liberal principles had to be taken on board as well:
"In effect, by the second decade of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, a 'model' of 'the' independent national state was available for pirating.

(...) But precisely because it was by then a known model, it imposed certain 'standards' from which too-marked deviations were impermissible. Even backward and reactionary Hungarian and Polish gentries were hard put to it not to make a show of 'inviting in' (if only to the pantry) their oppressed compatriots. (...) If 'Hungarians' deserved a national state, then that meant Hungarians, all of them; it meant a state in which the ultimate locus of sovereignty had to be the collectivity of Hungarian-speakers and readers, and, in due course, the liquidation of serfdom, the promotion of popular education, the expansion of the suffrage, and so on." (Anderson 1983:79)

The expansion of the concept of citizenship around the world could be viewed in a similar fashion. Wherever a government uses the term citizenship, it invokes, unwittingly or not, the entire tradition of liberalism outlined in the first section. This may not have an immediate impact on the lives of those termed "citizens" but it allows them to demand the concept's vindication on the part of the authorities. Certainly, language can be used to mystify the masses, as Marcuse puts it. It can, however, also do the opposite. Thus, over time, the inherent contradiction between the promotion of citizenship as official ideology and the denial of its attendant democratic principles in political practice can lead to strains which might directly challenge the survival of authoritarian regimes.25

25 One of the examples which comes to mind in this context was the way in which the Czech civil rights group Charter 77 used treaties signed by the Czech government within the CSCE (Council for Security
Habermas's Approach to Discourse and Social Change

One of the major premises upon which this investigation is based is that citizenship is the creation of a discursive space — both philosophically and historically as well as in contemporary terms. Much of the discussion so far has concentrated on the historical and philosophical evolution of the concept of citizenship. It is now time to turn our attention to citizenship as a contemporary phenomenon and to the way in which it is being maintained. But where does citizenship manifest itself in everyday life? And how can we analyze it? To answer these questions, we require a clear theoretical vantage point from which to understand the social world. In the following section, a summary of the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas will be presented as a useful approach to achieving that end.

The section is divided into four parts: I will first discuss why critical theory is a good starting point for studying contemporary manifestations of citizenship (see Habermas's Critical Theory and Citizenship, p. 110). I will then make some preliminary remarks on Habermas's theory (see p. 115) before turning my attention to Habermas's notions of Universal Pragmatics and validity claims (see Universal Pragmatics, p. 117). It will then be shown how the notion of validity claims can be extended to democratic discourse in Habermas's discourse theory (see Discourse Theory, p. 122). Finally, it will be argued that immigration leads to a civic dialogue that engages immigrants and the country to

and Co-operation in Europe) to document the government's human rights abuses. In these treaties, the government had, along with other Western and Eastern European member countries plus Canada and the US, pledged its adherence to principles of democracy that it then ignored or violated in practice. While I am not suggesting that the changes towards democracy in Eastern Europe were brought about solely through increasing tensions between official ideology and actual practice, it should be considered that the language of democracy and citizenship may have contributed significantly to an erosion of credibility on the part of the government (and a corresponding increase for opposition groups) to the point that violations of civil rights became so flagrant that ideological efforts by the authorities to reconcile abuses and political reality became more and more difficult.
which they have immigrated in such a way that there is a constant re-negotiation of citizenship.

**Habermas's Critical Theory and Citizenship**

Social research is not a disinterested endeavour. Most social scientists care deeply about the issues in which their research involves them. Is this a good thing? Positivist models of science promote a different ideal: scientists should remain as aloof as possible with regard to their objects of inquiry so as to ensure as much of a non-partisan analysis as possible. In the social sciences this is neither possible nor, indeed, desirable. I will begin with a quote which captures the essence of my motivation for engaging in research on immigration and citizenship:

> What is needed is a conception of civil society that can reflect on the core of new collective identities and articulate the terms within which projects based on such identities can contribute to the emergence of freer, more democratic societies.” (Cohen and Arato 1992:421)

An immigrant society is in a constant process of remaking itself. Where exactly this process is going, nobody knows. However, social science can help read the signs of changes that are afoot and suggest ways in which they might be reflected upon so that they will have an emancipatory rather than an oppressive effect. Thus, the term *conception of civil society* is not to be (mis)understood as a political party program but as an interpretative and analytical grid for better understanding.

Critical Theory in general, and Habermas's own brand in particular, attempt to fulfil this ideal. John Dryzek (1995:97) and John Forester (1993:2) see three tasks for the social
scientist working from a Critical Theory perspective. I summarize them side by side here.

While one has a more rousing programmatic ring to it and the other sounds more detached, both raise very similar points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dryzek</strong></th>
<th><strong>Forester</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The task for the social scientist is</td>
<td>Critical theory challenges us to devise methods of investigation that are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to understand the ideologically distorted subjective situation of some individual or group,</td>
<td>• empirically sound and descriptively powerful,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to explore the forces that have caused that situation,</td>
<td>• interpretively plausible and phenomenologically meaningful,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to show that these forces can be overcome through awareness of them on the part of the oppressed individual or group.</td>
<td>• critically pitched and ethically insightful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the types of critical theories which meet these epistemological demands are, according to Dryzek (1995:99). Freudian psychoanalysis (if it is based on doctor-patient equality and allows the patient to seek his own course of betterment after having come to an understanding of his/her problems), feminism, Paulo Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed, liberation theology and Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action.

Forester (1993:3) isolates three research strategies in the Habermasian framework, which I present here along with some additional theoretical considerations.

- **The ideal speech situation**: Habermas is not suggesting that we actually realize an ideal speech situation. Instead, he characterizes the conditions under which mutual understanding can be achieved with a maximum of fairness. Such understanding can only come about if it is based on a discourse that is characterized by an absence of coercion and the presence of the force of the better argument. It is useful to compare
the idea of the ideal speech situation with the notion of voice entertained by Bakhtin and those working within a Bakhtinian tradition.

In a Habermasian analysis, the extent to which someone is given ‘voice’ (although Habermas does not use the term himself) could be argued to depend on how close participants in the discourse come to realizing the conditions of ideal speech. These, in turn, are based on universal criteria in human communication that arise from human rationality. Only when we have a voice, can we effectively take part in a discourse. Without such “recourse to discourse” (Forester 1993:3) we cannot give the democratically required “informed consent”. The ideal speech situation can thus act as a sensitive guide in detecting situations in which the ability of one of the communication participants to check and explore the conditions of the communication is hampered.

The Bakhtinian notion of ‘voice’, on the other hand, stresses to a much greater extent the socially-situated character of communication as it is evidenced in dialogue. Through dialogue, Bakhtin argues, human beings become aware of how their individual existence relates to the society around them. But as Bakhtin himself said, this process of discovery, though re-enacted in countless interactions in daily life, has a universal core:
"…dialogic relationships are a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue, laid out compositionally in the text; they are an almost universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life— in general, everything that has meaning and significance." (Bakhtin 1984)

Therefore, what would at first appear to be a fundamental distinction between Habermas and Bakhtin - with Bakhtin emphasizing a social-contextual notion of voice and Habermas focusing on a rational-abstract interpretation of voice - has, in fact, a common ground: both are concerned with universal characteristics of human communication.

What Habermas does is to emphasize that, to a greater extent than in any other human activity, speech is able to create a social reality. As such, it can be abused by the powerful to disguise and manipulate but it can also be taken back by those subjected to manipulation in order to create a counter-discourse. These competing interests are evident in Habermas’s analysis of the “system” and the “lifeworld”.

- **The colonization of the lifeworld**: This second concept refers to Habermas’s distinction between the system and the lifeworld. This distinction allows Habermas to conceptualize society from two perspectives: from the participant perspective, society is regarded as the lifeworld of a social group. From the observer perspective, however, society is seen as a system of interactions. This dual perspective allows us to analyze some of the deficiencies of the modern world. Using this concept developed by Habermas enables one to investigate how the system, i.e. large private or public
organizations, bureaucracies and the state, encroach upon autonomous social action. The powerful nature of such institutional pressures derives from their influence in the media and the financial resources that the institutions command. The result is that the communicative context for citizens becomes so scattered that bonds of solidarity, which might lead to citizens recapturing lost symbolic structures, are prevented. One step towards regaining the autonomy of the lifeworld is for people to regain control over the structures of communication.

- Finally, *Making sense together*: Contrary to the previous point, *making sense together* does not refer to an aggregate level but rather looks at "the contingencies of ordinary social interaction and assess[es] how organizational and institutional contexts render 'making sense together' problematic and politically vulnerable" (Forester 1993:4). Such institutional contexts can be empowering or disempowering, educating or miseducating, organizing or disorganizing.

Forester (1993:4) summarizes the advantages of adopting a critical theory approach in the following way:
It brings us yet closer to developing a framework of social research that neither ignores normative problems nor shunts aside interpretive and phenomenological issues. With critical theory, we have a research framework that confronts us with the challenge to assess the vulnerabilities of our basic capacities to act with one another, to act meaningfully together, and to protect and nourish forms of social cooperation, forms of sociality. We are given the beginnings of a framework with which to integrate critical ethnographic and more structural and historical work. (Forester 1993:4).

Habermas’s Theory

The most comprehensive presentation of the theory of Jürgen Habermas may be found in his Theory of Communicative Action (Habermas 1984a; Habermas 1987), published in two volumes. It is difficult to summarize the main points of the immense body of theorizing contained in them, and even more so if one adds the numerous articles published in preparation or as an extension of the theory. The path that will be taken here is one of embedded selectivity. I will discuss those aspects of the theory that are particularly relevant for understanding how this theory (developed in the late 1970s, early 1980s) provides a foundation for Habermas’s more recent proposals concerning a discourse ethic and allows us to see the empirical data presented below in new and challenging ways. The relevant aspects will be explained with a view to ensuring that their place in the overall theory (and therefore much of its general relevance) is explained sufficiently to appreciate how these individual aspects relate to each other and to the general theory.
At its most basic level, Habermas's theory is a general theory of communication. He relies on the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) on speech acts to arrive at an account of universal pragmatics. Based upon universal pragmatics, Habermas develops a discourse theory: this theory is a pragmatic account that extends his universal pragmatics to offer an account of the general conditions of a non-coercive speech situation. If all communication went on smoothly, we would never need to invoke the level of discourse. Since this is not the case, though, Habermas shows us under which conditions we can ensure that communication continues, in spite of breakdowns at the level of universal pragmatics. Finally, at the highest level, Habermas develops a theory of societal evolution. He regards it as a serious failing of critical social theories that they do not explicate their normative basis. To remedy this situation, he tries to show that ideas such as truth, liberty and justice are already built into the structure of communication, i.e. that by using language to communicate we necessarily adopt a normative system.

Let me quickly draw on these three elements (universal pragmatics, discourse theory, theory of societal evolution) and point out how they are related to embedded empirical practice. Universal pragmatics is concerned with face-to-face interaction. Whether in a classroom, in a discussion taking place in an association or at a public meeting, the interaction proceeds from the implicit assumption of certain communicative principles (see the discussion of validity claims in the section on universal pragmatics in Habermas's Theory, p. 117). A theory of what these principles are and if and how they are adhered to and by whom can help us understand fundamental linguistic exchanges. At a secondary level, i.e. discourse theory, we move the focus away from the actual mechanics of exchanges and critically consider the contextual conditions under which these exchanges
take place. This allows us to ask questions such as to whose benefit (as well as to whose disadvantage) a certain set of conditions operates. Finally, a theory of societal evolution attempts to put both the microlevel and the more aggregate level together (fully realizing that text and context are not always easily teased apart) in order to show how actual interactions plus their broader contextual qualities combine to give a social context a just and equitable or an unjust and unfair quality.

What makes the components of Habermas’s theory so appealing for an analysis of pluralist societies is that it allows us to capture their manifestations at various levels: both the dynamics of small-scale meetings, at which diversity becomes an issue, as well as the evolution of entire societies, within which immigration and changed notions of citizenship have led to fundamental changes, can be captured in Habermas’s approach. Furthermore, Habermas’s writing (1994; 1996) has recently turned very explicitly to questions of societal diversity brought about by immigration and the challenges this poses to our notions of the evolving character and normative foundation of the modern, liberal state. Of course, Habermas’s own work remains largely theoretical in this domain. His efforts are mostly conceptual rather than empirical.

**Universal Pragmatics in Habermas’s Theory**

The following presentation relies, apart from Habermas’s own account in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Habermas 1979), on overviews provided in Horster (1995) and Reese-Schäfer (1991).

The central place Habermas assigns to dialogue (and thus language) as the means of constituting the social world can be seen in the following quote:
The social space, which is created through conversation, of a commonly inhabited lifeworld is the key to understanding the concept of society in the theory of communication. (Habermas 1986:332, trans. CQ)²⁶

An important source for Habermas was the Theory of Symbolic Interaction of George Herbert Mead. One of the consequences of human interaction, which relies on symbols (rather than gestures at earlier stages in evolution), is that it produces a community in which mutual understanding is only possible if participants agree on how linguistic symbols are to be used. Through language, people create a community of communication in which the individual reaffirms both his or her membership and his or her individuality and separateness. Language becomes the instrument that allows other types of societal structures, such as traditions and moral principles, to be established and, with the invention of writing, to be easily codified.

What Habermas tries to establish in his universal pragmatics are the general conditions that allow us to communicate. These conditions, Habermas assumes, are not language or speaker-specific but universal.

²⁶ Der im Gespräch sich öffnende soziale Raum einer gemeinsam bewohnten Lebenswelt liefert den Schlüssel zum kommunikationstheoretischen Begriff der Gesellschaft. (Habermas 1986:332)
"Communicative competence has as universal a core as linguistic competence. A general theory of speech action would thus describe that fundamental system of rules that adult subjects master to the extent that they can fulfil the conditions for a happy employment of sentences in utterances, no matter to which individual languages the sentences may belong and in which accidental contexts the utterances may be embedded." (Habermas 1979:xviii)

The eventual aim of establishing a pragmatic system is to be able to ground a characterization of what constitutes the lifeworld in the most basic element of communication, i.e. the speech act. Habermas argues that with every utterance we make four claims. We claim that what we say is comprehensible, true, truthful and right. These four claims\(^{27}\) Habermas calls \textit{validity claims}, although the first one (comprehensibility) is less of a claim (we cannot really \textit{claim} that what we say is comprehensible) than a pre-condition on communication even taking place, whether felicitously or not. Given the fact that the four validity claims play such an important role, I have synthesized the main points in the table below. The table also includes questions that an analyst or an immediate interlocutor might ask with regard to the claims being raised.

---

\(^{27}\) As Habermas formulated his theory at the end of the 1970s, he was no doubt influenced by some of the dominant linguistic terminology of the day, evident in his use of terms such as \textit{competence} and \textit{validity claims}. Habermas's adoption of the term \textit{competence} does not, however, suggest he believed in Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance. As far as his four \textit{validity claims} are concerned, it is quite possible that he was inspired by H. P. Grice's argument for the existence of four conversational maxims.
Type of precondition / validity claim: (Habermas 1984b:2f.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate question that is raised:</th>
<th>Relates the utterance to: (Forester 1992:49)</th>
<th>Types of reality which are referred to: (McCarthy 1979:xviii)</th>
<th>Questions to be asked of the speaker if either a. the comprehensibility, b. the truth, c. the truthfulness or d. the normative correctness are in doubt. (Habermas 1984b:138f.)</th>
<th>Follow-up questions which should be raised: (Forester 1992:49)</th>
<th>Possible challenges on the part of the listener (Forester 1992: 61f.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>comprehensible</td>
<td>Is the utterance comprehensible?</td>
<td>external reality</td>
<td>What does this mean? How am I supposed to interpret your utterance? Such questions require an act of interpretation.</td>
<td>Which language, terminology or framework is used to represent the issues?</td>
<td>Is my attention being aptly focused by the speaker?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>true</td>
<td>Is the utterance true?</td>
<td>external reality</td>
<td>Are things as you claim them to be? Why are they this way and not some other way? Such questions require an act of affirmation and/or explanation.</td>
<td>Can I explore the 'outer' states of affairs as truly or falsely existing?</td>
<td>Should I believe this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>truthful</td>
<td>Does the speaker intend to say what she is saying?</td>
<td>one's internal world / inner states of self &amp; emotions</td>
<td>Are you tricking me? Is my interlocutor in a state of delusion about his/her own motives?</td>
<td>Is the utterance authentic with regard to the speaker's intentions?</td>
<td>Does the speaker deserve my trust?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right</td>
<td>Against a background of shared values &amp; norms, is the utterance legitimate and justifiable?</td>
<td>normative reality / social world</td>
<td>Why did you do that? Why did you not act differently? Are you allowed to do that? Should you not have acted differently? Such questions require an act of justification.</td>
<td>Is the utterance appropriate with regard to the situation at hand?</td>
<td>Does the speaker deserve my consent?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

The table above requires a few comments:

I have already mentioned that comprehensibility is not a validity claim but a precondition. Communication can only proceed if we understand each other, i.e. are able to interpret each other's utterances. While this may appear to be quite rudimentary, there is possibly more to it than meets the eye. Forester feels that when complicated issues are concerned, comprehensibility is not only a question of whether or not we understand the words we hear but also of whether they are used to clarify or mystify a certain state of affairs. Consider the following example: when a company reduces its staff, this step is called
"downsizing" or "making the company leaner and more competitive" by those who wish to conceal the fact that a certain number of people are simply losing their jobs. Could this be characterized as a case of an untrue statement? Not really, since the words used do not explicitly dispute that jobs are being lost; it is rather that the focus is being shifted in such a way that an unpleasant reality is obscured. And this is precisely Forester’s point: language can lead to incomprehension if it represents issues in such a way that the hearer’s attention is diverted from the real issues.

The claim that a statement is true is one that can still be tested at the level of communication. If, for example, someone says “My mother is coming tomorrow” and the hearer doubts the statement, the speaker could affirm his utterance by saying “She just called me.” (Horster 1995:40f.).

Claims regarding the truthful nature of an utterance require a different kind of test. A speaker can be said to be truthful if s/he displays a consistency between words and action, i.e. a truthful speaker will follow his/her declared principles in the same way that s/he would expect others to follow them. Such consistency allows us to check that what s/he declares to be his/her intentions are truly those s/he holds. However, since actions cannot be verified on the level of communication or discourse, claims to truthfulness cannot be decided on the basis of discursive reasoning.

This leaves us with two claims that can be moved to the level of discourse: truthfulness and normative correctness.
Discourse Theory in Habermas’s Theory

At the level of discourse, we use arguments to clarify problematic validity claims. This means that we leave the immediate context of communication and make communication itself a topic for discussion. We no longer exchange information but give reasons for the claims we have made. Crucial questions that arise at this point are: who may actually participate in this discourse, how they may participate and why the participants should feel bound by its outcome. At this point, Habermas presents an unexpected solution to what would appear to be an almost intractable problem. In answer to the problem of how we decide who may participate in the discourse, Habermas suggests rationality as a criterion. But how do we determine if a participant is rational? Since there is no independent criterion for rationality apart from discourse itself, we appear to enter a vicious circle.

The solution: Habermas posits what he calls an ideal speech situation. The ideal speech situation is one in which there is a “strangely forceless force of the better argument” (Habermas 1971:137). Habermas (1984b:177f.) outlines the conditions for an ideal speech situation. They are based on the four types of validity claims discussed above. In the table below, I have summarized the validity claims on the left (they are preceded by a

---

28 Habermas clarifies in “Moralbewuβtsein und kommunikatives Handeln” (Habermas 1983:145) that there is a fundamental difference between strategic and communicative action. Success in strategic action depends on the material interests of the actors involved and the means employed towards achieving that success. Success in communicative action, however, is harder to come by since it cannot be forced:

“Processes of communication are directed towards reaching a consensus that depends on the rationally motivated agreement to the contents of an utterance. Consensus cannot be imposed on the other side, cannot be forced upon the opponent by manipulation. Something that has visibly been achieved as a result of outside intervention cannot count as consensus. This always rests on shared convictions.” (transl. CQ)

question that helps clarify the contents of each validity claim). They are connected with four conditions for an ideal speech situation, as shown in the right column of the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can all participants make themselves heard and understood? (Comprehensibility):</th>
<th>All potential participants must be given the same opportunity to open a discourse and continue it by speaking, replying, querying and answering.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can all participants affirm and doubt the truth of utterances? (Truth):</td>
<td>All participants must be given the same opportunity to interpret, affirm, recommend, explain and justify utterances and to doubt their underlying validity claims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can all participants be seen for who they are? (Truthfulness?):</td>
<td>Only participants are allowed who, as actors, are given the same opportunity to express their opinions, sentiments and desires. This guarantees that participants will be truthful and make their inner nature transparent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all participants to the same extent both authors and subjects of the normative claims in circulation? (Rightness):</td>
<td>Only participants are allowed who, as actors, are given the same opportunity to command and resist, to grant and deny permission, to make and accept promises, to explain and demand explanations. Only complete reciprocity that excludes privileges for any side can guarantee that communicative opportunities are equally distributed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2*

By characterizing the conditions of the *ideal speech situation*, Habermas is not calling on us to implement them in immediate social practice. Their relevance is twofold. On the one hand, they represent a shared commitment to standards of communication that we share by virtue of engaging in communication. On the other hand, though, they represent an ideal which, in most communication situations, we do not meet. For all those instances in which we fail to create an *ideal speech situation*, these conditions can act as a test that will allow us to see what it is about a communicative context that makes it less than ideal.
For the purposes of my study, the elements of Habermas's discourse theory and his assumption of an ideal speech situation have two main consequences:

- As far as social institutions are concerned, validity claims ensure social cohesion and the viability of social institutions:

  *The ability to raise validity claims, Habermas believes, is the basis of the social bond. The act of raising a validity claim affirms the mutual commitment to standards of validity that make communication, and thus the social relationship possible. (...) Now, it is the claim that the validity standards are the basis of the social bond, more than any other, which establishes the significance of Habermas's theory for sociology and for any theory of the evolution of social institutions. If the validity standards are the shared basis on which we negotiate our evolving social institutions and arrangements, as well as our shared understanding of the objective world, then they must be part of - indeed central to - the explanation of societal change. (Braaten 1991:14)*

- As far as the empirical analysis of actual instances of communication is concerned, John Forester argues:
The point here is not to predict what listeners will do, but to understand how much is at stake when speakers speak and, more generally, whenever we act meaningfully, thus communicatively. Habermas's analysis of the dimensions of communicative action can help us empirically to explore just how complex, how contingent and how rich, social and political actions actually are. Next, we can explore too what happens when these four pragmatic validity claims we've noted are in fact accepted, not challenged. As I have argued more politically, because much routine interaction enacts all four of these pragmatic claims simultaneously, such interaction (most of what we do!) reproduces four subtle yet powerful relations of social belief, consent, status and attention to problems. Because social and political interaction broadly have such a pragmatic communicative structure, this analysis can inform a far-reaching analysis of hegemony and discursive power." (Forester 1992:49f.)

Forester's comments must be read against the questions I listed in table 1 under “Follow-up questions”. If the questions listed there are not raised, the speaker can get away with getting his listeners to believe in, consent to, assign authentic status to and attend to his/her utterances without their being checked.

**Discourse as Ethics**

Discourse ethics moves beyond the mere mechanics of verbal interaction towards the idea that the very nature of communication might provide us with a normative universal. It constitutes a significant development of Habermas's thinking from his early 1970s
formulation of the principles of discourse theory to an extension of the significance of these principles to the political realm.

A crucial element in the shift from discourse theory to discourse ethics is that, within discourse theory, much of the deliberation of normative validity was carried out within the individual. In true Kantian fashion, norms were evaluated first and foremost through ratiocination. Discourse ethics, on the other hand, assumes that the validity test itself takes place in a public assembly. This becomes clear in the following quote, in which Habermas refers to one the principal commentators on his work in the Anglo-Saxon context, Thomas McCarthy.

From this perspective, the Kantian categorical imperative needs to be reformulated along the lines proposed above: “Instead of prescribing to all others as valid the maxim which I will to be a general law, I have to offer my maxim to everyone with the aim of discursively testing its claim to universalizability. The emphasis has shifted from what each and every individual can will without contradiction to be a general law to what each and every one will recognize in consensus as a universal norm. (Habermas 1983:77) Transl. Cohen(1990:85)"^^29

Discourse ethics thus shifts our attention to the universal quality of discourse as it can be discovered in interaction. Jean Cohen captures this in the following definition:

^^29 Aus dieser Perspektive bedarf auch der Kategorische Imperativ einer Umformulierung in dem vorgeschlagenen Sinn: „Stattdessen alle anderen eine Maxime, von der ich will, daß sie allgemeines Gesetz sei, als gültig vorzuschreiben, muß ich meine Maxime zum Zweck der diskursiven Prüfung ihres Universalitätsanspruchs allen anderen vorlegen. Das Gewicht verschiebt sich von dem, was jeder (einzeln) ohne Widerspruch als allgemeines Gesetz wollen kann, auf das, was alle in
Discourse ethics is an attempt to articulate those rules and communicative presuppositions that make it possible for participants in a practical discourse to arrive at a valid, rational consensus on social norms. (Cohen 1990:84)

Discourse ethics thus contains the very basic rules of communication that everyone, regardless of cultural, linguistic or other specifics, ought to be able to accept. In the words of Simone Chambers (1995:233):

The ideal conversation replaces the monological universalization test of the categorical imperative with a dialogical universalization test.

What is important to remember is that we are not dealing with issues of substantive morality. Rather, the notion of discourse ethics merely establishes the formal procedures upon which everyone should be able to agree in order to embark on more substantive questions. As such, discourse ethics is a dialogue-based platform for formal procedures of justice. It is useful to remind ourselves at this stage that the conditions outlined in discourse theory attempted to guarantee that no one is excluded from discourse, that everyone is given their turn at speaking and that no one be coerced (see Table 1 on page 120). These conditions still hold. What is new under discourse ethics is that any norm agreed on through rational consensus must have originated under deliberative conditions of symmetry, reciprocity and reflexivity: participants must display equal respect and impartiality, they must treat each other as equals with everyone having the same right to say who they are, what they strive towards and how they think the collective good can

Übereinstimmung als universale Norm anerkennen wollen” (T. McCarthy, Kritik der
best be achieved. Even more importantly, dialogue participants are actively called upon to listen to one another, reply to one another’s remarks and justify their positions in good faith. This involves taking a position in which participants are discouraged from acting strategically and attempting to manipulate those involved in the deliberation towards achieving a preferred objective. Such behaviour would not be acting in good faith and would be tantamount to treating those involved in a dialogue not as persons but as instruments. Rather, everyone must start with the assumption that everybody has a worthwhile contribution to make to the discourse and that no one’s claim can be discarded without serious consideration.

A discourse ethics involves the assumption that both my discourse partner and I, though we may not agree on a number of issues, can establish some common ground. This common ground is reason and rational argumentation. Once we agree on these basics, we accept that I might be persuaded by my conversation partner or vice versa. The requirements of discourse in a discourse ethics do contain certain moral assumptions about the way we ought to be talking to each other but they do not pre-determine either the contents or the outcome of our discussion. Habermas makes this distinction quite clear:

Verständigungsverhältnisse, Frankfurt/Main. 1980, 371) (Habermas 1983:77)
It should be obvious that in a discussion, participants with conflicting values will be able to agree on a course of action more easily if they have access to some abstract points of reference that are neutral in terms of their disagreements. (...) In order to show the superiority of a reflexive mode of justification and of the post-traditional legal and moral ideas that are based on such a mode, a normative theory is required. (...) This requirement can only be fulfilled if one replaces that which is contained in the concept „equally good for everyone“ with an argumentative rule for practical discourses. Then, one may try to justify such a rule by investigating the pragmatic prerequisites of argumentation in general. What would be discovered is that the idea of impartiality is rooted in the very structures of argumentation and need not be imported into it as additional normative content. (Habermas 1983:85/86, transl. CQ)30

What Habermas is arguing for here is not only that it would be good if some abstract neutral criteria were available to participants who are in a dispute over certain goals and values. Everyone would agree on that. In addition, he suggests that we do not have to artificially establish an external normative system to avail ourselves of such neutral criteria

---

30 Es leuchet ein, daß sich Argumentationsteilnehmer mit konkurrierenden Wertorientierungen auf gemeinsame Handlungsweisen eher werden einigen können, wenn sie auf abstraktere Gesichtspunkte rekurrieren, die gegenüber strittigen Inhalten neutral sind. (...) Um die Überlegenheit eines reflexiven Rechtfertigungsmodus und der auf diesem Niveau entwickelten posttraditionalen Rechts- und Moralvorstellungen zu begründen, bedarf es einer normativen Theorie. (...) Dieses Begründungsdefizit läßt sich erst ausgleichen, wenn man (...) das, was mit dem Prädikat „gleichermaßen gut für jeden“ gemeint ist, durch eine Argumentationsregel für praktische Diskurse ausdrückt. Dann kann man den Versuch machen, diese Argumentationsregel auf dem Wege einer Untersuchung der pragmatischen Voraussetzungen von Argumentation überhaupt zu begründen. Dabei wird sich zeigen, daß die Idee der Unparteilichkeit in den Strukturen der Argumentation selbst verwurzelt ist und nicht als ein zusätzlicher normativer Gehalt in sie hineingetragen zu werden braucht. (Habermas 1983:85/86)
but rather that they already exist and form the backdrop of any true discourse that is not tainted by strategic objectives.

Achieving democratic legitimacy for any group therefore entails accepting three propositions:

- that consensus must be established empirically, i.e. in the real world, through rational dialogue,

- that the norms for achieving such consensus, i.e. mutually recognized equality and respect, flow from the evidence of common humanity as expressed in the activity of communication,

- that the results of such empirical and rational deliberation be binding on all parties.

Thus, the empirical nature of consensus and the normative base structure of communication provide us with a basis for public discourses. No additional or external moral level needs to be invoked. And as far as the universalizable justifiability of discourse ethics is concerned (i.e. the normative base structure), Chambers comments:

*The political ideal contained in discourse ethics centers on a more reflective and widespread undertaking of an activity that already has a place in our lives. As Habermas has said, communication does not have to be established as an ought. Communication is the way we transmit and reproduce our lifeworld.* (Chambers 1995:241)

Once we realize the pervasive nature of communication in human pursuits and especially in the collective arrangements within which human beings exist, it becomes clear how
important the recognition of a discourse ethics is for a pluralist society. Unlike homogeneous societies that can look to the real or invented notion of shared cultural values, a pluralist society has no commonly accepted cultural practices. Where such overarching cultural practices are unavailable (and the francophones of Ontario are, as we shall see, a prime example for the erosion of such common cultural practices), something else needs to become commonly accepted in order to guarantee stability. This is where a discourse ethics steps in to suggest that human communication can fill the normative gap.

In one of his more recent interviews, Habermas argues that the objective of a discourse ethics is the mutual assumption of the role of the other.

[Discourse ethics] conceptualizes practical discourse as the public practice of a shared, reciprocal taking over of perspectives: everyone finds him- or herself required to take over the perspective of each other person, in order to test whether a ruling is also acceptable from the perspective of everyone else’s understanding of the world and of themselves. Justice and solidarity are two sides of the same coin, because practical discourse is a procedure which, on the one hand, allows every individual to make his or her ‘yes’ and ‘no’ felt, and thereby satisfies an individualistic understanding of equal rights.
But, on the other hand, in moral discourse the social bond which requires all participants in argumentation to remain aware of their belonging to an unlimited community of communication [unbegrenzte Kommunikationsgesellschaft] remains intact. Only with the securing of the existence of the communication community, which demands of everyone, in the ideal assumption of roles, an unselfish, empathetic activity, can those relations of reciprocal recognition be reproduced, without which even the identity of each individual would disintegrate. (Habermas and Dews 1992:252)

If Habermas is correct, a discourse ethics properly understood, provides a bridge between the liberal universalism of the individual rights discourse ("satisfies an individualistic understanding of equal rights") and the collective embeddedness of Taylor’s communitarian notions of individual identity ("the social bond which requires all participants in argumentation to remain aware of their belonging to an unlimited community of communication [unbegrenzte Kommunikationsgesellschaft] remains intact").
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General human rights of the individual safeguarded in liberalism</th>
<th>Recognition of individual's identity safeguarded in communitarianism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Discourse Ethics**

Unlimited communication community: universal structure of communication provides for equality of participants while community provides recognition of personal identity.

*Table 2*

Any public discussion is thus a part of the wider normative structure of human communication. It contains within itself the ideal of a discourse among equals. Thus, any debate contains the kernels through which its actual performance may be compared with its ideal performance. Discourse ethics does not, of course, simply make inequality and power differentials disappear. But it assumes that whenever people talk to each other they are, in principle, able to detect the violation of equality by considering the real performance of their conversation with its ideal counterpart, as Habermas makes clear.
Along with the validity claims raised in communicative action, the tension of the ideal becomes part of the social facts, a tension which participating subjects become aware of in the form of a power which bursts contexts apart, and transcends all merely provincial criteria. To use a paradoxical expression: the regulative idea of the validity of utterances is constitutive for the social facts generated through communicative action. (...)

Learning processes should build a bridge within time to the unlimited community of communication which reaches beyond all temporal distance; they should realize within the world the conditions which are presupposed by the unconditional demands of transcending validity claims. This conception (...) also shapes the notion of society which is developed from the standpoint of communicative action: for communicative interactions can only run along the rails of intersubjectively recognized validity claims. With these unconditional validity claims transcendence enters the life-world and saturates its symbolic structures. (...) Every actually raised validity claim which transcends the context of our present life-world creates a new fact through the affirmations and negations of those to whom it is addressed. The results of the interplay of innerworldly learning processes and world-disclosing innovations become sedimented through the mediation of this cognitive-linguistic infrastructure of society. (Habermas and Dews 1992:261)
Thus, in the Habermasian conception of discourse, the 'provincial' context of any given actual verbal exchange projects outwards to the unlimited community of communication.

**Discourse as Community**

What underlies the idea of a communication community is the concept of a discourse ethics. Discourse ethics creates a link between the realities (legal and social) of civil society and their attendant public discourses. Jean Cohen makes this link clear when she discusses why the rights, which sustain Western concepts of society, cannot merely be regarded as acts of positive legislation. Rather, rights rely on vital political cultures with constituencies who, if need be, are ready to mobilize in their defence:

> [Discourse ethics] requires precisely that institutionalization of discourse in civil society that is so crucial for the positing and defense of rights. [However], discourse ethics points not only to the sociological process of creating and expanding rights, but provides the basis for a theory of rights which not only argues for fundamental rights, but also helps us isolate the central clusters of rights from among them. (...) All rights, including those securing moral autonomy, require discursive validation. From this point of view, it might appear that the rights of communication are the most fundamental since they are constitutive of discourse itself and, hence, the key institution of modern civil society: the public sphere.

*(Cohen 1990:94/95)*

If, indeed, rights of communication and the public sphere do play such a central role in modern civil society, how are we to achieve communities with communication rights at
their core? Habermas (1992:240) argues that, following the cataclysmic effects of nationalism and fascism in the twentieth century, we are witnessing a salutary move towards universalism with the concurrent rise of world interdependence, as reflected in increased migration, growing ethnic diversity, increasingly dense communication networks and a heightened world wide sensitivity to violations of human rights.

This leads to reactions of anxiety and defensiveness. But at the same time there is also a spreading awareness that there is no longer any alternative to universalistic value orientations. What does universalism mean, after all? That one relativizes one's own way of life with regard to the legitimate claims of other forms of life, that one grants the strangers and the others, with all their idiosyncrasies and incomprehensibilities, the same rights as oneself, that one does not insist on universalizing one's own identity, that one does not simply exclude that which deviates from it, that the areas of tolerance must become infinitely broader than they are today – moral universalism means all these things. (Habermas and Dews 1992:240)

The idea of a community of discourse must therefore be situated between the poles of respect for cultural difference and the assumption of universal values. The assumption that there are no essentially irreconcilable differences between human beings, i.e. the belief in a common humanity, and that in communication this common humanity finds the minimal common denominator necessary to reach peaceful settlement of its differences, is an assumption which needs to be applied and tested with great care since the idea of
universalism can easily be abused and reveal itself as cultural imperialism. But how can we ensure that the notion of a communication community does not become culturally imperialistic? The political scientist Andrew Linklater takes up that issue.

Membership of wider communication communities does not presume that others must have the same cultural orientations or share similar political aspirations. All that has to be assumed is that cultural differences are no barrier to equal rights of participation within a dialogic community. The duty to associate with others as co-legislators within wider communities of discourse rests on the fact that there are no compelling differences between human beings which can legitimate their prima facie exclusion from dialogic interaction. (...) Intellectuals should retreat from weakening the sense of common humanity, (...) especially at the boundary where the 'wildly different' meet and where there is a primary and universal obligation to engage the other in dialogue on equal terms. The willingness to engage wildly different human beings qua human beings, in a dialogue which assesses the rationality of practices of exclusion, is the hallmark of the communication community. (Linklater 1998:85/87)

Linklater's characterization lets us see the outlines of the communication community. The idea of a communication community does, however, necessitate a balancing act between liberalism and communitarianism and it is from feminist research that some of the clearest statements have come on how universalism and difference may be reconciled. Feminists are particularly sensitive to these issues. On the one hand, they realize the emancipatory
potential of a communitarian ethic that allows women as a group to mobilize and move beyond patriarchal structures of domination. On the other hand, though, they are aware of the importance of a universal ethic that allows one to criticize the subjugation of women, especially when this happens under the guise of ethnic communitarianism. Seyla Benhabib’s concept of a ‘post-conventional contextualism’ (1992) and Frazer and Lacey’s notion of a ‘dialogic communitarianism’ (1993) point in this direction. Benhabib, much like Habermas, argues that concrete ‘others’ (rather than the Kantian notion of individual ratiocination) must engage in dialogue and with empathy to work out the principles by which they want to be governed. In the same vein, dialogic communitarianism is critical of the notion that there can be some higher moral point of view that would allow specific moral questions to be decided. Rather, the concept of dialogic communitarianism assumes that dialogue partners are the ultimate arbiters of the social arrangements they will reach, that they must do so, however, by displaying mutual respect and a willingness to engage in open dialogue.

Out of the vast number of civil society contexts in which discourse plays a role, I have picked one that will be subjected to a closer examination: the new francophone landscape of Ontario. Among the many reasons for this choice, the principal one certainly is the fact that we are dealing with a minority-within-a-minority situation (the new francophones being a minority among the traditional francophones of the province), all of which is embedded in the highly pluralistic context of Canadian society. All of this combines to yield highly fertile ground for old collective claims of legitimacy to be challenged in new and unfamiliar ways, questioning some of the apparently axiomatic assumptions of the Canadian polity.
Chapter 4 - The Citizenship of Multiple Belonging: New Francophones in English

Canada

From Multinational to Multicultural: Francophones in Ontario (a Brief History)

Francophones in Ontario constitute a sizeable minority. They represent slightly more than half a million (5.6%) of Ontario’s total population of 10.6 million (Office des affaires francophones 1998). The history of francophones in the province dates back to the very beginning of European settlement in Canada but these early roots have not guaranteed the francophone population an easy existence (Jaenen 1993). Francophones in Ontario never achieved a territory over which they could exercise political control and pressures towards assimilation into the English-speaking majority are perceived as a constant threat to the survival of the community. Discrimination against francophones was particularly intense at the beginning of the 20th century when Ontario outlawed French as a language of instruction from 1912 until 1927 (Martel 1995). These pressures led Ontario francophones to organize politically under the leadership of the Association canadienne-française d'éducation de l'Ontario (ACFEO). Initially, ACFEO’s leaders regarded rural isolation and the Catholic religion as the best guarantors for the future of French speakers.

31 While the number of francophones is usually based on mother tongue figures in census data, this may not adequately reflect the number of francophones. A large number of immigrants from Africa, for example, speak indigenous African languages as their mother tongue but have completed all of their schooling in French and use French to a great extent in their daily lives. These people are excluded from any francophone by mother tongue indicators, though they would certainly regard themselves as francophones. Thus, it should be emphasized that the number of francophones by knowledge of official languages (i.e. those who speak either French only or both English and French) is more than twice the number of francophones as measured by mother tongue: 12% of Ontarians speak either French or both official languages (Statistics Canada 1996). That this number may, in fact, give a more adequate idea of the place of French in Ontario is supported by another statistic: the number of French-only speakers in Ontario is very small (0.4% or 46,940 individuals). This means that even among francophones as measured by mother tongue, English-French bilingualism is the overriding reality. There are, in fact, hardly any French-only speakers in Ontario and it might, therefore, be more useful to consider the number of people with official language knowledge of French-only or French and English (regardless of mother tongue) as an appropriate measure of the role of French in the population of Ontario.
in Ontario. However, the combined effects of industrialization, urbanization and the emergence of Quebec nationalism in the 1960s, which effectively ended the unified concept of one French-Canadian people across the country, meant that Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent had to face new realities (Carrière 1993; Juteau and Séguin-Kimpton 1993; Juteau-Lee 1991; Martel 1997). They took up a more modernist struggle, led by a revamped AFCO (underlining its broader aims, the word éducation was taken out) and called on the state to provide institutions over which Franco-Ontarians would exercise control (Bureau 1989; d'Augerot-Arend 1996:257-261).

The federal government, for its part, was not disinclined to provide such support since it fitted in well with its policies of trying to prove to Quebec nationalists that francophone life outside Quebec was possible. As a result, Franco-Ontarians managed to achieve limited institutional autonomy culminating by the late 1980s in the setting up of a handful of separate francophone school boards and the provision of juridical, health and social services. As Denis (1990) points out, however, the extent of institutional autonomy among francophones in English Canada in no way compares to the much more powerful status of anglophones in Quebec. In addition, federal government support has been cut back drastically since the early 1990s, exposing the precarious dependence of minority francophone associations on federal funds.

Throughout this struggle, however, the issue of who actually counted as a Franco-Ontarian was never resolved. On the one hand, Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent could not afford to refuse new francophones since their own ranks were being thinned out through assimilation. On the other hand, however, an influx of too many newcomers would threaten the privileged role of French-Canadians in history as a
peuple fondateur next to the English as the only other founding people. Martel (1995) makes this point very succinctly and argues that the only truly unproblematic source of immigrants was Quebec. He argues that during the earlier part of this century, the Franco-Ontarian leadership was suspicious of other immigrants because they were potential competitors for land or industrial work and posed a threat to the link between language and the Catholic religion. After the Second World War, the principal concern became the fear that large numbers of immigrants would lead to the Franco-Ontarian community being perceived as just another ethnic group among many multicultural communities.

Given this context, the recent arrival of new francophones from Africa and the Caribbean is a double-edged sword for long-established Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent. In Toronto, for example, close to one in four francophones (22.5%) belongs to what Statistics Canada calls a "visible minority" (Office des affaires francophones 1998)32. On the one hand, this influx gives a welcome boost to the overall number of francophones and thus strengthens the argument that the state (at both the federal and the provincial level) should continue to provide services in French. On the other hand, though, it challenges not only the cultural and historical identity of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent but leads to increased competition for federal funding among francophone organizations and more French-speakers crowding an already tight French-speaking labour market.

32 Due to the fact that this only includes mother-tongue francophones, excluding many Africans for whom French, although not the native language is, in fact, the primary language, some members of the francophone community estimate the number of non-French-Canadian francophones to be closer to 40% of the overall francophone population.
Marie-France Kingsley (1998:242) notes that any efforts at building bridges between
ACFO and groups of francophone newcomers have been hampered by competition over
shrinking federal funding.

_Il est certain toutefois que les élans de bonne volonté ont dû être quelque
peu freinés par la rationalisation du financement fédéral accordé aux
groupes minoritaires de langues officielles._

This has led to a change in political strategy. While francophones joined forces in the past
in the hope of obtaining ever increasing funding from the state, the reality of shrinking
government support as well as the presence of a neo-liberalist ideology of self-reliance has
led them to try and maintain whatever state support they currently enjoy while otherwise
looking for new sources of revenue. This has put francophone groups in immediate
competition with one another, as Labrie and Roy observe (1998):

_[Les personnes actives sur le plan politique] se prévalent désormais d’un
discours adapté aux nouvelles réalités de la mondialisation et du néo-
libéralisme, acceptant les nouvelles règles du jeu imposées par le
gouvernement fédéral (...). Ces changements de stratégies d’action
politique ne s’effectuent pas nécessairement dans la cohésion, mais bien
dans un climat de compétition pour le contrôle des ressources, donnant
lieu dans certains cas à une accentuation des divisions internes._

Such divisions, however, may also open a window of opportunity for groups that are even
more marginalized than the ethnocultural minorities. In an article on the situation of gays
and lesbians among Ontario’s francophone population, Grimard and Labrie (1999:8) note
that the emergence of a multiplicity of discourses within the francophonie may, at first glance, appear to lead towards unwanted fragmentation. A variety of discourses as opposed to one central discourse may, however, also render visible for the first time the diversity among Ontario francophones and allow those who have traditionally been assigned to the fringes of Ontario's francophonie, whether for reasons of origin, sexual orientation or other, to add their perspective of what it means to be francophone in Ontario.

**The Settlement Experience**

In order to understand how new francophones insert themselves into the political and economic structure of Canada, it is important to consider how they become settled here. Following telephone interviews that I conducted with a wide variety of francophone newcomers (George and Mwarigha 1999), three important steps of the settlement process emerged:

a. the immediate needs francophone newcomers have when they first arrive in Canada,

b. the ways in which these needs are met and,

c. the long-term barriers which newcomers face in Canadian society.

About twenty francophone immigrants were invited to participate in a discussion session to inquire further into these issues. The discussion was structured in relation to the three steps outlined above. The experiences of the participants provide a starting point for

---

33 All references to persons or organizations have been anonymized.

34 Research referred to in this section was carried out as part of a Consultation on Settlement Programming for African Newcomers at the Centre for Applied Social Research (Faculty of Social
understanding the process which leads a person from the moment s/he arrives on Canadian soil to becoming a more or less integrated member of Canadian society. The major needs that immigrants have when they arrive in Canada will be considered first.

**Immediate Needs of Newcomers**

Before immigrants enter Canada, they are brought into contact with an important governmental institution: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. On the basis of their experience, they form an opinion about the country to which they have migrated. Many of them have been exposed to reports about Canada through friends, the media and often a visit to a Canadian consulate abroad. These reports and personal experiences with Canadians and representatives of Canada establish a threshold of expectations which, after their arrival in Canada, are compared with the reality encountered here. Consider the following excerpts, which illustrate what different newcomers think about their early experiences in Canada:

---

Work / University of Toronto). My responsibility was the preparation and chairing of two francophone focus groups. The principal investigators of the project were Usha George and M.S. Mwarigha.
Moi je vais parler seulement de mon expérience bien. Moi je suis ici comme résident permanent. Ma grande surprise bien entendu, c'était d'arriver dans un pays qui organise de façon solennelle l'appel de personnes étrangères pour pouvoir s'établir ici et de constater à l'aéroport qu'il n'y a aucun accueil de ces gens là. Aux ambassades du Canada dans les pays d'origine, ça appartient au Canada d'organiser de telle sorte que le démarrage puisse se faire très vite. Parce qu'on perd un certain temps quand il n'y a pas une certaine coordination dès le départ. Alors qu'il y a beaucoup de services je pense qui peuvent répondre à pas mal de demandes de nouveaux arrivants mais seulement ces derniers ne sont pas au courant. Je pense que s'ils étaient au courant dès l'aéroport, vous allez à tel endroit, vous trouverez ceci vous trouverez cela ils perdraient moins de temps et l'intégration pourrait être plus rapide.

Quand je suis arrivé, on m'a dit que l'agent francophone à l'immigration était en congé, il va revenir dans un mois.

Je vais dire quelque chose tout à fait contraire. Je n'ai pas trouvé difficile. J'ai été orienté et bien pris en charge jusqu'à maintenant.

I'll talk only about my experience here. I'm here as a permanent resident. My great surprise was to arrive in a country that organizes in such a ceremonious manner its call for foreigners to come and settle here and to find out at the airport that there are no welcoming services for those people. At the Canadian embassies in the countries where people are from, it really is up to Canada to make certain provisions so that people have a quick start here. Because there is a lot of time wasted when there is no proper coordination from the beginning. I think there is a great number of services that are able to respond to the needs of newcomers but those newcomers don't know about them. I think if they knew about them right from the time they arrive at the airport, are told to go here or there, you can find this or that, they would lose less time and integration would be speeded up.

Upon my arrival, I was told that the francophone immigration officer was on leave, that he'd be back in a month's time.

I'll say something totally different. I had no difficulty. I was given information and have been well taken care of until now.
Pour ma part je pense que quand le Canada demande aux gens de venir s'installer, il regarde son intérêt et l'intérêt de ces gens quand ils arrivent, qu'ils trouvent un strict minimum d'information, ça c'est clair. Mais ces gens ont déjà une expérience professionnelle et un certain niveau de vie. Ils se retrouvent soit chômeurs, soit on leur demande une expérience canadienne. Alors que lorsqu'on les choisit, on les choisit sur des critères comme étant il a dix ans d'expérience dans son domaine. Il arrive ici sans rien et le peu d'argent qu'il ramène, 5 000$ - 10 000$ à peu près cela, au bout de trois mois, quatre mois c'est fini. Tout ça, il y a un mélange au niveau de l'immigrant qui arrive, au niveau de l'information qu'on lui délivre dans son pays qui n'est pas conforme. Arrivé ici, pas d'agence qui vont l'orienter pour trouver un appartement. Il finit à se balader avec le visa d'immigrant reçu sans savoir qu'est-ce qu'il faut après ça.

As for myself, I think that when Canada asks people to come and settle here, it looks after its own interests and the interests of those people when they arrive, that they find a bare minimum of information, that's true. But these people already have professional experience and have achieved a certain level in terms of quality of life. They end up either unemployed or being asked for Canadian experience. But when they are selected [by immigration authorities], they are selected according to criteria like he's got ten years' experience in his profession. He arrives here without anything and however little money he brings with him, about $5000 - $10,000, after three or four months, it's finished. All of this, there's confusion on the part of the immigrant who arrives, in terms of the information he receives in his country, it doesn't correspond. Once they arrive, no agency is there to help them find an apartment. He ends up running around with his immigrant visa not knowing what to do next."

With one exception, all participants voiced disappointment with their initial experiences in Canada. Most notable is the stark contrast between people's expectations and their actual experience. They feel that they have been asked to come to a country to which they are willing to contribute their best professional abilities but which provides no start-up
assistance whatsoever. At the top of the list of complaints is the fact that no agency is there to guide newcomers through their first steps in Canada. Many are disappointed that the much-vaunted bilingualism they had experienced in Canadian consulates abroad is often not even available from federal immigration officials within Canada. An additional hardship experienced by most immigrants, and one which will be discussed in more detail below, is the fact that they were selected as professionals on the basis of experience and training that is subsequently not at all valued on the Canadian job market. But are these discrepancies at all important for the integration of these newcomers and their development into citizens? Or are these only early hardships which are later on easily forgotten? Consider another remark by one of the participants:

_C'est vraiment une situation que je déplore et qui n'est pas bien pour ces gens là. Parce que nous dirons aux gens qui vont arriver que ce n'est pas un pays qui nous accueille vraiment et à la fin qui est perdant? On est perdant et le Canada est perdant._

_I really find this situation deplorable and it's not good for the people concerned. In the end, we'll tell those people who are thinking of coming here that this country doesn't really welcome us and in the end who loses? We lose and Canada loses._

Despite its negative overtones, the concern for upholding Canada’s reputation actually demonstrates a high level of civic responsibility. A triangular relationship is set up between a. the immigrants who are already here, b. potential, successive immigrants and c. Canada. The purpose of immigration is seen as a mutually beneficial process. But, unfortunately, while immigrants keep their side of the bargain by being ready to contribute to Canada, Canada is seen as not doing its part and failing to help newcomers to become productive members of society. Immigrants, it seems, arrive with a high degree of
enthusiasm for Canada, which they quickly lose. Faced with hardship, what do immigrants do? The next section will take a look at what happens beyond the first steps in order to see how immigrants cope with life here.

Meeting the Needs of Newcomers

Given the perceived failure of the state to offer adequate settlement services, francophone immigrants were asked about their proposals for improved service delivery by social organizations. During two meetings held late in 1998 in Toronto, opinions were elicited on whether one single social organization or a multiplicity of social organizations would be better placed to offer settlement assistance. I am using the term "perceived failure of the state" here since it should be added that the state is not entirely absent in providing assistance. Some francophone organizations do receive funding from the federal government to help and guide immigrants in their first steps in Canada. However, the indirect manner in which assistance is provided is in itself an important fact: the government does not appear to be particularly concerned to make known its assistance to immigrants, preferring service delivery through funding a variety of smaller institutions and the services of provincial governments.

A number of participants voiced a strong preference for small organizations bringing together people of the same ethno-linguistic background. It was felt that such organizations should be organized along national-specific groups.
Moi je dirais qu'il faut permettre que les nouveaux soient reçus par des gens qui sont passés par les mêmes problèmes, qui puissent connaître leurs besoins, parce que la personne qui n'a jamais connu ces problèmes ne peut pas t'aider, il ne peut pas voir la réalité des choses.

Il serait préférable d'avoir un organisme parapluie. Ce sera beaucoup plus efficace et plus facile pour ces gens là lorsqu'ils arrivent.

Il faut aller par des petites communautés. Ce serait mieux parce que dans ces communautés les gens auront beaucoup plus du temps à s'occuper des individus.

Dans mon expérience 90% des informations que j'ai reçues venaient des gens de ma communauté. Si tu ne parles pas anglais il y a telle école qui peut t'apprendre, ce sont mes amis, mes compatriotes qui me l'ont dit. Ce sont les gens de ta communauté qui te donnent, qui t'aident, qui te montrent quoi faire. Les grands organismes, je ne comprends pas, parce qu'ils ne font rien.

I think newcomers should be welcomed and helped by people who went through the same problems, who know their needs because someone who's never been through these problems can't really help you, they cannot understand what things are really like.

I think there should be an umbrella organization. It would be a lot more efficient and easier for these people [newcomers] when they arrive.

One should work through the small communities. That would be better because in those communities people will have more time to deal with individuals.

In my own experience, 90% of the information I received came from my community. If you don't speak English, there is a particular school where you can learn. I found this out from my friends and compatriots. It's people in your own community that give you, that help you, that show you what to do. Those big organizations, I don't understand, because they don't do anything.

For reasons of intimacy of service provision, cultural proximity and general efficiency, most participants voiced support for small communities providing settlement services.

Suddenly, though, one discussant took up the issue from a different angle.
Quand il s'agit des immigrants, qui reçoit ces gens là? Ce ne sont pas les communautés qui reçoivent ces gens là. C'est l'État qui fait la publicité, qui a besoin d'avoir de la main d'œuvre, donc c'est le service central d'accueil de l'État qui doit être là, au moment de l'accueil de l'immigrant qui arrive.

As far as immigrants are concerned, who receives these people? It's not the communities who receive these people. It's the state that advertises, that needs a workforce so it's the state's central reception service that should be there when immigrants arrive.

Somewhat unexpectedly, the discussion has turned away from issues of mere efficiency (who is best placed to provide services?) to questions of responsibility (who should provide services?). Regardless of the small inaccuracies in the last contribution (there is no state central reception service), it is clear that this immigrant is concerned not only about help being provided, but actually about where this help is coming from. In the eyes of this immigrant, the government, which encourages immigrants to come to Canada, cannot abdicate its responsibility for newcomers once they start to live here. By simply offloading settlement services to small community-based organizations, it appears to this immigrant that the government is not keeping its part of a bargain it struck with the newcomers when they were allowed to enter Canada.

Soon enough, though, the discussion took yet a different turn. Quite explicitly, the viability of Canadian multiculturalism was challenged and the question raised as to whether immigrants should be served by their own ethnic group or should instead be encouraged to become part of the Canadian mainstream as quickly as possible. It should be noted that this question was raised by an immigrant from Burundi, who had lived in Canada for about six years. This person did not question the fact that people with the
same origin as the immigrant himself or herself are best placed to help with settlement. What he did express was a fear that newcomers who are only helped by their own community might begin to live in ghettos.

Il ne faut pas trop favoriser les communautés, c'est élever aussi des ghettos. Nous sommes venus ici au Canada pour nous intégrer, on doit faire un effort d'intégration. Mais cela ne nie pas que quelqu'un appartient à un groupe. (...) Nous devons être ensemble et refuser toute idée de ghettos parce que là d'où nous sommes venus pourquoi il y a eu des problèmes. C'est d'abord des ghettos et des groupes particuliers, ces groupes là qui vont engendrer des discriminations. Et ces discriminations sont contraires à la loi canadienne. Cette discrimination va engendrer la haine entre des groupes. Ce n'est pas bien. (...) Je voudrais dire un mot sur le danger des petites communautés basées sur les gens qui sont venus d'un même coin. Nous sommes venus ici pour nous intégrer et appartenir à une nouvelle nation. Nous ne sommes pas venus ici pour reconstituer nos ghettos avec nos haines et nos problèmes.

The communities should not be given too much emphasis because that means we are creating ghettos. We have come here, to Canada, in order to integrate and we have to make an effort towards integration. That doesn't mean someone is not part of a group. (...) We should be together and refuse outright any ghettos because where we came from there were those problems. First and foremost, it is ghettos and separate groups, those kinds of groups that lead to discrimination. And such discrimination is against Canadian laws. Such discrimination leads to hate between groups. That's not good. (...) I want to say something about the danger of small communities constituted around people who come from the same region. We have come here in order to be a part of and belong to a new nation. We have not come here to rebuild our ghettos with our hatred and problems.

The above remark possibly exaggerates the threat of communities (ghettos, discrimination), though, given Burundi's recent past, it may be more than understandable
and aggrandizes the reasons for coming to Canada (belonging to a new nation rather than finding a safe country or economic opportunities). But the remark does set up images and symbols that cannot be easily dismissed. Clearly, there is more to being an immigrant than individual economic betterment. The above remark, however, was quickly contested.

\begin{itemize}
\item J’aimerais m’adresser à monsieur K. et peut-être lui rappeler que Toronto marche sur les communautés. Si vous aller à Carleton ou Gerrard, il y a des chinois, à Dundas, Spadina c’est un quartier Chinois. Si vous allez vers l’ouest, il y a des Ukrainiens et partout il n’y a pas forcément des ghettos.
\item I would like to comment on the remark by Mr. K. and possibly remind him that Toronto is based on communities. If you go to Carleton or Gerrard, there are Chinese, at Dundas, Spadina, it’s a Chinese quarter. If you go towards the West, there are the Ukrainians but wherever you are there aren’t necessarily ghettos.
\end{itemize}

What is surprising about the discussion is that it had only been intended as a forum to discuss better ways of providing settlement services but, without any prompting on the part of the organizers of the discussion, it became highly politicized and directly addressed the question of how immigrants fit into Canadian society.

**Overcoming Barriers**

The most outspoken criticism concerning the immigration experience came during the last segment of the discussion, when participants were asked to comment on the barriers they are facing as francophone immigrants in Toronto. Two issues were clearly most pressing: on the one hand, in Toronto finding any kind of skilled work was next to impossible if one only spoke French, and on the other hand, in spite of years of professional training and work experience in their home countries, immigrants are forced to work in jobs below
their qualifications because employers demand so-called Canadian experience, which, by definition, an immigrant does not have. The lack of economic opportunity and the occasional dependency on welfare is clearly a demoralizing experience for many immigrants. However, without economic stability in their lives, they argued, they cannot feel a part of Canada and become Canadian.

My husband and I are biologists. [After we immigrated] my husband went back to school to take computer science courses but until now, and it's been three months, he has not been able to find work. He is always being asked if he has any experience. I think the best way to help immigrants is to set up an organization that will help them find work. That is the biggest problem because as long as you don't have work, you really cannot ever become settled in Canada.

But if we keep on talking about Canadian experience and if it takes another ten years to learn English and then let's add another five to look for work and finally at sixty you've got a job and at sixty-five you have to retire. It makes no sense. So I think they don't really give a damn about immigrants. They are here, let's give them some welfare. They have an apartment and so they should shut up, that's how it works.

Mon mari et moi, nous sommes des biologistes. Mon mari est retourné à l'école pour faire l'informatique et jusqu'à présent, ça fait trois mois qu'il l'a fait, il n'a pas pu trouver du travail, on lui demande toujours de l'expérience, toujours de l'expérience, alors je pense que la meilleure façon d'aider les immigrants c'est de créer un organisme qui pourra leur donner une chance de trouver un travail. C'est le plus grand problème parce que tant qu'on ne trouve pas un travail on ne pourra jamais s'installer au Canada.

Mais si on continue à dire expérience canadienne, si ça vous prend dix ans pour apprendre l'anglais, mettons un autre cinq ans pour chercher un emploi et finalement à soixante ans vous avez un emploi et à soixante cinq ans vous devez vous retirer. ça n'a pas de sens. Donc je pense qu'ils se foutent un peu des immigrants. Ils sont là, mettez les au bien-être social. Ils ont un logement et puis qu'ils ferment la gueule, ça marche un peu comme ça.
Ce que je veux dire, si on a choisi de venir au Canada c'est pour travailler justement, ce n'est pas pour vivre au chevet de l'aide sociale canadienne.

Si on a choisi de venir ici au Canada c'est déjà pour travailler et non d'être sur l'aide sociale et attendre qu'on nous donne de l'argent. On vient avec notre expérience et on veut travailler, qu'on nous donne l'opportunité de trouver ce qu'on sait déjà.

Je trouve qu'il y a une certaine discrimination, un peu dissimulée, c'est ça la "Canadian Experience".

What I want to say is that if we have chosen to come to Canada, it's obviously to work and not to live off government welfare.

If you have chosen to come to Canada, it's to work here and not be on welfare and wait for someone to give you money. We come with our experience and we want to work. We want to be given the opportunity to find what we already know [to find work in an area for which we are already qualified].

I think there is some hidden discrimination here. That's really what Canadian experience is all about.
Et pour l'expérience canadienne, je pense en quelque sorte que c'est un frein, ils n'ont pas vraiment besoin de cette expérience, puisque l'expérience s'acquiert au travail. Les jeunes universitaires n'auront jamais l'expérience si on leur demande à la sortie de l'université. Pour l'expérience Canadienne il faut regarder du côté bénévolat, tu peux tirer deux, trois, quatre expériences par-là. Du côté diplômes étrangers, les diplômes africains, le système africain de diplômes, moi je viens du Congo, il y a quand même une très bonne formation sur place au Congo ; il faut qu'on ait des gens qui puissent évaluer le niveau africain et le niveau canadien.

About Canadian experience, I think that's all stuff to slow people down, they don't really need it, it's the sort of thing you learn on the job. Young university graduates will never have experience if that's what you ask of them when they get out of school. In order to get Canadian experience you have to look at working as a volunteer, then you get two, three or four types of job experience. As far as foreign diplomas are concerned, African diplomas, the African system of diplomas, I come from the Congo, there is, after all, a pretty good system of professional training in the Congo. There should be people who are able to assess an African qualification and its Canadian equivalent.

A great deal of frustration can certainly be heard in these remarks. It stems mostly from what is felt to be a discrepancy between the skills which have allowed people to come to Canada (knowledge of French as an official language and a professional background) and the fact that neither of these appears to be of great value in the job market of Canada's largest city. Built into this frustration, of course, is also the fact that the Canadian government has the power to allow people into the country but once people actually get here, immigrants realize that the government's reach in providing economic opportunities is quite limited. Some immigrants suggest that what the government should do is to disallow the hidden discrimination contained in the requirement for Canadian experience.
and set up a system of equivalencies for diplomas earned abroad\(^35\). Again, though, there is no complete agreement on how immigrants approach the hardships imposed by the English language and \emph{Canadian experience}. Some immigrants take a pragmatic approach. They feel that in order to move ahead in Canada, they must find ways into the system. As far as \emph{Canadian experience} is concerned, for example, they opt for voluntary work, i.e. giving their own labour in exchange for being able to put such work experience on their résumé in the hope that this will eventually allow them to find a paying job.

\textit{L'expérience canadienne il y a possibilité de le faire par le bénévolat. Il y a même un service sur internet qui propose du volontariat au niveau de ta compétence directe. Et je me dis, ça c'est vraiment une bonne occasion de pouvoir trouver une expérience canadienne.}

\textit{As far as Canadian experience is concerned, you can get it through doing voluntary work. On the Internet there is even a service that allows you to work in an area of your professional competence. And I think that's really a good way of getting Canadian experience.}

This approach, however, is immediately contested by those inspired less by pragmatism but by a more principled approach: the notion that, after years of training, a person should have to work for free while depending on government welfare is an act of exploitation.

\(^{35}\text{It is interesting to note that, following a number of consultations with immigrants and agencies serving immigrants in 1997 and 1998, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Human Resources Development Canada and the Federal-Provincial Working Group on Access to Professions and Trades organized a conference in Toronto in October 1999 entitled \textit{Shaping the Future: Qualification Recognition in the 21st Century}. The conference aims to ensure that "all skilled workers, whether educated in Canada or abroad, can contribute fully to the Canadian economy" by developing "more standardized approaches in recognition of qualifications and foreign credentials." While it remains to be seen to what extent this will lead to a decrease in discriminatory practices against immigrants, the fact that this conference is the first of its kind ever to be held in Canada demonstrates that government institutions are, at least, aware of the problem. (Qualification Recognition Conference Secretariat 1999, p. 1)\)
La "Canadian Experience", je suis choqué de la solution point qu'a apporté l'ami ici. Ce point revient de droit à tout immigrant qui vient ici donc. C'est l'État qui devra intervenir dans toutes entreprises en disant écoutez, ces gens là on les a recrutés parce qu'ils présentent un potentiel de travail pour le pays. Il faut abroger le mot canadien et demander une expérience, et cette expérience s'ils ne l'ont pas en venant de l'extérieur, là oui. C'est un point fondamental, et comme je dis je suis choqué parce que notre ami a trouvé dans l'internet des boîtes qui demandent des travaux, ça je pense que c'est illégal, pour avoir de l'expérience je vais pas travailler pour une entreprise sans que je ne touche une certaine somme, sans que je sois assuré, sans que tout ça, c'est vraiment aberrant. (...) Il arrive on lui dit vous ne parlez pas bien anglais, d'accord! Je vais donner trois mois de mon temps, je vais parler l'anglais. Mais aller travailler pour rien pour avoir une expérience, ça je suis pas d'accord. Pourquoi on nous a choisis pour venir?

I am quite shocked by the remark made by my friend here about getting Canadian experience. That really concerns every immigrant who comes here. It's the responsibility of the state to intervene and tell all these companies, look, we have recruited these people [to come to Canada] because they constitute a professional potential for our country. The word Canadian has to be eliminated and replaced with a simple requirement of experience. And if those who come from outside Canada don't have that experience, well then, ok [but no one should be refused because they did not get their professional experience in Canada]. That's a very basic issue and, like I said, I am shocked to hear that our friend has found these company outfits on the Internet which ask for [volunteer] work, I think that's illegal. To get experience I am not going to work without being compensated financially, without being insured, without all these things, it's really outrageous. (...) Someone gets here and is told, you don't speak English, all right. I'll invest three months and learn English. But going to work for nothing just to get experience, I don't agree with that. Why were we chosen to come here?
Beyond the hardships and disappointments expressed in the above remarks, one cannot fail to note a keen sense of both civic belonging and civic alienation. The last sentence "Why were we chosen to come here in the first place?" makes it very clear that the immigrants present in the discussion look upon immigration not merely as a chance to do the best they can in a new life context but also as a chance to contribute to Canada on an equal footing. Otherwise, one would expect them to accept quietly whatever conditions they are faced with.

It is sometimes somewhat naively assumed that the conditions in an immigrant's country of origin are such that anything would be considered better than staying. Typically, such assumptions are not made about immigrants from highly industrialized Western countries but from developing and sometimes war-torn countries, such as the francophone African countries from which the participants in the discussion originated. But clearly, these immigrants (and it needs to be pointed out that those taking part in the discussion were voluntary immigrants for the most part, not refugees) do feel that immigration carries with it a purpose, that there is some kind of understanding that should exist between the host country and the immigrant. And this understanding is not merely one of economic expediency. Those who come to Canada want to belong and they feel that the offer of coming here carries with it the task of making Canada their place. The rejection and frustration that they experience only begins to make sense because there is a feeling that moving to Canada entails a political commitment. This political commitment is the desire and willingness to be a full and contributing citizen. The next section will examine the shape, location and designation that this political commitment on the part of francophone newcomers may take.
Marginalized vs. Mainstream Francophonie

In order to better understand the francophone landscape of Ontario at this point in time, it is useful to take the perspective of a francophone group in Ontario that has traditionally tended to be marginalized: francophone feminists. By taking a step back and looking at their experience, the issues for francophone newcomers will be easier to understand.

A series of events which started in 1994 has led both feminists and ethnocultural francophones to develop their own profiles vis-à-vis the provincial organization that has been seen as primarily representing the interests of traditional male French-Canadians in Ontario. In 1994, Canadian Heritage, the federal Canadian ministry responsible for the funding of official language minority groups, organized a meeting to discuss new ways of distributing funding to Ontario francophone groups. The francophone groups invited to this meeting felt they were being presented with a fait accompli and decided in 1995 to set up a structure to counteract what was seen as the government's bias towards traditional French-Canadian francophones. What is most interesting in this undertaking is what name was given to this new structure. It was called the Coalition for the development and expansion of the Franco-Ontarian Community and the Ethnic Francophone Groups of Ontario. This is the clearest example of a distinction drawn, very publicly, between the Franco-Ontarian community, on the one hand, and francophones from other places, on the other. Consider how a leading member of a feminist organization, who was present at the 1995 Community Forum, recounts how the new name was adopted:
At this meeting, we had to choose a name that would refer to the Coalition. Certain associations representing visible minorities asked that the name contain an explicit reference to the "Ethnic Francophone Groups". While this expression can be perceived as constraining, the Association féministe decided, under the circumstances, to support the term "Coalition for the development and expansion of the Franco-Ontarian Community and the Ethnic Francophone Groups of Ontario". This was done with a view to symbolically including and promoting this reality in francophone Ontario.

This passage raises numerous issues. One of the most striking contradictions in it is the idea that, in order to symbolically include a particular group (e.g. an association of francophones ethnoculturels), one needs to explicitly exclude them from the group they are meant to be included in (les Franco-Ontariens). Ultimately, the objective of the Coalition was to provide a common platform for all francophone groups in Ontario. The
term which was chosen, however, makes a very explicit distinction between *la communauté franco-ontarienne* and *les Groupes ethniques*. In pursuing this course of action, the representatives of the francophone racial minorities may have been motivated by a desire for a very visible separation but from personal conversations with these representatives, it appears that they were mostly keen to have the diverse composition of Ontario's francophones recognized and acknowledged. Thus, they were hoping that, in the future, they would be accorded a more prominent place in the Franco-Ontarian community, which had, up until very recently, seen itself as a rather homogeneous group.

But is the very visible place accorded to the *minorités visibles* actually beneficial to a more diverse projection of Ontario francophones? The above-mentioned feminist leader voiced her doubts in the above-cited footnote when she asks whether the new name for the *Coalition* does not lead to the exclusion of francophone groups other than those organized around race. Where, for example, are homosexual francophones supposed to fit, or francophone feminists? In a later comment, the same feminist leader, stated:

*Au départ, il faut dire que les femmes penchaient davantage pour l'expression "communautés francophones de l'Ontario" pour exprimer la diversité des groupes en présence. Or, à notre grande surprise, cette appellation n'a pas fait l'unanimité. (Bouchard 1997:197)*

*It has to be said that, at the beginning, the women were more in favour of the term «Francophone Communities of Ontario» in order to express the diversity of groups which exist. Then, to our great surprise, this term did not get unanimous approval.*

Which names are to be used to refer to francophones, is, at this particular juncture in the history of French speakers in Ontario, not only an issue for academics but is also a hotly debated and crucial question for the community itself. Many French-speaking groups and
individuals in Ontario currently do not feel that terms such as *la communauté franco-ontarienne* or long-standing French-Canadian institutions project an accurate picture of the diversity of francophones living in the province today. At the same time, government support for francophones in the province and any kind of potentially successful collective action depends on a certain degree of perceived homogeneity and common action. Just how a balance can be struck between the two competing demands of respecting diversity internally while at the same time agreeing on a common front for external representation is unclear. Opinions range from those new francophones who openly profess themselves as Franco-Ontarian and hope to transform the Franco-Ontarian movement from within (see Universalist Discourse, p. 129) to those who wish to set up black francophone institutions that explicitly exclude white people.

One of the most strident calls for a separation between black and white francophones in the interest of black francophones, for example, is made in the recommendations of a study undertaken in 1998. With the financial support of the Trillium Foundation, the Centre Pan-Afrika undertook a social-psychological study on the community needs of black francophone children in Ontario. The study begins by defining the meaning of community at the end of 20th century and argues that, even though communities may no longer display traditional characteristics such as spatial concentration, the importance of communities as social spaces that allow the pursuit of common interests remains very high.
Autrefois, en l'absence des moyens de communication et de transport, le territoire était la principale caractéristique d'une communauté. La communauté était toujours localisée dans une région géographique. Désormais, les caractéristiques territoriales et régionales se sont élargies avec la globalisation et les découvertes technologiques. L'on peut ainsi retrouver de nos jours une communauté virtuelle qui n'a aucune appartenance géographique spécifique mais qui a toutefois des intérêts spécifiques. À Toronto la notion de communauté est souvent très complexe à définir à cause de la diversité de la population d'une part, et les enjeux sociaux, économique et politiques qui influencent l'identification des communautés. (Centre Pan-Afrika 1998:7)

Without explicitly mentioning the Franco-Ontariens de souche, the study develops the idea that communities today should no longer justify their existence through their link to a particular place. The study goes on to suggest that, especially in a place like Toronto, among the variety of cultures, no privilege ought to be accorded to French-Canadian francophones over those from elsewhere. Communities arise out of social, economic and political conditions. Among the social conditions that can lead to community formation, it argues, can be racism and discrimination. Therefore, there exist in Ontario communities of African francophones which are as much the result of origin as of commonly experienced prejudice. They are, as the study puts it, une minorité dans la minorité franco-ontarienne
(Centre Pan-Afrika 1998:5). Being a minority within a minority, these new francophones need to claim their rightful place within Ontario’s francophonie, especially since, as the study argues, the arrival of large numbers of African-francophone children has made possible the continued existence of Franco-Ontarian schools. Such schools would otherwise have suffered from a lack of students due to assimilation to the anglophone majority.


Schools in Ontario have particularly benefited from immigration because the economic boom in Ontario has drawn immigrants to this province. The young people among the ethnic francophone groups who are attending school in Ontario have come, since the 1980s, from francophone Africa (...). Due to the phenomenon of assimilation, the school population has been in constant decline. The sharp increase in immigration has not only meant an increase in the number of students in some schools but also ensured the survival of schools in Southern Ontario because the financing of some schools is directly dependent on the number of students in these schools.

Whether this characterization is accurate or not (some would take issue with the terms assimilation and constante diminution), what is important is the image that is being generated here: black francophones, though a minority within the francophones of
Ontario, are actually contributing more to the survival of the French fact in Ontario than the traditional francophones, since the traditional francophones tend to assimilate into the anglophone majority. The basis for demanding a distinct representation of racial minority francophones is thus not only their specific place of origin or the experience of discrimination but is also their particular contribution to the future of French in Ontario.

In its main empirical section, the study then describes the many challenges faced by black francophone adolescents in Ontario. Citing the results of a questionnaire-based survey conducted among more than one thousand youngsters, the argument is made that there are serious difficulties faced by black francophones in areas such as personal self-confidence and cultural identity (66% of black francophone youth are reported to have responded that they would like to be someone else) but also substance abuse, communication with one’s family, lack of financial resources that would enable these youngsters to participate in traditional Canadian leisure activities such as skiing, hockey or ice-skating and racial prejudice.

The study thus very much focuses on the distinctiveness of the problems faced by new francophones. Its most striking statement, though, is contained in its recommendations. Based on the results of the study, the authors recommend that a youth centre be created which would only be open to black francophone youth:
Un centre homogène pour toutes les races ne s’avère pas encore être une solution. Toutefois, une éducation raciale permettrait peut-être la réalisation d’un tel service. Pour assurer le succès d’un tel centre il faudra ainsi éviter de mélanger les races. (Centre Pan-Afrika 1998:50)

A homogeneous centre for all races does not yet seem like a solution. A racial education, though, might allow such a service to come into existence. In order to ensure the success of such a centre a mixing of the races will have to be avoided.

Now consider how the traditional francophone lobby group deals with the issue of unity and diversity. In a recent working document outlining a new structure for la francophonie torontoise (for more on the process of revamping the organizational structure of francophone groups in Toronto, see “Forum: nouveau départ, p. 129), the diversity of francophones in Toronto is explicitly acknowledged in the following passage:

La communauté francophone est pluri-ethnique et multiraciale et provient de tous les coins du monde.

The francophone community is multi-ethnic and multi-racial and comes from all corners of the world.

While this characterization appears to grant wide recognition to all elements composing la communauté francophone, the speech given by the president of the traditional francophone lobby group at their 1999 annual meeting (where this new working document was presented) paints a very different picture of how the various elements of Toronto’s francophonie should be imagined. He leaves no doubt as to the primacy of French-Canadian francophones over the newcomers, who are cordially welcomed but should, nonetheless, not expect to be able to change the historically evolved conditions. He states
that the Toronto chapter of the traditional francophone lobby group believes in \textit{notre vision de deux peuples fondateurs accueillant la diversité mondiale}.

Thus, it seems, in spite of some efforts to acknowledge the diversity of Toronto's francophone groups, the traditional francophone lobby group is very much tied to the notion of the founding peoples. They may be willing to accept newcomers but believe it is ultimately the francophone immigrants who must conform to the local Franco-Ontarian standard and not the other way around.

But neither the traditional francophone lobby group's local chapters nor the province-wide organization can claim any longer to speak on behalf of \textit{les Franco-Ontariens} (if, indeed, they ever could). What we can observe with the diversification among Ontario francophones, is also a diversification of leadership, and feminists have been the vanguard for re-inventing what it means to be francophone in Ontario. Instead of being able to offer any answers to the issue of how one should or can refer to Ontario francophones, I will quote from a position paper by Ontario's \textit{Association féministe}. It is an impassioned plea to recognize the diversity of francophone groups because any attempt at a monolithic representation of Ontario's francophones would detract from both the quality and the weight that public demands made on behalf of francophones will carry.
La reconnaissance de l'émergence d'un nouveau leadership en Ontario français:
Cette reconnaissance sous-entend que la communauté accepte que les groupes qui la composent (jeunes, femmes, personnes faisant partie des minorités ethnique et culturelles, personnes vivant avec un handicap, personnes intervenant dans des domaines différents tels la culture, l'enseignement, la santé, l'économie) possèdent une richesse qui leur est propre, que leurs voix sont d'égale valeur et qu'il est important qu'elles se fassent entendre de façon autonome dans le concert des voix de la communauté francophone en Ontario.

Nous croyons que toutes et tous les francophones en Ontario peuvent défendre certaines causes ensemble, chacun et chacune avec sa voix et sa couleur. Nous croyons aussi que les femmes francophones qu'elles soient de Groupes ethniques, culturelles, lesbiennes, ayant des handicaps, sont mieux servies au sein de leurs organismes où elles exercent un plus grand contrôle sur leur destinée. Pour ces raisons, nous croyons également qu'il est inacceptable, comme le veulent nos gouvernements et certains membres de notre élite, de réduire à une seule voix la parole pourtant si diversifiée de la communauté francophone en Ontario.

Recognizing the emergence of a new leadership in French-speaking Ontario:
Such recognition means that the community accepts that the groups which make it up (youth, women, persons belonging to the ethnic and cultural minorities, persons living with a disability, persons active in specific areas such as culture, education, health and the economy) have all their own rich potential, that their voices are of equal value and that it is important that they be heard, each with their own voice within the concert of voices of the francophone community in Ontario. We believe that all francophones in Ontario can defend certain causes together, each with their own voice and colour. We also believe, however, that francophone women whether they belong to ethnic, cultural, lesbian or disability groups are better served within their own organizations where they dispose of greater control over their own development. For these reasons, we believe that it is unacceptable, as is the goal of our governments and some of our leaders, to reduce to one single voice what the highly diverse francophone community in Ontario has to say.
Une telle attitude nous place dans un carcan, limite le nombre et la qualité de nos interventions de même que leur portée. (Association féministe francophone de concertation provinciale de l'Ontario 1997:5)

Such a stand leaves us no room to breathe, limits the number and quality of our contributions as well as their impact.

This feminist francophone position paper, in a way, returns us to the beginning of this section. After focusing on the diversity of Ontario’s francophonie, their position paper in the end very strongly maintains the idea of *la communauté francophone en Ontario*. Is that surprising? To some extent it is motivated by a sense of political realism: a completely atomized francophone community simply cannot act effectively on the political level. But, at another level, it is an endorsement of the concept of community, though radically redefined. No longer should community be understood as a group of people led by a self-installed and self-perpetuating elite. In their view, a new and democratic leadership is called for that leads and respects the various components of *la francophonie ontarienne*.

"*Forum: nouveau départ*"

Given the above-mentioned differences within the francophone community, efforts had been under way in Toronto’s francophone community since the spring of 1997 to devise new ways of co-operation between the geographically and socially dispersed francophone organizations. The main reason for attempting to set up a new francophone structure was that many francophone newcomers felt that the traditional francophone lobby group only represented the *old guard*, i.e. Canadian francophones with historical roots in Canada. A
growing number of francophone groups had appeared since the 1980s, many of which did not see any reason to look to the traditional francophone lobby group as an umbrella organization. The resulting disparate patchwork of francophone organizations across the city was, however, not only felt by the traditional francophone lobby group to be unfortunate but by many other groups, as well. Most agreed that everyone stood to gain from better co-ordination among Toronto’s francophone activities. Thus, a series of forums was launched that would enable francophone groups to come together and find out more about one another and would hopefully lead to closer co-operation between all francophone groupings in the city. In this community effort, the traditional francophone lobby group presented its role as one of facilitator rather than responsible organizer. Given its administrative and financial resources, it was clear that the traditional francophone lobby group would be well placed to convene these forums. What was not so clear was the role it would play during the discussions and whether or not any newly established francophone structure for Toronto would supersede the traditional francophone lobby group or whether it would be merely a member of any such new structure. A new francophone structure is beginning to emerge but the traditional francophone lobby group also continues to exist and is a key player in it. The following sections will trace a few steps of this process of restructuring Toronto’s francophone community as it finds itself faced with an unprecedented challenge of diversity.

We shall begin with a comparison of the invitations issued for the 1997 and 1998 gatherings, which differed in small but significant ways. In a working paper attached to the 1997 invitation, the first sentence under the rubric “history” was the following: The presence of francophones in Toronto goes back 300 years (La présence francophone à
Toronto remonte à environ 300 ans.). There then followed a brief history outlining the waves of migration of Quebeckers to Ontario and the establishment of the first francophone parish in Toronto in the 19th century. Under a separate heading entitled Host Community (Communauté d’accueil) the diverse composition of Toronto’s francophones is mentioned.

The community of speakers with French as their mother tongue is not only a community of historical origin but also a host community or a community of integration. (...) The majority of francophone newcomers rely on Toronto’s francophone community infrastructure to ensure their integration.

La communauté de langue française est non seulement une communauté d’origine, elle est aussi une communauté d’accueil, ou d’intégration. (...) Les nouveaux arrivants francophones s’appuient majoritairement sur l’infrastructure communautaire franco-torontoise pour assurer leur intégration.

In late January 1998, a follow-up event for Toronto’s francophone community took place. Under the auspices of the Toronto chapter of the traditional francophone lobby group, about forty people from a wide variety of francophone organizations gathered to discuss new ways of giving life to a community that many felt had been discouraged by government cut-backs and disjointed among its membership. During that meeting, many controversial issues were discussed: Why should the traditional francophone lobby group organize such a meeting? Is there one or are there many francophone communities in Toronto? How important is it that Toronto francophones present a common front? 

Following a somewhat stormy first meeting, which we shall call January Forum here, a series of small-scale preparatory meetings took place that paved the way for another general meeting in April 1998, here referred to as April Forum. These preparatory
meetings were characterized by often controversial but highly involved and committed discussions about what it means to be francophone in Canada’s largest city.

In the face of undeniable changes in the composition of Toronto’s francophonie, and in the space of less than one year, the Toronto chapter of the traditional francophone lobby group had completely changed its official tone with regard to Toronto’s francophone community. In the working paper of January 1998, no longer was any mention made of a unified history of francophones in Toronto. Instead, the emphasis was now squarely on the variety of origins of Toronto’s francophones. Under the heading Identity, the 1998 working paper stated the following:
Voici les composantes essentielles qui contribuent à définir l'identité de la communauté francophone de Toronto:

- communauté d'accueil: la communauté francophone est pluri-ethnique et multiraciale et provient de tous les coins du monde
- dispersion géographique sur le territoire de Toronto
- couples mixtes (p.ex. ayant des langues maternelles différentes)
- ouverture d'esprit très grande
- très grande mobilité des francophones quoiqu'un noyau semble toujours être présent
- communauté en voie de développement et en période de croissance
- dû au sentiment de multiples appartenances de ses membres, il est difficile de rejoindre certains membres de la communauté francophone
- dû au sentiment de multiples appartenances de ses membres, la communauté francophone désire trouver des lieux de rencontres pour rejoindre d'autres francophones et pouvoir y échanger en français. Être francophone ne semble pas représenter l'identité totale.

Here are the essential elements which contribute towards a definition of the identity of the francophone community of Toronto:

- A host community: the francophone community is multi-ethnic and multiracial and comes from all corners of the world
- Geographically dispersed across Toronto
- Mixed couples (i.e. having different mother tongues)
- a very open spirit
- high mobility among francophones while there appears to be a core that remains in the city
- a community that is developing and thriving
- due to the feeling of multiple belonging among its members, it is difficult to reach some members of the francophone community
- due to the feeling of multiple belonging, the francophone community hopes to establish meeting places in order to reach other francophones with whom they may use French. Being francophone does not appear to constitute the totality of identity.

In what follows, we will trace the issues, arguments and positions that preoccupied members of Toronto’s francophonie during the period of 1997 until 1999. Thus, it is
possible to understand the complexities involved in defining a community under conditions of great diversity.

The January 1998 Forum

Under the programmatic slogan *On s'organise avant de se faire organiser* ("We'll get ourselves organized before someone organizes us"), the Toronto chapter of the traditional francophone lobby group invited francophone groups and organizations to come together and discuss better ways of making the Toronto francophone community flourish. Based on a report drawn up by a private consulting agency for the Toronto chapter, the forum was intended to discuss three main points:

- How to enable French-speaking organizations in Toronto to exchange information more effectively and set up better communication structures between them.

- Which models of co-operation would be best suited to achieve greater collaboration between the various groups in a number of areas.

- The steps to be taken in the future to ensure that this concerted community effort meets with success.

The day-long meeting alternated between meetings in a general assembly and meetings of committees, which presented the fruits of their discussion to the entire assembly at the conclusion of the day's event. The topics discussed at the meeting were the following:

- Needs of Toronto francophones

- Shared values of Toronto francophones
• Barriers to better co-operation

• Solutions to enable better co-operation

The discussion during much of the day was dominated by a split between old and new francophones. It was one of the first events during which the discontent among Toronto’s francophones of African and Caribbean origin became very public. The previous year, such criticism had been far more muted. This time, tensions became obvious in the discussion of each one of the four topics listed above.

While there was general agreement that every francophone should feel at home in the francophone community, a number of long-established francophone participants acknowledged that the situation of francophones in Toronto was very different from that of rural francophone communities, principally because the Toronto francophone community had become a host community for immigrants. This acknowledgement came in response to bitter charges of exclusion made by recently-arrived black francophones. They had expressed their frustration with a lack of representation in francophone institutions (such as educational, social and health institutions) which, according to them, had already caused a number of new francophones to turn to the English-speaking majority in their efforts to integrate into Canada.

The novelty of being a host community was thus invoked by long-established francophones as an explanation and, to some extent, excuse for certain inadequacies in the system for integrating newcomers. The charges of the newcomers were, however, more far-reaching. They lamented a general lack of co-operation among francophone groups, who were each more interested in the survival of their own organization than in helping all
Francophones of all origins through the sharing of resources. They decried a monopoly of decision-making power among old francophones and a lack of cohesion between organizations offering help to newcomers. In the end, it was agreed that better communication and collaboration between organizations had to be achieved.

Subsequently, a discussion took place that focused on the values shared by all Toronto francophones. It is interesting to note which values emerged, given that formulating these values was seen as an attempt at easing the tensions that had previously become apparent. The participants declared that:

- they value the diversity of the francophone community of Toronto,
- greater transparency ought to be achieved,
- equitable representation as regards age, sex and ethnic origin of the members of Toronto’s francophone community ought to be achieved in francophone institutions,
- Toronto’s francophone ethnocultural groups must take part in all decisions that directly affect them.

When participants were asked to discuss the barriers to greater co-operation, one of the main issues that emerged was the power differential between long-established organizations and those which had been recently founded. Representatives of ethnocultural groups pointed out very clearly that the process envisioned by the meeting’s organizers assumed that all groups concerned were participating with an equal amount of resources. Given that this was not the case, they felt measures would have to be taken to ensure that the final outcome of the consultation would not reproduce the very differences
in power it was meant to alleviate. This concerned, in particular, the fact that many of the newer and smaller organizations relied heavily on volunteers while the older and more established ones deployed paid staff.

At the end of the January 1998 meeting, it was decided that a planning committee (comité de démarrage) would be set up to co-ordinate the next gathering planned for April 1998. The deliberations of this planning committee therefore took on an important role for the future relationship between old and new francophones. The new francophones had very vocally set out their concerns and it was now up to the planning committee to come up with ideas for a new francophone structure that would address these concerns and prepare the next meeting in such a way that no one would feel excluded.

Setting the Task - the First Planning Committee Meeting

A few days before the first meeting of the Planning Committee, an important francophone event took place, the repercussions of which were felt in francophone groups across the province: an Ontario-wide gathering of francophone organizations, whose main task had been to decide on the manner in which the federal government would fund official language minority groups in the future (that meeting is discussed in great detail in The Rencontre provinciale, p. 129). Even though the Rencontre provinciale is discussed in a separate section, it is important to mention it here since it had produced what most regarded as an éclat between established francophones and francophone newcomers. The events were widely discussed in the francophone media. Their impact can be measured by the fact that, as the first meeting of the Planning Committee was about to get under way, small groups of people were standing around, discussing what had happened. Thus, the
fallout from the Rencontre provinciale event very much overshadowed the first meeting of the Planning Committee.

Ten people attended the first meeting of the Planning Committee. They represented social, cultural, financial and educational francophone institutions. This meeting, like all of the subsequent events, was moderated by a person from a private consulting firm, which was financed through government funds available to francophone organizations. Such independent moderation enabled the discussion to take place without the chairperson being personally involved as a representative of any particular grouping. In general, turn taking and length of turns in the discussions were handled in a fair and respectful manner.

The objectives of the first meeting were outlined by the moderator as follows:

- To develop a proposal for a new francophone community structure.

- To define the values and the identities of the various components of Toronto’s francophonie in order for the new francophone structure to adequately reflect the diversity among Toronto’s francophones.

In order to facilitate the first of these objectives and based on the discussion of the January 1998 Forum, one of the participants made a proposal to create seven umbrella groups within the new francophone structure. The purpose of these umbrella groups would be to serve as platforms for all associations with similar concerns. Thus, there would be an ethnocultural/racial minority group, separate groups each for the elderly, for women, for cultural events, for health and social services, for education and training and for economic development. She specified that these groups were not mutually exclusive and that, for
example, the existence of an umbrella group for ethnocultural/racial minority concerns would not prevent francophones of ethnocultural or racial minority origin from participating in other umbrella groups, such as health and social services, for example. This, however, led to an immediate challenge by another participant, Catherine Beaumont, a middle-aged woman working for a francophone health service provider. Catherine Beaumont voiced her dissatisfaction with the proposal as she felt that it would give visible minority francophones more votes than anyone else. The remark was rather curious given that nothing had been discussed in the way of voting shares. In fact, the exact nature of the organization with which the umbrella groups would be affiliated had not even been discussed.

One of the participants of ethnocultural origin therefore reminded Catherine that the objective of the planning committee was to come up with general proposals to be submitted to the next forum and to leave any decisions regarding which group would be assigned which weight to the decision-making process of the upcoming forums, if indeed it would become necessary to make any such decisions at all.

With that first and somewhat tense exchange of opinions over, the deliberation turned to the issue of how the diverse components of Toronto’s francophone community could be brought together. A number of people expressed their desire to do more to make immigrant francophones feel at home in Toronto’s francophone institutions. Several ideas were circulated. Then, something rather unexpected occurred: while the discussion had focused on the adequacy of services for francophone immigrants and how improvements could be achieved through increased funding, some participants of French Canadian origin
pointed out their unease about increasing funding in one area (francophone immigrants) while many other services (such as health and education) were being scaled back. This opposition was not expressed directly, though. Rather, one participant, who had come to Toronto from Quebec, suddenly remarked "We are all immigrants here. Only about 5% of francophones in Toronto were born here."

While my interpretation is obviously somewhat conjectural, it seemed to me that these participants (francophones originally from Quebec, but having lived in Toronto for extended periods of time) used a tactic of appropriating a term for themselves that in the previous discussion had been clearly reserved for non-white francophones. And by effectively declaring themselves to be immigrants (in their new reading, anyone from outside Toronto ought to be considered an immigrant to the city), the particular issue under discussion (i.e. how to help integrate mostly non-white recently arrived francophones from outside Canada) was refocused to become an issue which concerned 95% of all francophones in Toronto. A year later, in March 1999, this line of argument became officialized in a working document of the traditional francophone lobby group. Under the heading Communauté d'accueil, the term "immigrants" is used for the first time to include francophone Canadians moving to Ontario from another province:

---

Two interpretations are, of course, possible: The integrative interpretation would assume that the francophones from Quebec wished to share the symbolism of immigrant status in order to put everyone on an equal footing. The manipulative one would assume that the francophones from Quebec wished to confer on themselves the status of immigrants in order to effectively invalidate any claim to special help for immigrants from outside Canada. In order to decide which one is the more likely interpretation, one should remember that access to influence and resources were at stake here. In my view, this makes the first interpretation the less likely one.
La communauté franco-torontoise est non seulement une communauté d'origine, elle est aussi une communauté d'accueil ou d'intégration: elle comprend plusieurs milliers d'individus qui ont le français comme principale langue officielle de communication, c'est à dire les nouveaux arrivants, les immigrants interprovinciaux et internationaux.

The Franco-Torontonian community is not only a native-born community but it is also a host community and a community of integration: it contains several thousand individuals who possess French as their main official language of communication, that is to say newcomers as well as international and interprovincial immigrants (…).

Various other participants, though none of the black francophones, expressed their unease with the turn in the discussion by again pointing out that the majority of long-established francophones have an obligation to help newly-arrived francophones. As we will see in verbatim quotes from the subsequent meetings of the planning group, the nature and composition of Toronto's francophone community continued to be a contentious topic.

Imagining Francophone Toronto – the Second Planning Committee Meeting

The main topics of discussion during the Planning Committee's second meeting were the values and identities of Toronto's francophones. The discussion began with a crucial attempt to clarify the differences between francophones and (other) ethnic groups. One participant began the discussion by asking a question he had apparently been asked by many anglophones: Why is it that so many immigrant communities in Toronto can point to a part of town where they are concentrated (like the Chinese in various Chinatowns, the Italians in Little Italy, the Greeks along the Danforth) but that the francophones in Toronto have no similar neighbourhood where they congregate? The answer, offered by the same person, was that francophones are Canadians and therefore do not need the
support of an ethnic neighbourhood to ease their transition into a new country. Such an explanation, however, contradicts what was said during the previous meeting of the Planning Committee, when someone had insisted that nearly all Toronto francophones were immigrants, whether they were from Africa or from Quebec. These contradictions show how much is at stake when members of the francophone community position themselves, which makes it extremely worthwhile to consider in detail how the debate progressed.

The debate around issues of identity started when the moderator of the meeting asked for suggestions on how the values and identity of the Toronto francophone community ought to be characterized for the purpose of a working paper to be submitted to the next forum. One of the participants responded as follows:
Claude Maurais: Il y a un élément, que, euh, quand j'ai, j'ai eu euh des discussions avec des gens qui euh des gens demandent souvent, ou des anglophones, des gens qui connaissent pas des francophones, demandent souvent pourquoi vous avez pas un quartier francophone? Puis eh en tous cas, je vais lancer ça, vous me direz si ça correspond à votre expérience et est-ce que vous avez vécu. Ce que j'ai, est-ce que j'ai réalisé au cours des années ici, c'est que les francophones quand ils arrivent à Toronto, euh, ne sont pas comme un groupe ethnique comme tel, mais parce qu'ils sont Canadiens d'origine. Ils, ils, et souvent ils viennent ici pour trouver un travail, euh, leur premier, la première, je dirais, j'sais pas comment dire ça là, mais leur réflexe premier c'est pas nécessairement de se rapprocher de leur communauté, de, où ils se sentent le plus attachés, mais, mais ils se sentent bien. Ils se sentent chez eux, oui, ils se sentent chez eux dans le sens que euh juste pour prendre un exemple euh, il y a un quartier grec et euh les gens s'ils veulent aller dans leurs pays, c'est un peu loin, je dis, il y a un sens plus euh plus profond, plus avancé dans leur, dans leur être pour se rapprocher de leurs semblables dans cette partie là, là. Alors, que la majorité des francophones, étant qui sont Canadiens d'origine, alors qu'ils viennent d'autres provinces ou du Nord de l'Ontario, tout ça, alors ils sentent pas ce besoin là, parce qu'ils sont euh ils sont chez eux d'une certaine façon.

Claude Maurais: There is something where, um, when I, when I um am talking with people who um people often ask, or anglophones, people who don't know the francophones, often ask, why don't you have a French neighbourhood? So uh in any event, I'll just present this, you can tell me if it reflects your own experience and what you have encountered. What, what I have come to understand over the course of many years here is that the francophones when they arrive in Toronto, um, they are not really like an ethnic group but because they are Canadian to begin with, they, they, and often they come here to find work, um, their, their, I am not sure how to say this, but their first reflex is not necessarily to get close to their community where they feel most attached but, but they feel comfortable anyway. They feel they are at home, yes, they feel right at home in the sense that um just to take an example um, there is a Greek neighbourhood and um people if these people want to go to their own country, that's a bit far, I'd say, there is a deeper um a deeper meaning, more elaborate in their being which makes them approach their compatriots in that area. But the majority of francophones, since they are born Canadian when they come from other provinces or from Northern Ontario and all that, they don't feel that need because they are um they are already at home in a way.
There are a number of contradictions in Claude Maurais's remarks, some of which can be more easily understood with reference to the way in which francophones in Canada have wanted to be seen. Faced with large numbers of immigrants who often outnumber francophones (according to the 1996 census, there are in Toronto about 50,000 francophones but five times as many Chinese, for example), minority francophones have attempted to secure and justify a privileged role for themselves by drawing a sharp distinction between so-called ethnic groups and official language minorities. Although less mentioned these days, one can still feel the ideology that French-Canadians are one of the two founding peoples of Canada, while ethnic groups are post-Confederation immigrants who do not have the right to demand the privileges of a founding people. In his remarks, Claude Maurais is certainly conscious of the need not to have francophones be seen as an ethnic group. But what are they then? According to him, they are native-born Canadians who move within the country, often to find better employment. But, he points out, they feel at home. There is, however, a small contradiction: on the one hand, they are supposedly Canadians living comfortably in Canada, i.e. they ought to be just like everyone else, but, on the other hand, there exists something which Claude Maurais refers to as their community where they feel most connected, which would point to their being separate from everyone else. It is this contradiction which lies beneath the following remark: "leur réflexe premier c'est pas nécessairement de se rapprocher de leur communauté, de, où ils se sentent le plus attachés". In an effort to diminish the contradiction, he sets up varying degrees of community attachment. The Greeks, he argues, are more strongly attached to their community as an expression of a quasi-essentialist type of identity: "il y a un quartier grec et euh les gens s'ils veulent aller dans
leurs pays, c’est un peu loin, je dis, il y a un sens plus euh plus profond, plus avancé dans leur, dans leur être pour se rapprocher de leurs semblables”.

Claude Maurais’s distinction between the francophone and ethnic groups was immediately echoed by another participant, Pauline Foch, an activist in the field of francophone education. Again, however, her remark was revealing through its inherent contradictions.

Pauline Foch: pourquoi il faut qu’il, il faudrait qu’il y ait un quartier francophone, nous sommes Canadiens. Pourquoi on doit faire la même chose que, les Italiens, puis que les Espagnols, puis que les Portugais, puis que. Alors, c’était très intéressant parce qu’on voyait quand même deux, on voyait deux fronts, voyait ce de côté canadien-français qu’ils eux n’ont pas besoin de s’identifier, ils sont Canadiens. Et puis les autres, euh les immigrants qui eux ont besoin de se, de sentir qu’il y a un quartier.

Pauline Foch: Why should there, why should there be a French neighbourhood, we are Canadians. Why should we do the same thing as the Italians or the Spanish or the Portuguese? So, that was very interesting because you could obviously see two, you could see this from two sides, you could see it from the French-Canadian side where there is no need to identify, they are Canadian. And then from the other side, um the immigrants where they have a need to feel that there is a neighbourhood.

Factually, there are certain inconsistencies in Pauline Foch’s remarks. There are official language minority groups, i.e. Canadians living in Canada but speaking a language not shared by those around them. They live in clearly defined geographic spaces. Consider, for example, the English-Canadians who live in the Montreal district of Westmount or other anglophone pockets in Quebec. Pauline Foch’s account deserves a closer look: there are relatively few Spaniards (or even Hispanics) in Toronto and there is no easily identifiable part of town where they concentrate. Therefore, her remarks are more important in terms of how she imagines communities through them than in any objective
sense. The essence of her argument appears to be that francophones do not need an ethnic
neighbourhood because they are not an ethnic group, with the exception of the new
francophone immigrants who do constitute an ethnic group and therefore would like to
have a francophone neighbourhood, as Claude Maurais makes clear in his immediate
feedback to Pauline Foch’s remarks. Lines are being drawn by Pauline Foch and Claude
Maurais between the French-Canadian francophones and immigrant francophones. The
most interesting element of Pauline Foch’s comments is her contention that French-
Canadians have no need for any separate identification as they are Canadians (“de côté
canadien-français qu’ils eux n’ont pas besoin de s’identifier, ils sont Canadiens”). At the
very heart of the Planning Committee’s meetings and the forums of January and April lay
the issue of how francophone organizations in Toronto might come together to strengthen
Toronto’s francophone community. It is therefore somewhat incongruous for one of the
participants in the community effort to flatly deny that French-Canadians have any need
for any distinct identification (although a weak challenge of that position did arise later in
the meeting). The only possible explanation is the clear desire among native-born
francophones not to be considered as an ethnic group and to focus squarely on their
Canadianness (which begs the further question: At which stage can immigrants be
considered Canadian?).

37 There is a certain irony that Pauline Foch is herself an immigrant, albeit from France. I can only
speculate why she aligns herself so much with the French-Canadian discourse. French people have
reported to me that they often find it difficult to penetrate the close-knit networks of Ontario
francophones of French-Canadian descent. Since Pauline Foch has lived in Canada for more than
twenty years and worked with francophones professionally but not lost her original European French
accent, she may feel compelled to adopt the French-Canadian discourse in order not to emphasize her
own separateness.
At a later stage in the discussion, Pauline Foch asked that the working document, which the consultant was to draw up on the basis of the discussion, reflect the distinction between francophones who have lived in Canada and do not need an ethnic neighbourhood and the newly arriving francophones, who would prefer to have such a neighbourhood in order to be close to people of similar background. This had essentially been a position also supported by Catherine Beaumont, a woman working for a francophone health service provider (see Setting the Task - the First Planning Committee Meeting, p. 129). Suddenly, though, and in contrast to a position Catherine Beaumont had supported in the first meeting, she appeared to dislike the idea that only francophone immigrants should have a *French Neighbourhood*. Her position flip-flops as she tries to reconcile her desire to portray French-Canadians as simply Canadian (i.e. not an ethnic group) and her desire to have a francophone neighbourhood (like other ethnic groups), which would respond to her need for social activities in French. Consider her remarks as she points out that she had never felt at home in Toronto but that, at the same time, she would still like to have a geographical space where francophones come together.
Catherine Beaumont: Moi, je veux ajouter, j'ai l'impression qu'il y a plus que ça. Parce que moi je me suis, c'est vrai je suis l'étranger en quelque sorte, je suis pas Canadienne, je me suis absolument pas sentie perdue à Toronto, ni rien, je me suis sentie comme chez moi. Sauf que j'aurais aimé qu'il y ait un endroit où aller pour pouvoir rencontrer quand même d'autres francophones. Savoir où m'adresser. Savoir si j'ai envie de danser en français, où est-ce que je vais? Si j'ai envie d'étudier en français, où est-ce que je vais? Je vais aimer avoir une espèce que retrouver un endroit, effectivement, où je pouvais rencontrer la communauté francophone. Alors, malgré tout, ça me semble intéressant, d'avoir, d'avoir un lieu.

Catherine Beaumont: I would like to add, I think there is more to all this. That's because I did, it's true I am a foreigner in some ways, I am not Canadian, I did not feel lost in Toronto, at all or anything like that, I felt like I was at home. Except that I still would have liked to have a place where I could have gone to meet other francophones. You know, where to look. Know where to go if I feel like going dancing in French. If I feel like studying in French, where can I go? I would like to have some kind of place where I can meet the francophone community. So, in spite of everything, it still looks to me as if it would be nice to have a place.

Catherine Beaumont needs to reconcile two opposing concepts: on the one hand, she follows the line of argument that had previously been established and argues that francophones are not in need of an ethnic neighbourhood as they are (supposedly) at home anywhere in Canada. She emphasizes that she is not a Canadian but that she immediately felt at home when she came to Toronto. Having thus satisfied the previously established and important criterion of demarcation between "ethnics" and "francophones", she is free to launch into a description of the kind of francophone community she would like to see in Toronto. Upon close inspection, however, the very community that she desires fulfills exactly the same kind of functions that immigrant neighbourhoods have traditionally performed:
• meeting others of the same background,

• obtaining help and referral services,

• pursuing educational objectives or social activities, such as dancing,

• being able to move in a geographic space where the community is concentrated.

What all of this points to is the fact that the distinction between francophones and ethnic groups is upheld by some francophones mainly for political and ideological reasons. There are, however, other francophones for whom the dispersed and disjointed character of Toronto’s francophones is a veritable asset and who resist any attempts to build a close-knit francophone community. Monique Bédard is one of these people. She had not previously participated in the discussion but is moved to counter Catherine Beaumont’s desire for a cosy, almost parochial type of community.
Monique Bédard: Je pense qu'il y a aussi un désir de se mêler et de disparaître dans plusieurs cas pour celles et ceux d'entre nous qui arrivons de petits patelins où tout le monde se connaît et cetera. Une des choses qui nous plaît de Toronto, justement, c'est la possibilité de disparaître dans Claude Maurais: dans la masse

Monique Bédard: dans la masse et donc à ce niveau là, ce qui devient important, ce sont des lieux de rencontre à différents endroits mais pas nécessairement Claude Maurais: à un quartier

Monique Bédard: mais que nous puissions aller retrouver la communauté plutôt que de se sentir enfermés dans la communauté.

Claude Maurais: Pour sentir la communauté?

Monique Bédard: certainement

Claude Maurais: Je pense, je pense que

Monique Bédard: Moi, je viens d'une communauté qui est extrêmement claustrophobe, pour plusieurs d'entre nous. Et euh, et il y a une autre question d'identités multiples. Alors, certains d'entre nous, certains par exemple, moi si j'arrivais ici comme personne noire, je serais portée à m'en aller dans un quartier anglophone mais où je puis trouver de la nourriture qui me convient et où je ne suis pas évidemment marginale, où il y a d'autres personnes qui me ressemblent. Si j'arrive ici comme jeune homme gay du fond du Québec, je voudrais me ranger de ce coin là, Church et Wellesley. Euh parce qu'être francophone n'est pas l'identité totale de quelqu'un.

Monique Bédard: I think there is also an urge to mingle and disappear in many cases for those among us who come here from tiny hamlets where everyone knows everyone else. One of the things we like about Toronto is just that, the possibility to disappear in Claude Maurais: in the crowd

Monique Bédard: in the crowd and then what becomes important are those meeting places in different locations but not necessarily

Claude Maurais: in a neighbourhood

Monique Bédard: but that we can go and find the community rather than feeling hemmed in by the community.

Claude Maurais: To feel the community?

Monique Bédard: Yes.

Claude Maurais: I think, I think that

Monique Bédard: I come come from a community that is extremely claustrophobic, for some of us. And, uh, there is another issue, that of multiple identities. So, some of us, some, for example, myself, if I came here as a black person, I would go to an anglophone area but one where I could find the foods I like and where I am not obviously marginalized, where there are others who are like myself. If I come here as a young gay man from the heartland of Quebec, I would want to go to that area there, Church and Wellesley. Because being francophone is not the totality of someone's identity.
Monique Bédard brought to the discussion an entirely new concept, that of multiple identities. Her remarks came as something of a shock to the others. In trying to come to terms with Monique Bédard’s remarks, the participants, and particularly those who had participated most vigorously up until the time she made her remarks, were moved to answer a question that she had implicitly raised: *If being francophone is but a part of one’s identity, then how do we know who to count as our own? If one and the same person feels a variety of allegiances, where does that leave any attempt at establishing cohesion among francophones?* Monique Bédard’s remarks certainly puzzled the other members of the Planning Committee since they appeared to question the very legitimacy of the exercise being undertaken. *If black francophones or gay francophones indeed felt a primary allegiance to their origins or sexual orientation, how much involvement could be expected of them as francophones?* Monique Bédard’s answer is fairly straightforward: not desiring a geographically located, close-knit community and having ties with more than one group does not mean that *francophoneness* is not important. She uses the example of children from mixed marriages to illustrate the type of community ties she favours: such children, she argues, refuse exclusive identification with any one community but are at ease navigating across and between a number of different communities.
Monique Bédard: S'il y avait un quartier francophone, pour un bon nombre d'entre nous, ça ne réglerait quand même pas la question. (...) Il y a aussi, je pense, le développement d'une, d'une communauté qui s'identifie presque comme biculturelle et qui donc, et encore c'est le cas pour plusieurs personnes qui grandissaient en milieu francophone minoritaire, ils trouveraient ça suffocant de vivre dans un milieu uniquement en français, et donc en fait préfèrent pouvoir naviguer entre les deux mondes et c'est en partie pour ça qu'ils arrivent dans des endroits comme Toronto plutôt que d'aller au Québec entre autres. Euhm, et donc, et c'est de plus en plus le cas lorsque euh, je trouve des enfants de, de ces mariages mixtes, finalement, euh ils s'identifient de plus en plus comme ayant une culture canadienne.

Claude Maurais: une culture canadienne

Monique Bédard: une identité mixte et donc euh ne fonctionneraient pas particulièrement confortablement dans un milieu uniquement francophone.

Monique Bédard: Even if there were a French neighbourhood, that would not solve the issue for a good many of us. (...) There is also, I think, the development of a, of a community which identifies itself almost as bicultural and which therefore, and again this is the case for several among us who have grown up in a francophone environment, they would find it suffocating to live in a uniquely francophone environment and therefore they do, in fact, prefer to navigate between two worlds and it's partly because of that that they come to places like Toronto rather than going to Quebec, for example. Um, so, that's more and more the case when, um, I see children of such mixed marriages, in the end, they identify more and more as having a Canadian culture

Monique Bédard: a mixed identity and so um they wouldn't feel particularly comfortable in a uniquely francophone environment.

At this point, the discussion was broken off as the moderator moved on to another topic. The segments discussed here do, however, tell us a great deal about the tensions and the general state of mind within Toronto's francophonie. Claude Maurais's unsuccessful attempt, at the very end, to finish one of Monique Bédard's sentences ("Monique Bédard: ils s'identifient de plus en plus comme ayant... Claude Maurais: une culture canadienne...
Monique Bédard: une identité mixte”) reflects his position of consensus and underscores his acceptance of any conception of community (whether one of clearly delineated communities or one of multiple identities) as long as it can be turned into an affirmation of French-speaking Canadianness. What Monique Bédard did not know at the time she made her argument in favour of multiple francophone identities before a mostly white, Canadian-born francophone audience, was that a few weeks later she would be challenged on her notion of multiple identity by an immigrant francophone from Africa. How that challenge arose will be discussed in the next section.

The April Forum

The main objective of the April Forum was to submit to the francophone community the results of the Planning Committee’s work. A wide variety of francophone organizations was present and the members of the Planning Committee anticipated a lively discussion of their proposals. In an introductory presentation by the private consultant who had also led the Planning Committee meetings, everyone was reminded of the mandate the Planning Committee had been given:

_de suggérer une structure de concertation basée sur les valeurs et l'identité de la communauté francophone de Toronto en vue de mettre sur pied la Coalition des organismes francophones de Toronto._

to propose a structure for community dialogue based upon the values and the identity of the francophone community of Toronto with a view to creating a Coalition of Francophone Organizations in Toronto.

In practical terms, the gathering was asked to deliberate on the creation of a number of umbrella groups. As already mentioned, such umbrella groups were meant to provide an
opportunity for organizations with similar interests to meet on a regular basis and coordinate their activities. Someone within each umbrella group would then communicate the activities and ideas of that umbrella group's member organizations to a central office which would, in turn, distribute any pertinent information as widely as possible within the community. The types of umbrella groups envisioned were: health and social services, cultural and leisure activities, education, business, women's issues, ethnocultural groups, adolescent groups, senior citizens' groups, racial minorities and long-established groups and initiatives.

To anyone unfamiliar with the particular history and inner workings of Toronto's French community, this may appear to be a rather convoluted approach towards achieving some coherent community action. As has already been pointed out, though, one organization had very much tended to dominate (or had been perceived to dominate) francophone activities in the past, and this not only in Toronto but in the entire province of Ontario. Women's groups and ethnic francophone organizations, in particular, had felt an increasing unease with a centralized francophone organization. As a consequence, they had distanced themselves from the traditional francophone lobby group and conducted their activities with their own clientele in mind. Quite inevitably, this had led to a situation where activities were rather dispersed and it had become increasingly difficult for anyone to keep tabs on all the francophone events taking place in the city. Thus, the idea of a structure for community dialogue was born. In working towards such a structure, however, extreme care had to be taken in order not to reproduce the same centrally dominated structure of the traditional francophone lobby group. Even though it would still be a player in the new structure and, given its organizational qualities, an important
one at that, it tried to restrain its influence (for example, an independent consultant was asked to co-ordinate activities) in order not to be seen to play too important a role. The other groups, particularly women’s groups and ethnocultural francophone groups, were generally in favour of better community co-ordination but accompanied the process with some reticence. To them, it was very important that the new structure would not diminish their autonomy but would only facilitate communication between independent organizations. This explains why so much time and effort was spent on discussing and devising a structure that would not repeat the mistakes of the past and would leave each participant organization its independence.

At the April Forum, the opening remarks were made by a member of the Planning Committee and set the agenda for the day-long meeting in two important respects, one practical, the other more conceptual. In practical terms, the proposed structure was outlined; in conceptual terms, the Planning Committee’s ideas concerning the values and identity of francophones in Toronto were presented. Among the values which had been added or changed since the January Forum were:

\[
\text{inclusion, representation and participation by ethnocultural groups in any decision-making process; respect for the autonomy of organizations.}
\]

At the end of this introductory presentation, questions were taken. Among the first to comment on the proposal was a well-known activist for ethnocultural issues. Moustapha Bari stated that there was a need for Franco-Ontarians to get out of their rut, to show a spirit of openness. He recognized a change in attitude towards new francophones but
stated that this was not enough. Many ethnocultural francophones, he argued, were dissatisfied with events such as this forum because they did not feel that such events had any positive bearing on their lives.

Moustapha Bari’s assertions were blunt, not least of all because he employed the term Franco-Ontarian in its restrictive sense, i.e. applying it only to Canadian-origin francophones and not to francophones living in Ontario, such as himself. A Canadian-origin francophone, who was also a member of the Planning Committee, took up Moustapha Bari’s charges. While his tone was conciliatory, he did not address the points raised by Moustapha Bari directly. Rather, he called on francophones in general not to always ask what their organizations could do for them but how they as individuals could help the francophone cause. As other speakers were already waiting for their turn to speak, Moustapha Bari needed to wait a while with his reaction. When his turn came up, he voiced his concern that the envisioned structure would not leave ethnocultural groups enough room to allow for the specificity of their problems.

Community announcements followed and the meeting broke for lunch. The informal talk in the hallways, however, continued to revolve around the contentious topics raised in the morning session: representatives from women’s and ethnocultural groups were particularly anxious that the new structure not restrict their groups’ room for manoeuvre.

As the meeting reconvened, a female participant raised an issue which, in the past, had frequently led to tension among francophones in Toronto. She wanted to know why there should be one umbrella group for ethnocultural groups and one for racial minorities, arguing that the distinction between the two was unclear and probably unnecessary. The
reasons behind the existence of these two groups with similar concerns are, indeed, not easy to understand. It is interesting, however, how differently this issue tends to be taken up. When, for example, I once asked black francophone women about why there were two groups, they simply shrugged off my question and declared that, yes this was somewhat odd but that they had never thought about it much. In conversations with white francophones of Canadian origin, however, the suspicion was often voiced that, by creating two groups, the new francophones were quite unabashedly trying to increase their power (though, it was never quite clear how and over what or whom). Now that the question was posed publicly (by a white francophone woman), everyone waited expectantly to see who would dare to explain this controversial issue. The moderator of the meeting asked if anyone in the audience felt competent to offer an explanation. Given Moustapha Bari's vocal interventions earlier on, the moderator's gaze turned to Moustapha Bari but he was obviously disinclined to say anything. After an unusually long pause, Claude Maurais, a long-time white francophone activist, raised his hand and said he would try an explanation.

Ethnocultural francophones, he said, were of a different origin (from Northern Africa rather than Sub-Saharan Africa) and had different concerns from the racial minorities. Underlying his remark and, one can assume, implicitly for most participants, he alluded to the fact that people from Northern Africa are often viewed as white and therefore are less likely to face racism in their daily lives than those from other parts of Africa. The word 'racism', though, was not mentioned once. At the end of his remarks, Claude Maurais turned to Moustapha Bari and asked him if he had explained the distinction well. Moustapha Bari's reaction was unexpected: he simply stated that he did not see the need
to justify the existence of these two groups any more than any white francophone would see the need to justify the existence of ‘their’ groups. Asking to justify the existence of any particular umbrella group, he argued, would be tantamount to an intrusion into the autonomy of ethnocultural and racial minority groups. Through his remarks, it became apparent that Moustapha Bari viewed the day-long event with deep suspicion (an impression also confirmed through an interview I conducted with him). Given that the objective of the day’s event had been to bring diverse francophones together, but especially to build bridges between francophone newcomers and long-established francophones, it now appeared that the rift between the two had actually deepened. Some time later, however, an exchange of opinions took place that suddenly cast a very different light on the situation.

Up until that moment, the discussion of how Toronto’s francophones could be brought together had centred on the notion that there are distinct subgroups among Toronto’s francophonie. The presentation of the proposed community structure with its separation into various umbrella groups had, of course, bolstered that perception. Nobody had raised the question, though, whether these umbrella groups corresponded to the lived realities of francophones. The issue of multiple memberships, where neat distinguishable categories do not exist, had simply not arisen. While it seemed to make sense that one could not be both a member of the francophone adolescent group and of the senior citizens group, it is not at all clear why one could not be a member of a women’s group, of a business group, of a health and social services group and of an ethnocultural group, all at the same time. The discussion, however, had taken place as if behind each umbrella group there existed a homogeneous group of people fitting exclusively the umbrella group’s designation. And
Moustapha Bari’s refusal to discuss the justification for a particular umbrella group had inadvertently strengthened the notion of very separate components among Toronto’s francophones. Moustapha Bari then went even further (and provoked an unexpected reaction). He demanded that, in addition to the principles of inclusion and representation, there be a third principle: exclusiveness. This, he argued, would prevent umbrella groups from speaking about issues which should only be of concern to one particular umbrella group. Thus, for example, nobody but the ethnocultural umbrella group would be allowed to speak to issues concerning immigrants and non-traditional francophones. For Monique Bédard, however, one of the feminist activists in the audience and also a member of the Planning Committee, this took the proposed autonomy of groups one step too far. Consider Moustapha Bari’s proposal first:
Moustapha Bari: Nous parlons en tant que groupe représentatif nous mêmes d'une certaine communauté, je crois que c'est le groupe lui même qui va décider de la table. Autrement dit, effectivement pour qu'il n'y ait pas, pour qu'il n'y ait pas dédoublement, c'est le groupe qui va dire, puisque il est autonome, que nous aimerions qu'il y ait une table de femmes, table de jeunes, et cetera. Et je reviens encore à une autre question. Il faut qu'il y ait exclusivité. Autrement dit que les autres groupes représentés au, à cette concertation ne peuvent pas, c'est à dire organiser une table qui ne relève pas de leur compétence. Autrement dit, ils n'ont rien à voir avec quelque chose qui relève de l'ethnoculturel. Autrement dit, nous demanderons l'exclusivité des tables. Quant au niveau d'organisation et de la représentation.

Moustapha Bari: We are speaking here as a group representing ourselves and coming from a particular community, I think it is the group itself that will decide on the umbrella group. In other words, in order not to have any overlap, it is the group which will indicate, because it is independent, that we would like there to be a feminist umbrella group, an umbrella group for young people and so on. And that brings me back to another question. There must be singularity. In other words, the other groups represented at this concerted community effort may not, that's to say set up an umbrella group which is beyond their area of concern. In other words, they have nothing to do with something that touches ethnocultural issues. In other words, we demand that the umbrella groups be exclusive as far as organization and representation are concerned.

Moustapha Bari's argument is fairly clear: he does not wish any other umbrella group to meddle in ethnocultural affairs. He manages to justify his argument by presenting ethnocultural francophones as a solid community expressing a desire for non-interference from other francophones. As we will see, ethnocultural francophones are, in fact, a much more porous group of people but it is interesting to see the image conjured up by Moustapha Bari here. He sets up a notion of us vs. them where the us demands exclusivité, i.e. a kind of self-determination.
Moustapha Bari is challenged almost immediately. Adel Amado, himself an ethnocultural francophone but one who has, in the past, worked more closely with the traditional francophone lobby group, poses a question: Why are we all gathered here today? His answer: Because we are all francophones, those are the ties that bind us at this particular moment. And, as such, he argues, everyone should work together and not dwell on their differences.

Adel Amado : La seule chose qui nous unit ici tous, quelque part je peux le dire, c'est la vérité, c'est le français, c'est la langue française que nous parlons tous. D'où moi je pense, c'est vrai, c'est vrai, il faut tenir compte de toutes les composantes, qui est francophone, qui ne l'est pas, sur quelle forme il est francophone mais il est temps aussi qu'il, qu'on puisse réunir toutes les choses, les mettre ensemble (...) que nous travaillons ensemble. En fait, ce qui est sûr dans cette histoire, dans moi je suis tel, ou moi je suis tel, ou moi je suis de telle représentativité, c'est à dire nous sommes du mal un groupe comme des francophones, comme un regroupement. Et quand nous serons dans ce groupe, nous serons encore des petits groupes subdivisés. Finalement, on n'en finira pas dans ce sens, on n'en finira pas.

Adel Amado : The only thing which unites us here, I guess I might as well say it, it's the truth, it is French, it is the French language that we all speak. That's why I think, it's true, it's true, one has to take into consideration all the elements, who is francophone, who is not, in which way someone is francophone but it is also time that one, that we bring all these things together, put them together (...) so that we can work together. After all, the only thing that's for sure in all this talk about I am this or I am that or I am representative of this, it is that we are hardly a group yet as francophones in the sense of a grouping of people. And when we are in that group, we will still be little divided sub-groups. In the end, we will never get anywhere with this, we'll never finish.

The issue Adel Amado raises is an important one. Unlike Moustapha Bari, who views his primary affiliation with the ethnocultural francophones and who carries this affiliation into any general francophone event, Adel Amado realizes that there is more than one group
with which one may identify. Such varied identifications, he argues, should, however, be subordinated to the particular identification at hand.

One could use the following image to illustrate the differences between Adel Amado and Moustapha Bari. While Adel Amado leaves the parts of his identity at the coat check when he enters a francophone event and conducts himself solely as a francophone during the event, Moustapha Bari does not check any of his identities. He carries them into the event and is willing to walk out if the event itself cannot accommodate his other identities. Adel Amado's stance is reminiscent of the stance taken by Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent vis-à-vis what they call la cause: francophone rights. Most notably, the right of francophones to be present in Ontario is defended through suppressing what is, in fact, a heterogeneous community and imagining it as a cohesive movement.

Beyond Adel Amado's model of temporary suspension of multiple identities and Moustapha Bari's model of primary ethnic affiliation, however, there is a third model that entered the discussion during the last hour of the April Forum. The third model is one where all possible identities of a person are taken into consideration and where the person him- or herself decides at any given moment which affiliation s/he would like to privilege. This, of course, causes a serious problem for anyone who attempts to run any particular organization: if, for example, half of the members of a particular group are women and they decide at one point to privilege gender over ethnic affiliation, the group leader's ability to speak authoritatively on behalf of that group is severely hampered. And the remainder of the April Forum became dominated by precisely that issue.
After Moustapha Bari had made his demand for exclusive representation of ethnocultural francophones by his group, there had been some notable stirrings of discontent from the feminist participants in the forum (notable through such overt signs as intense whispering and shaking of heads and other gestures expressing disagreement). Since the order in the list of speakers had to be respected, however, there was no immediate reaction to either Moustapha Bari or Adel Amado. When her turn did finally arrive, Monique Bédard rose to ask Moustapha Bari a question (thus opening up the possibility of circumventing the order of speakers and entering into a dialogue of statement and rebuttal).

Monique Bédard: C'est une question de clarification par rapport à une des questions qui étaient soulevées (...) il faut que nécessairement que je me pose je veux enfin là comprendre parce que il y a des groupes, entre autres le nôtre, qui font un travail en collaboration avec d'autres organismes, c'est à dire, qui euh enfin peux-tu me, peux-tu élabores un petit peu sur ce que, plus sur ça.

Moustapha Bari: Je pense que par exemple les problèmes de l'immigration de euh la femme ethnoculturelle et cetera. C'est des tables, c'est à dire, qui devraient avoir l'exclusivité, c'est à dire que personne ne peut dire qu'il peut parler aux noms de ces tables là. C'est ça l'exclusivité.

Monique Bédard: I would like to ask a question to clarify something with regard to one of the issues which had been raised (...) I have to ask. I want to understand because there are groups, like our own, which are working in collaboration with other organizations, that's to say, which um anyway, can you, can you say a bit more on what, a bit more on that.

Moustapha Bari: Here, I think for example, of immigration issues of the ethnocultural woman and so on. These are umbrella groups, that's to say, which are exclusive, that's to say that no one can say that he may talk on behalf of those umbrella groups. That's exclusiveness.
Monique Bédard: Je comprends ça, mais par exemple, un organisme comme Refuge organise le concert avec, donc si d'autres organismes, un groupe de discussion des femmes immigrantes parce que les femmes immigrantes font partie de notre organisme et cetera. Est-ce que, ça ça ne va pas au delà de ta conception d'exclusivité? Ce que j'essaie de comprendre.

(...) Parce que je veux dire. Est-ce que tu vas, est-ce qu'on va nous dire par exemple que ça relève des groupes euh des Groupes raciaux et ethnoculturelles, par contre ce sont des femmes donc ça relève de notre mandat, alors je suppose que moi je

Moustapha Bari: Non, pour moi, ça me dérange pas. Je sais qu'il y a des membres de, il y des membres de notre communauté qui sont même euh un membre de certains organismes de femmes et cetera. Moi, je ne suis pas contre l'idée. On y vit dans ce pays là que chacun puisse faire ce qu'il veut, selon ses pensés, ses sentiments et ses principes. L'exclusivité pour moi veut dire lorsqu'il y a une table sectorielle par exemple sur l'immigration, c'est les groupes ethnoculturels qui devraient s'en charger. (....)

Monique Bédard: Ce que je comprends c'est qu'il y a énormément de zones grises potentielles dans ceci.

Monique Bédard: I understand but if, for example, an organization like Refuge organizes (...) a discussion group of immigrant women because immigrant women are a part of our organization and all that. Doesn't that go beyond your notion of exclusiveness? That's what I am trying to understand.

(...) What I am trying to say is are you, is someone going to tell us, for example, that this is an area of concern for the racial or ethnocultural minorities, but then again they are women, so it really falls within our mandate, so I guess that

Moustapha Bari: No, for me, I don't mind that. I know that there are members from our community who are even a member of certain women's organizations and so on. I, myself, am not against that idea. We live here in a country where people can do what they please, what suits their ideas, their sentiments and their principles. Exclusiveness for me means that when there is an umbrella group, for example on immigration, it would be the ethnocultural groups who would take care of that. (....)

Monique Bédard: What I understand is that there are huge potential grey areas in all this.
Monique Bédard has put Moustapha Bari on the spot. He senses that with his notion of exclusive representation, he has painted himself into a corner. While he maintains a tight notion of community ("I know that there are members from our community..."), he admits, somewhat grudgingly, that those whom he considers to be members of his own ethnic community have defected to associations beyond what he thinks should be a primarily ethnic affiliation ("...who are even a member of certain women's organizations."). He reconciles these leakages of community boundaries with an appeal to the overriding liberal-individual rights, which permit people to associate freely with whomever they wish ("We live here in a country where people can do what they please, what suits their ideas, their sentiments and their principles.").

After the exchange between Moustapha Bari and Monique Bédard, the moderator asked for volunteers among the participants to come forward and continue the process of community restructuring by participating in a committee preparing the next forum. Not surprisingly, along with others, both Moustapha Bari and Monique Bédard declared their interest. Following a few more community announcements, the event was brought to a close with the moderator thanking the participants for their willingness to sacrifice a Saturday in the interest of a stronger francophone community.

Having traced a few recent events in the restructuring process within Toronto's francophone community, we have, of course, but caught a glimpse of the variety of discussions that are taking place all the time. They do, however, represent some of the major strands of opinions and positions in the emerging new structure.
"Consultations complémentaires"

Unlike the *Forum: nouveau départ*, where a majority of the participants were Canadian-origin, Franco-Ontarian participants, the Consultations complémentaires was a series of community events with an overwhelmingly ethnocultural francophone participation.

**Motivation for the “Consultations complémentaires”**

As part of its policy of restructuring the education system, the Ontario government introduced a new law in the area of education early in 1997. Its stated objective was to improve education through increased accountability and efficiency. Many teachers and parents saw the government’s action primarily as a cost-cutting measure with little regard for the quality of education. As far as francophone public education was concerned, however, the new law redrew the educational map completely and led to the creation of 12 new school boards. This was hailed by many francophones as a historic step that would finally put the responsibility for francophone education into the hands of Franco-Ontarians. Restructuring meant the creation of additional school boards that were, for the first time, composed exclusively of francophone schools.

Given these significant changes, in May of 1997 Franco-Ontarian organizations active in the field of education held a three-day meeting entitled *Consultations sur l'éducation élémentaire et secondaire de langue française*. The purpose was to discuss and take up positions vis-à-vis the upcoming educational restructuring and to develop a concept for the future of francophone public education in Ontario. From the point of view of ethnocultural francophones, however, the gathering suffered from the fact that few efforts were made to ensure a wider francophone participation. The meeting’s participants were
mostly long-established francophones. This was reflected in the very low priority assigned to issues of equity and pluralist education in a survey conducted among participants of the meeting.

As a result, a number of concerned francophone parents of ethnocultural origin decided to hold an alternative Consultations complémentaires as a supplementary event, the objective of which was to remedy the gaps in the original Consultations sur l'éducation. This is clearly pointed out in the final report that issued from the Consultations complémentaires.

Toutefois, ces Consultations sur l'éducation [i.e. the original Consultations sur l'éducation] ont été marquées par une très faible participation des membres de la communauté ethnoculturelle. C'est cette carence que les membres du Comité ont voulu combler. Le Comité a voulu, dans une grande mesure, reprendre le travail amorcé par les organisatrices et organisateurs des Consultations sur l'éducation préparées par les organismes franco-ontariens pour y introduire les éléments manquants qui se rapportent à la vision, aux besoins et priorités des élèves et des parents des communautés ethnoculturelles.

However, these Consultations sur l'éducation [i.e. the original Consultations sur l'éducation] were marked by a very weak participation by members of the ethnocultural community. It is this failure which the members of the Comité wanted to rectify. The Comité wanted, to a large extent, to pick up where the organizers of the Consultations sur l'éducation, which had been undertaken by Franco-Ontarian organizations, had left off in order to introduce missing elements which relate to the vision, needs and priorities of students and teachers who are members of the ethnocultural communities.

In order to inform ethnocultural francophones of the changes in the public French education system and to elicit their particular concerns, the Comité decided to hold four hearings in different regions of Ontario: in Windsor, Sudbury, Ottawa and Toronto. Each hearing was co-ordinated by the Comité in Toronto but its immediate planning (i.e.
invitations to local community groups, messages broadcast over local radio stations and placing advertisements in newspapers) was left to members of the local ethnocultural francophone community. The hearings took place in community centres, colleges or schools that were well-known to potential participants. On the day of each hearing, the participants were presented with a working document outlining four major areas in which improvements in the French public education system were proposed. These included emphasizing the importance for ethnocultural children of cultural roots, skills development, psychological welfare and the recognition of a diverse francophonie.

Below is a summary of the major points in the working document:

- The French education system should allow any child to grow up with a knowledge and grounding in his/her language and culture. Children ought to know and develop a sense of pride for the community to which they belong.

- The francophone education system should allow children to develop the skills they need to succeed in a pluralist, diverse, competitive and global society.

- The francophone education system should show concern for the psychological well-being of all children and allow them to develop self-confidence and take active and creative charge of their lives.

- The francophone education system should contribute to a flourishing French-speaking community in all its diversity.

For each of these areas, between five and ten specific points were listed. The participants were asked to rate these points in order of priority and, if necessary, to add their own
Subsequently, and with the co-ordination of a member of the Comité, the participants were encouraged to discuss the priorities they had indicated individually and to come up collectively with a general consensus. At two events (Windsor and Sudbury), the number of participants was below sixty and the day-long discussion took place in one common plenary session. In the other two events (Ottawa and Toronto), between sixty and one hundred people took part and the decision was taken to split the meeting up into smaller working groups, each dealing with different aspects of educational issues. In all cases, however, the meeting concluded with a presentation of the results achieved during the hearing. Participants were informed that these would then be included in the final report and communicated to government and school board authorities.

We will focus here briefly on the first two events and then consider the Ottawa meeting in greater detail as it was marked not only by the largest number of participants but also by an extremely involved discussion that brought out with extreme clarity issues that were not discussed either in as much detail or with as much vigour in the other meetings.

The first meeting (in Windsor) took place in an atmosphere that could be characterized as one of constructive criticism blended with outright frustration and it is this atmosphere which also prevailed in the three subsequent meetings. The working paper helped to get the discussion started but the issues that emerged were very much determined by the participants’ concerns. In Windsor, these concerns were twofold. Firstly, the participants lamented that, despite a growing number of students of ethnocultural origin in schools in the region, there was not nearly a corresponding number of teaching and administrative staff of ethnocultural origin employed in these schools and this in spite of the fact that
many ethnocultural francophones were qualified to fill such positions. Secondly, a call was issued to create *classes d'accueil*, the mere setting up of which would be a recognition of the new diversity of francophones in the region and would possibly provide employment opportunities for ethnocultural francophones.

The second hearing in Sudbury was characterized by a fairly high participation of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent, from schools, colleges and universities. The discussion focused on the need for intercultural and anti-racist training for teachers and support personnel in francophone schools. Without such training, it was feared that ethnocultural students would continue to be marginalized in the schools of the region. Such training was argued to be particularly important given that, unlike in the other regions where hearings took place, the percentage of students of non-French-Canadian origin is rather low in Northern Ontario and their needs tend to be more easily overlooked. In a classroom, for example, in which a third or more of the students have recently arrived from Africa (such as is frequently the case in Southern Ontario) the need for additional instruction in basic information technology tends to be far more easily recognized than in a classroom with only one or two recently immigrated students. However, the participants also demanded that the curriculum be changed to include more international components such as international social studies and francophone literature from countries other than Canada or France.

The Ottawa Meeting of the "Consultations complémentaires"

When the *Comité* prepared the meeting in Ottawa, it expected neither the high turnout nor the depth of the deliberation that came to mark the event. With its close to eighty
participants, it turned out to be the most lively and engaging of all four hearings. For this reason, the Ottawa meeting will be considered in more detail than the others.

After the usual opening remarks and an initial plenary discussion, the participants grouped themselves into four different committees, each dealing with one specific element of the working paper. At the end, everyone came together again to discuss the results achieved in each committee. It was during this final discussion that a number of issues were brought up which illustrate very well how Ontario francophones of ethnocultural origin are attempting to carve out a place for themselves in Canada's civic landscape. I will first focus on the pressures and challenges that were voiced during the meeting and will then go on to address the question of how ethnocultural francophones see their role in Canada.

Finally, the demands for change which issued from this meeting will be examined in order to show how, based on a sense of discrimination and the adoption of a civic role to counter such discrimination, ethnocultural francophones moved towards a keen sense of active and discursively constructed citizenship (to be discussed in more detail below).

Pressures and Challenges:

Given the large numbers of francophone children of ethnocultural origin in schools in the Ottawa region, one of the most keenly felt challenges which surfaced during the discussion was the question of how school boards could be made to hire more teachers of ethnocultural origin. A number of speakers made it clear that they felt this lack of teachers was not due to a lack of qualified persons among the new francophones but rather a result of discrimination in the hiring process. This point was driven home by the very personal remarks made by a teacher who had worked for a number of years as a
supply teacher, was never offered a permanent position and is now seeing some of his former (white) high school students obtaining permanent teaching positions upon completing their teacher training. In the following quote, the speaker first speaks in the third person but then reveals that he is really talking about himself (I verified this with him in a follow-up conversation).

*Et le pire c'est qu'il y a des suppléants qui ont vu leurs anciens élèves dans les écoles, gradués et employés. Moi, je les ai, je l'ai vu, je l'ai vécu.*

*And what is most disturbing is the fact that there are supply teachers who have seen their former students graduate and become employed. I have seen it, I have experienced it myself.*

This sentiment was echoed by other speakers. They described a high level of frustration and resignation among potential teachers, which often led them to not even apply for positions.

*Moi j'ai entendu pas mal des commentaires des gens qui euh ont pas postulé parce qu'ils étaient sûrs qu'on va prendre quelqu'un, un Canadien avant moi.*

*I have heard a number of comments from people who um did not even apply because they were certain that someone else would be chosen, a Canadian before me.*

What is interesting here is the use of the term *Canadian*. Many of the ethnocultural francophones hold Canadian citizenship but what this remark betrays is a sense among ethnocultural francophones that they are not seen as *real Canadians*. Others expressed a suspicion that it is extremely difficult for new francophones to break into established Franco-Ontarian networks where jobs tend to be offered on the basis of ethnic affiliation (see the reference to *son nom* below) or family ties (see the reference to *sa femme* below).
I think that when a post becomes available, one should also think of the person who has been a supply teacher for four years and not hire someone who has just graduated (...) or someone that is hired just because his or her name has been recommended or his wife recommended him.

Interestingly, an official from the local French school board was present during these discussions. Faced with the above mentioned charges, he countered that there was actually a lack of qualified young ethnocultural francophones to take up teaching positions. As far as hiring supply teachers is concerned, he suggested that schools were more interested in having young and dynamic teachers who come fresh out of a faculty of education and are therefore (supposedly) more in touch with modern ways of dealing with students.
Si vous regardez les dernières années là, les gens de différentes cultures qui se sont présentés à la faculté d'éducation. Il n'y en a pas beaucoup. Mais là je sais que parmi vous il y en a peut-être qu'ils ont des années et des années d'expérience. Euhm il reste que quand on doit embaucher euh à l'école élémentaire là (...) un plus jeune là, c'est que, écoute, on fait faire la suppléance aux gens mais on va embaucher quelqu'un qui selon nous là, les jeunes l'acceptent, quelqu'un qui est dynamique, quelqu'un, disons, qui est moderne, tout ça là. Alors, c'est pour ça que c'est important qu'il y en a des jeunes là, (...) il y en a des jeunes haïtiens, des jeunes somaliens là, pourquoi ils sont pas plus à la faculté de l'éducation là, parce que ils sont ici depuis un certain nombre d'années là, ils sont bien intégrés à la culture (...) mais il y en a presque pas, presque pas.

If you look at the last few years, the people from various cultural backgrounds who have applied to study at faculties of education. There aren't many. But then I know that among you there are maybe some people who have years and years of experience. Um but then again when someone has to be hired um at a primary school (...) someone younger, it's that, look, someone is used as a supply teacher but then someone else is hired who, according to us, the youngsters accept, someone who is dynamic, someone who, let's say, is modern, all that stuff. So, that's why it's important that there be young people, (...) there are young Haitians, young Somalis, but why aren't there more at the faculties of education, because they have been here for a number of years, they are well integrated into the culture (...) but there are hardly any.

When I discussed this particular remark with other participants some time after the event, it became very clear that many had felt quiet outrage and considered the remark a slap in the face, though couched in a language that seemed to express good-will and a concern for the quality of education. Not only was the lack of ethnocultural teachers argued to be the fault of the ethnocultural community itself because it did not encourage enough high school graduates to register in faculties of education, but the non-hiring of long-standing supply teachers was argued to be motivated by a concern for the best interests of the students. Finally, the fact that cultural integration rather than professional qualification
had been stressed by the school board representative (...il y en a des jeunes haitiens, des jeunes somaliens là, pourquoi ils sont pas plus à la faculté de l'éducation là, parce que ils sont ici depuis un certain nombre d'années là, ils sont bien intégrés à la culture...) confirmed the fear that black francophones would only be allowed to teach if they accepted the premise that francophone public schools were places of cultural reproduction for Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent rather than geared towards the diversity of all francophones.

After these remarks, there was some commotion in the meeting. After it had died down, one ethnocultural participant countered the remarks with a simple explanation for the lack of young ethnocultural francophones in faculties of education.

*Monsieur, je veux faire commentaire. Il y a aussi le fait que peut-être les jeunes, ont été un peu découragé de voir qu'il y a leurs parents qui n'ont jamais pu avoir un poste. Donc ils disent «voilà il n'y a pas de postes en éducation, j'irai ailleurs». Donc ce qu'il a donné des lacunes au niveau des jeunes à se présenter à la faculté d'éducation.*

Sir, I'd like to make a comment. There is also the fact that these young people are possibly just a little discouraged to see that their parents never stood a chance of obtaining a post. So they tell themselves “there aren't any jobs in education, I'll go elsewhere”. So that's why there are so few people interested in applying to study at faculties of education.

Given these difficulties, the question arises as to how the ethnocultural francophones present at the meeting envisage overcoming such discriminatory barriers. The strategy that emerged consisted of two distinct elements: one element concerned the general place of ethnocultural francophones in Ontario and in Canada, the other concerned concrete
action that ought to be taken in the future. Both of these relate to the civic position they want to map out for themselves.

*Civic positioning*

In order to take any kind of political action, it is obviously important to realize one’s place within the polity within which such action is to be taken. Such a process can take different forms but one of the most important questions to be answered is whether one undertakes political action as an individual citizen or as a collectivity. If one is concerned about discrimination, for example, one can try to achieve justice by demanding that every individual citizen be treated equally, regardless of his or her origins.

On the other hand, though, one can also attempt to overcome discrimination by acting as a member of a group and by requiring equal treatment precisely because of one’s difference from others as well as by showing that it is this difference which has given rise to discrimination. In the case of ethnocultural francophones, the issue is further complicated by the fact that, if they decided to act collectively, they have to face their double minority status as a minority group within the minority Franco-Ontarian community. Given the obvious need to effect change, it is useful to consider how the Ottawa participants discussed their place in the Canadian polity.

In the first remark quoted below, a speaker voices clear criticism of putting too much emphasis on community belonging and speaks out in favour of putting the equality of Canadian citizenship front and centre.
Moi, il y a quelque chose que j’aimerais dire. Je pense oui nous faisons partie de ce qu’on appelle les minorités ici au Canada. Je pense qu’il est temps qu’on se dise qu’on a choisi de vivre au Canada. Il faut qu’on commence à se comporter comme des citoyens du Canada.

Une autre personne dit: Voilà! (Applaudissements)

Autre chose (...) ça m’ennuie lorsque je vois qu’on demande à un enfant qui n’est pas blanc, d’où il vient. Il faut que ce temps là qu’on lui mette en tête qu’il est né au Canada, qu’il est un Canadien comme tout le monde (...). Sinon nous nous perdons dans cette affaire de multiculturalisme.

There is something I’d like to say. I think, yes, we are a part of what is called the minorities here in Canada. I think it is time, though, that we tell ourselves that we have chosen to live in Canada. It is time that we start acting as citizens of Canada.

Someone else interjects: Exactly! (Applause)

Something else (...) it bothers me when I see people ask children, who are not white, where they are from. These days we have to make it clear to these children that they are born in Canada, that they are Canadian like everyone else (...). If not, we’ll get lost in all this multiculturalism talk.

But applause was not restricted to the position of emphasizing one’s Canadianness above all else. The following remark, which countered the previous one by underlining the importance of difference, received at least as much applause as the previous one.

Bon euh là je veux dire non (...). Moi, ce que je veux dire, c’est vrai il faut qu’on s’intègre dans la communauté canadienne MAIS tout en sachant que nous sommes singuliers. Parce que il y a cette singularité. Il ne faut pas la perdre. Il faut que les autres savent, [les] Anglais aussi, que nous avons cette différence.

Well, um to this I’d like to say no (...). What I’d like to say is, it’s true that we have to integrate into the Canadian community BUT we still have to be aware that we are unique. Because there is that uniqueness. We mustn’t lose it. The others should know, the English as well, that there is that difference.

(Applause)
The speaker is not exactly clear on who he means when he refers to “nous” but from the context (*Il faut que les autres savent, [les] Anglais aussi ...*), one can be fairly confident that he draws a distinction between ethnocultural francophones and French-Canadian francophones, on the one hand, and between francophones and anglophones, on the other. And he is adamant that this distinction not be lost.

It is not easy to navigate between an affirmation of one’s individual citizenship rights and one’s belonging to a particular group. Later sections will explore where such contradictions lead and how they may be resolved. What emerges from the discussion in Ottawa, though, is that the two concepts of political belonging (individual and collective) are both important and must be recognized. The inextricable link between these two was rather eloquently pointed out by yet another participant. According to him, the fact that ethnocultural francophones are a visible minority means that they, as any other visible minority group, are subject to certain kinds of prejudice. This, he argues, cannot be overcome by simply insisting on one’s legal status as a Canadian citizen. The difference with which ethnocultural francophones have to contend is not entirely of their own choosing but is attributed by society. While the general desire to overcome discriminatory barriers may draw much of its motivation from the far-away ideal of a society in which race no longer matters, it is questionable whether day-to-day progress can be achieved merely by espousing lofty ideals. Rather, as the following speaker suggests, collectivities, i.e. linguistic and cultural communities, have an important role to play in applying joint pressure to achieve change.
Nous sommes citoyens à part entière. (...) Nous avons une identité culturelle que nous pouvons pas oublier et qui est très visible et qui le plus souvent est à notre désavantage. Mais nous devons nous atteler à la tâche et commencer méthodiquement à faire vraiment quelque chose qui sera utile pour nos enfants et pour notre communauté. Donc il faut prendre les choses en main. Il faut pas rester seulement en théorie. Il faut aller à la pratique. Mettre des comités dans des régions, donner à ce comité une mission officielle de façon que ce comité se joint à des comités des autres régions, Toronto, Windsor, Sudbury.

We are citizens on an equal footing. (...) We have a cultural identity that we cannot forget and which is very obvious and which, most of the time, is to our disadvantage. But we have to take up this challenge and systematically begin to do something about it that will be good for our children and for our community. Therefore we have to take things into our own hands. We can’t just stay at the theoretical level. We have to become practical. There must be committees in the regions and they must be given a formal responsibility in a way that the committee connects with committees in other regions, Toronto, Windsor, Sudbury.

Demands for change:

The meeting in Ottawa, however, did not just stop at identifying the grievances of ethnocultural francophones and at discussing their place within the political landscape. The participants were very much interested in proposing concrete demands for change. A large part of the discussion concerning such demands focused on the need for more teachers of ethnocultural francophone origin to be hired by francophone public schools.
Il y a une grande recommandation que dans toutes les écoles et en particulier dans celles où il y a une présence ethnoculturelle qu’on engage un nombre raisonnable de personnel enseignant et administratif représentatif de la clientèle et il y a un point qu’on a ajouté, euh des intervenants ethnoculturels. C’est à dire qu’il y ait des intervenants ethnoculturels dans les écoles pour appuyer disons l’école, comprendre les besoins et la pluralité des élèves d’origine ethnique et ethnoculturelle.

There is an important recommendation which is that in every school and particularly in the schools where there is an ethnocultural presence, that a reasonable number of the teaching and administrative staff reflect the make-up of the student population and there is a point we have added, ethnocultural experts. We think there should be ethnocultural experts in these schools to support the school, understand the needs and the diversity of students of ethnic and ethnocultural origin.

The discussion then moved to how such recommendations might be implemented. At this point, the idea of a quota, i.e. a type of affirmative action, was born and a number of speakers suggested that such a quota be included in the hiring policies of francophone school boards:

Ce qu’on pourrait peut-être demander c’est d’influencer les preneurs de décisions pour qu’il y ait sûrement un quota ou bien qu’il y ait plus de représentativité au niveau des politiques d’embauche.

What we might be able to demand is to have an influence on decision makers so that there could be a quota or that hiring policies could be made more representative [in terms of reflecting the ethnic make-up of students in the teaching staff]

In addition to the idea of affirmative action policies in the hiring process, other participants felt that there was also a need for an institution that would allow some administrative or legal recourse in cases where members of the ethnocultural francophone community felt
that they had been wronged. Given the sometimes stormy relationship between old and new francophones, the idea of an ombudsperson was launched.

La première chose c'est la possibilité dans certaines écoles où, où il semble qu'il y a beaucoup de frictions entre la la communauté d'accueil et la, et les communautés ethnoculturelles, à ce moment là eh de demander qu'il y ait un ombudsman. Tout à l'heure vous avez parlé d'un agent de liaison. Peut-être que c'est le même rôle mais c'est un modèle que j'ai déjà vu appliqué ailleurs. L'ombudsman est là, il est représentant des communautés ethnoculturelles et quand il y a un problème il fait la médiation entre les gens, les élèves des communautés multiculturelles et leurs parents et l'administration scolaire. (...) Finalement, peut-être ça serait d'essayer que la communauté se prenne en charge (...). Ça pourrait être une façon aussi d'avoir une vigilance dans la communauté.

The first point is the possibility in certain schools where, where there appear to be a lot of tensions between the host community and the [singular], and the [plural] ethnocultural communities to demand at that point that there be an ombudsman. Just before, you talked about a liaison person. Maybe that's the same function but it's a model I've already seen used elsewhere. The ombudsman is there, he is the representative of the ethnocultural communities and when there is a problem, he mediates between people, the students from the multicultural communities and their parents and the school administration. (...) In the end, maybe that would be a way to try and have the community take responsibility (...). That might be a way for the community to show some vigilance.

Finally, a considerable amount of political astuteness was demonstrated when a participant suggested that a committee of concerned ethnocultural francophone parents be formed in every school board region. The main task of such a committee would be to get the francophone ethnocultural vote out during school board elections. The speakers' use of terms such as political force, power and weight shows the extent to which the meeting in Ottawa had succeeded in covering the whole gamut of political organization from the identification of pressing concerns to the plotting of a political strategy.
Et je pense que je suis sur le point justement de faire une recommandation qui est très important (...) que dans chaque région suite à cette consultation, qu'il y ait euh, qu'il y ait la composition d'une structure ou bien d'un comité en éducation, (...) d'un comité dans cette région là qui doit se pencher sur les problèmes qu'engendre l'éducation ethnoculturelle dans son ensemble. Cela veut dire que c'est un comité qui voit à l'intégration des jeunes qui va alors faire des pressions pour l'embauche d'enseignants ethnoculturels. Le comité qui euh appuie les candidats à des élections scolaires, un comité aussi qui encourage les parents à sortir pour aller voter dans les élections scolaires. Parce que c'est là-dedans qui est la force et le pouvoir. Si vous êtes des électeurs (...) les gens vont s'intéresser à vous parce que ils ont besoin de vos, de vos votes. Donc qu'ils seront là, qu'ils soient ethnoculturels ou pas, mais ils savent que vous avez un poids politique.

Here I think I am just about to make a recommendation that is very important (...) namely, that in every region following this meeting, there should be, um, a new structure or an education committee should be formed, (...) a committee in that region which should address the problems arising within the area of ethnocultural education in general. What this means is that this would be a committee that looks after the integration of young people, that will press for the hiring of ethnocultural teachers. A committee which backs candidates during school board elections, a committee which would also encourage the parents to go out and vote in the school board elections. Because that's where influence and power lie. If you are voters (...) people will be interested in you because they need your votes. So, they will be there, whether you are ethnocultural or not, but they know that you carry some political weight.

What did the meeting achieve in the end, however? Can any tangible results already be noted? Unfortunately, it is too early to measure the lasting impact these meetings may have. As the entire endeavour was financed by the federal ministry of Canadian Heritage, its results are being communicated to government officials, both federal and provincial. In
addition, the committee members have made public presentations on the findings obtained during the hearings. The final report certainly does not mince any words and points out in no uncertain terms what had transpired during the meetings. Consider how the various remarks concerning the lack of ethnocultural francophone teachers in French schools were incorporated into the *Comité's* final report:
Plusieurs participants et participantes ont évoqué le problème que rencontrent les enseignants et enseignantes des communautés ethnoculturelles. Ces enseignants travaillent souvent comme suppléants et suppléantes pendant plusieurs années, au point de voir parfois les élèves à qui ils et elles ont enseigné obtenir des positions permanentes dans l’enseignement, tandis qu’eux continuent toujours à faire de la suppléance. On se demande pourquoi, si les services professionnels qu’offrent ces personnes sont jugés satisfaisants dans le cadre de la suppléance, ils ne le seraient pas lorsqu’il s’agit d’occuper des postes permanents. Ce phénomène a un effet pervertis. En effet, les facultés d’éducation ont de plus en plus de difficulté à recruter des étudiants et étudiantes des communautés ethnoculturelles. Quand les jeunes voient leurs parents et les membres de leur communauté dans l’impossibilité de décrocher des positions permanentes, cela les décourage d’entreprendre des études dans les facultés d’éducation bilingue.

Several participants have raised the problems encountered by teachers from the ethnocultural communities. These teachers often work as supply teachers for several years, to the point where they sometimes see their own students, whom they have taught, be hired into permanent posts in the educational field while they continue to work as supply teachers. One might ask why, if the professional services offered by these people are judged satisfactory enough for them to work as supply teachers, they are not satisfactory when it comes to obtaining permanent employment. This phenomenon has a perverted effect. Faculties of education are having increasingly greater difficulties in attracting students from the ethnocultural communities. However, when these young people see that their own parents and the members of their communities are unable to find permanent posts, it certainly discourages them from undertaking a course of studies at bilingual faculties of education.

The results of the Ottawa meeting, however, were not only published in the Comité’s final report but a few days after the event, Le Droit, the only French-speaking daily in Ontario, reported on the concerns raised during the Ottawa meeting. Interestingly, the headline used a different term to characterize the participants. It referred not to the francophone
ethnocultural communities but to *les afro-francophones*. From the article, it appears that the term was used in an interview the journalist conducted with one of the local organizers of the event. Consider the following excerpts from the article.

**Les afro-francophones veulent plus de professeurs**

(*...*)

**Afro-francophones want more teachers**

(*...*)

---

*Jusqu'à 50% des élèves dans certaines classes*

*Up to 50% of all students in some classes*

---

*De passage à Ottawa samedi, le comité a tenu ses Consultations Complémentaires, réclamant un plus grand nombre de professeurs afro-francophones dans les salles de classe à travers la province.*

*The Comité made a stop in Ottawa on Saturday, holding its Consultations Complémentaires and demanding more afro-francophone teachers in classrooms across the province.*

*Selon le représentant d'Ottawa-Carleton à la Table de travail, Boniface Berthet, il reste beaucoup de travail à faire pour bien représenter la mosaic culturelle dans la programmation des écoles à travers la province.*

*According to the representative of Ottawa-Carleton in the working group, Boniface Berthet, a great deal of work remains to be done in order to ensure that the cultural mosaic is reflected in school programs across the province.*

*« Lorsque j'enseignais au début des années 1980, je pouvais compter sur les doigts de la main les afro-francophones dans la salle de classe », a-t-il souligné.*

*“When I taught at the beginning of the 1980s, there were only a handful of afro-francophones in the classroom”, he points out.*

*« Maintenant, le panorama a changé et, dans certaines écoles, ils représentent 50% des élèves. Pourtant, le curriculum n'a pas été changé en conséquence et ces jeunes ont rarement des professeurs de leur communauté qui leur enseignent. »*

*“Nowadays, the picture has changed completely and in some schools they make up 50% of all students. Still, the curriculum has not been changed and these young people rarely have teachers from their own community to teach them.”*
Les gens présents aux Consultations Complémentaires ont notamment crié à la discrimination en ce qui concerne les embauches effectuées par les conseils scolaires pour renouveler le personnel enseignant des écoles francophones. «On doit avoir une juste représentativité. Si une école a une forte saveur ethnoculturelle, il serait préférable que sa direction en soit le reflet au niveau administratif» a souligné M. Berthet.

«Il est très important pour des élèves de voir des enseignants de la même culture qu'eux. Il y a actuellement un problème de modèles» a ajouté une des participantes, MCJJ.

Ces derniers demandent au ministère de l'Éducation de revoir et élargir le contenu de certains cours offerts au secondaire, dont la géographie et l'histoire, afin de transmettre leur propre culture. (…) 

Those who attended the Consultations Complémentaires condemned discriminatory practices in the hiring policies of school boards when replacing teaching staff in francophone schools. “We need a fair ratio. If a school has a strong ethnocultural presence, it would be preferable that at the administrative level this should be reflected” underlined Mr. Berthet.

“It is very important for students to see teachers from the same cultural background as themselves. We currently have a problem with [the lack of such] role-models” added one other participant, MCJJ.

Participants called on the Ministry of Education to revise and extend the contents of some courses offered at the secondary level, such as geography and history, in order to convey their own culture.

What is surprising about the article is the extent to which it emphasizes the collective mobilization and separateness of ethnocultural francophones. The term afro-francophones draws a clear distinction between old and new francophones along racial lines, while the quoted passages in the article underline the cultural distinctiveness of new
francophones. The lack of non-white teachers in francophone schools, for example, is not so much deplored as an instance of racism directed against an individual teacher of colour who applies to work in a francophone school (which would have nothing to do with the racial composition of the student population of that particular school). Rather, the presence of a diverse student population is argued to justify the demand for a diverse teaching staff which, if it is not implemented, is then seen as discrimination against an entire collectivity, not against a particular individual. The fact that so much emphasis is put on the collective rather than the individual is by no means a trivial matter. Though the issue will be discussed in greater detail in later sections, it is useful at this point to pause and ask a few questions:

Consider Boniface Berthet’s criticism that “ces jeunes ont rarement des professeurs de leur communauté qui leur enseignent”.

Why should it be important that students are taught by members of their community?

How is their community defined: racially, culturally, linguistically?

At which point does it become problematic to assume that second generation immigrants, i.e. the children of francophone immigrants, are a member of the immigrant group their parents belong to? To what extent is it patronizing to assume such group belonging and to what extent is its non-assumption equal to non-recognition of cultural and linguistic specificity?
The same questions may be asked with regard to the term culture, invoked by MCJJ: "Il est très important pour des élèves de voir des enseignants de la même culture qu’eux". And, as the article continues, it is argued that not only should the teaching staff be more diverse but also the curriculum itself, through subjects like geography and history, should transmit to afro-francophone students leur propre culture. But what exactly is their own culture? Can we simply assume that their origin (or even their skin colour) assigns them a particular culture about which they ought to be formally instructed? To what extent should the school curriculum be driven by the composition of its student population rather than a generally accepted Canadian conception directed towards the creation of a responsible citizenry?

We must ask such difficult questions in order not to fall into the trap of uncritically accepting the premises upon which the demands made by participants of the Ottawa meeting are founded. While we may be intuitively inclined to support demands for greater diversity, it is important to be clear about how such demands are justified and how they are embedded in a general concept for a democratic society.

It is to these issues that we shall return in the final part of this study.

The Rencontre provinciale

The Prelude

More than any other event discussed here, the Rencontre provinciale captures in one single incident the current state of Ontario’s francophonie. Due to the size of the gathering (about 300 participants) and, more importantly, to the diverse backgrounds of its participating groups and individuals, it brought out the fractious relationship among the
various francophone players in Ontario. The debates which took place in a conference centre during one weekend in February of 1998 caused waves which were felt across francophone organizations in Ontario and whose ripple effect could be noticed in conversations long after the event had concluded. What do you think about what happened at the Rencontre provinciale? became a standard question in my interviews with francophones and the fact that people knew immediately what I was referring to attests to the impact of what had occurred during that one weekend. In order to understand the grand rhetoric as well as the frictions and frustrations of the event, however, one needs to step back a little to see what had led to the Rencontre provinciale in the first place.

As explained above, the Canadian government has been involved in giving substantial financial support to official language minority groups since the early 1970s. With the beginning of the 1990s, however, along with cutbacks in many other areas of government spending, the amount available to francophone groups in English-dominant provinces was reduced significantly. In 1987/88, for example, the amount of funding for francophone groups in Ontario stood at S 3,793,729 (Pal 1993:163). Ten years later, francophone groups were given S 677,131 less (Ministère du Patrimoine canadien 1996:section 8.1); a reduction of nearly 20%. This reduction in funding coincided with changes in the francophone landscape of Ontario, which made the cutbacks even more difficult to accept. The arrival of new francophones from Africa and the Caribbean since the early 1990s had spawned a multitude of new francophone clubs and organizations which were now eager to get their slice of the shrinking pie of government money. For long-established
francophone groups, this led to a perception of being squeezed from two sides: a less generous government and a greater number of applicants for funding.

At the same time, as part of a Canada-wide policy, the government had become less inclined to actually oversee the distribution of available funding and was eager to find some representative francophone body to which it could pay a lump sum and which would then take on the unenviable task of allocating funding among Ontario's many francophone groups. For an interim period a compromise was found and a so-called Joint Committee, composed of government representatives and members of francophone groups, was set up which would evaluate and decide on applications for funding. Given the heightened financial constraints and the changes in the distribution mechanism, there was clearly a need for Ontario's francophone groups to hold some sort of large-scale meeting that would bring everyone together in order to decide not only on financial matters but, even more importantly, to establish a new vision for Ontario's francophonie. This was the objective of the Rencontre provinciale. In fact, an even more existential issue became central to the discussions: could one, in fact, still assume that there was any kind of communauté francophone in Ontario, i.e. was there still any kind of common link between francophones living in Ontario or had they become so dispersed, geographically, culturally and in terms of their divergent social conditions and interests, that the very notion of a community, however tenuous, no longer made any sense. Even though it was clear from the start that no definitive answer could be found, the stakes were high, indeed. Thus, in preparation for the meeting, a number of reports and memoranda were produced that outlined the demands of different francophone segments and sketched some possible solutions. These written documents thus became the basis of discussion for the
deliberations at the Rencontre provinciale. The central document was a report drawn up by the forum’s Planning Committee (Comité de démarrage), whose recommendations were based on surveys and consultations undertaken by private consulting firms. In order to understand on which basis the debates during the Rencontre provinciale took place, I will summarize these various reports.

Reports Submitted Before the Rencontre provinciale

Planning Committee (the working document).

In a working document of the Rencontre provinciale’s Planning Committee, issued three months before the Rencontre provinciale, the contentious issues which would emerge during the forum had already been anticipated (Groupe de travail 1997:1). The very notion of a francophone community was so sensitive that, apart from the title of the agreement to be entered into with the Canadian government, the term community is hardly used.

Le mécanisme de concertation et de représentation s’applique à plus que l’Entente Canada-Communautés. Il devient la nouvelle façon pour la Francophonie ontarienne de travailler ensemble pour assurer le développement et l’épanouissement individuel et collectif des personnes qui désirent vivre en français en Ontario.

The mechanism for dialogue and representation applies to more than just the Canada-Communauté Agreement. It will become the new procedure in which Ontario’s francophonie, both individually and collectively, will work together to ensure the development and flourishing of those who wish to live in French in Ontario.

We have here an example of the extent of the unease surrounding the notion of community. While the paragraph begins with the title of the agreement between Ontario francophones and the Canadian government, which explicitly refers to Ontario
francophones as communauté, the Committee members are far more cautious, referring to francophonie ontarienne and later on to a term which places the individual French speaker much more in the centre than any collectivity: des personnes qui désirent vivre en français en Ontario.

As far as the arrival of new francophones is concerned, the Planning Committee states emphatically, that they are a plus for the community and that their exclusion would be to the detriment of long-established francophones. It is difficult to avoid the impression, though, that this is less of a statement and more of an appeal to long-established francophones not to see the newcomers as competitors but as allies.

La communauté des groupes ethniques et les groupes ethnoculturels francophones ajoutent [sic!] à la Francophonie qui existait déjà en Ontario et ce sur tous les plans. Elles sont donc un «plus» pour la Francophonie ontarienne (...). Si l’on refuse à l’un ou à l’autre les moyens de s’affirmer et de grandir, on se nuit à soi-même et on nuit à la Francophonie toute entière.

The Community of Ethnic Groups and the Ethnocultural Francophone Communities add something to the francophonie which already existed in Ontario, and it does so at every level. They are, therefore, a “plus” for Ontario’s francophonie (...). If one or the other is denied the means to affirm himself or herself and grow, one does harm not only to oneself but to the francophonie as a whole.

Memorandum by the Groupes raciaux

The gulf between old and new francophones is very clearly topicalized in the memorandum submitted to the Rencontre provinciale by the Groupes raciaux. It condemns what it considers to be the token integration of francophone newcomers. The newcomers, it charges, are welcome only insofar as they boost the number of overall francophones living in the province (and thus lend added weight to demands on the
government for francophone services) but they are ignored when it concerns the recognition of plurality among francophone groups in Ontario (Groupes raciaux francophones 1997).

Les éléments principaux de ce conflit larvé qui pose le problème de cohabitation mutuelle et de co-appartenance à la francophonie ontarienne (...) sont les suivants: la conviction qu'ont la quasi-totalité des leaders de la communauté des Groupes ethniques francophones et leurs membres d'être uniquement comptés comme francophones par les élites de la communauté franco-ontarienne et leurs organismes et associations communautaires lorsqu'il s'agit de faire des revendications auprès des gouvernements (...). Mais lorsqu'il s'agit de partager les retombées issues des démarches entreprises au nom de tous les francophones, les Groupes ethniques ne voient presque jamais être injectées dans leur communauté les richesses qui en découlent, que ce soit en termes d'emplois, de création d'équipements ou de financement de leurs organismes et organisations communautaires. (Groupes ethniques francophones 1997 :48)

The principal elements in this latent conflict of how to live with each other and belong to Ontario’s francophonie are the following:

the impression shared by nearly all of the leaders of the community of ethnic francophone groups and their members that they are only counted as francophones by the Franco-Ontarian community elite and their community organizations and associations when demands are made on the government (...). But when it comes to sharing the products of these demands which are made in the name of all francophones, the ethnic groups almost never see the fruits of such efforts applied to their community, whether in the form of jobs, the making available of material or financing of their organizations and community groups.

For the Groupes raciaux, the consequence to be drawn from this unacceptable situation is to clearly distinguish between les Franco-Ontariens (de souche) and les Groupes raciaux.

Unless this distinction is made, the argument goes, the unequal treatment of old and new
francophones would go unnoticed. But this distinction is also justified on the basis of the very behaviour of the *francophones de souche*. The memorandum sets up a simple parallelism: while within Ontario there exists a francophone minority which is separate (and adamant about its distinctiveness) from the anglophone majority, this minority itself ought then not to have any difficulty recognizing that there exists within that francophone minority a distinct minority group called *les Groupes raciaux*, which is equally adamant that *les Franco-Ontariens* do not render them invisible. Thus, the memorandum continues, another element of the conflict between old and new francophones is

\begin{quote}
la non acceptation du fait qu'auant il est anormal que les anglophones parlent au nom des Franco-Ontariens, autant il est inacceptable que les Franco-Ontariens directement ou indirectement pretendent parler au nom des Groupes ethniques francophones dans les matieres qui sont propres a ceux-ci et pour lesquelles leur legitime est et doit etre principale. (Groupes ethniques francophones 1997 :43/44)
\end{quote}

the refusal of the notion that, as much as it would be unnatural for anglophones to speak on behalf of Franco-Ontarians, would it be acceptable that Franco-Ontarians claim to, either directly or indirectly, speak on behalf of the ethnic francophone groups in areas which are clearly their prerogative and over which their legitimacy is and must have priority.

What this alerts us to, once again, is the importance of the terminology used to describe Ontario’s francophones. There is no consensus as to whether newly arrived and non-white francophones are included in the term *Franco-Ontarian*. A number of black francophones I interviewed did consider themselves to be Franco-Ontarian. They did, however, always point out that they understood the term to mean francophone and living in Ontario. Thus, they attempted to appropriate the term for themselves rather than reject it as tainted with the notion of *Canadien francais* of old stock. Other black francophones,
such as the authors of the memorandum, however, "do not regard themselves necessarily as Franco-Ontarians and certainly not as Franco-Ontarien de souche [ne se reconnaissent pas nécessairement comme franco-ontariens et certainement pas de souche]" (Groupes raciaux francophones 1997:10).

Being submerged among les Franco-Ontariens, however, is not the only fear expressed in the memorandum. Black francophones are also determined not to become absorbed among anglophone multicultural groups. Even though these might be of similar origin (e.g. from Africa), they do not recognize the linguistic distinctiveness of black francophones.

Ces derniers [les groupes ethniques anglophones] ont toujours eu du mal à accepter la réalité et les particularités des groupes ethniques francophones (à savoir la particularité linguistique et les conséquences qui peuvent en découler), préférant réduire leur réalité à une simple réalité ethnique comme tant d'autres en Ontario. (Groupes raciaux francophones 1997:50)

The latter [the ethnic anglophone groups] have always found it difficult to accept the reality and particular characteristics of the ethnic francophone groups (especially their linguistic difference and the attendant consequences) and preferred to reduce their reality to a simple ethnic reality as so many others in Ontario.

This points to the minority situation of black francophones on two fronts: they are both a linguistic and a racial minority. Thus, in their pursuit to establish for themselves a place within the Canadian polity, they could have chosen the path of English-speaking multiculturalism (and, on an individual basis, many black francophones have, indeed, done this by sending their children to anglophone schools, which they perceive as more tolerant than francophone schools). Still, a number of black francophones remain committed to
the policy of bilingualism rather than that of multiculturalism as a way of establishing a public presence within the Canadian political landscape. This is clearly echoed in the report.

Les groupes ethniques anglophones préfèrent en effet jouer le multiculturalisme au lieu de respecter le principe de dualité de langues officielles ou bilinguisme sur lequel s'appuient principalement les Groupes ethniques francophones dans leurs démarches et leurs revendications.

The ethnic anglophone groups do, in fact, prefer to play the multicultural card at the expense of respecting the principle of official language duality or bilingualism, which is the critical cornerstone in the demands and claims made by the ethnic francophone groups.

Memorandum by the Association féministe

Another group that is in a somewhat similar position of dual minority status are francophone women. They, too, could align themselves with the cause of anglophone feminists. Instead, however, the francophone Association féministe has opted to work for the feminist cause within the francophone community, in spite of the fact that they have experienced particularly tense relations with the traditional francophone lobby group. In 1996, they went so far as to completely withdraw from the Entente Canada-Communauté, protesting what they saw as unacceptable irregularities and a lack of accountability in the handling of the Entente's finances.
L'Association féministe participe à une dynamique démocratique. Elle privilégie la transparence, les discussions ouvertes et les débats. (…) En décembre 1996, lors de la signature de l'Entente, en plus de refuser de la signer, l'Association féministe a fait le choix de se retirer de la gestion de l'Entente. Les motifs de ce retrait ont été basés sur l'expérience vécue par l'Association féministe à la Coalition pour le développement et l'épanouissement de la communauté franco-ontarienne et des minorités raciales francophones de l'Ontario sous la présidence du groupe de lobby traditionnel. Cette expérience a été teintée de non transparence et d'irrégularités. (…) Depuis la signature de l'Entente Canada-Communauté et la mise en place du comité de démarrage, issu de cette dernière, l'Association féministe a constaté des irrégularités et les a dénoncées régulièrement dans sa correspondance avec la ministre du Patrimoine canadien, Sheila Copps. Mais l'Association féministe n'a reçu aucune garantie de la part des parties concernées par l'Entente (c'est-à-dire Patrimoine canadien et le comité de démarrage) concernant les règles démocratiques qu'on entend appliquer dans tout ce processus. Au contraire, nous avons pu observer d'inquiétantes entorses à ces règles démocratiques.

The Association féministe takes part in a democratic process. It is in favour of openness as well as frank discussions and debates. (…) In December of 1996, when the Entente was signed, the Association féministe not only refused to sign but also chose to withdraw from co-managing the Entente. This decision was motivated by the Association's past experience in the Coalition for the Development and Expansion of the Franco-Ontarian Community and the ethnic francophone groups under the leadership of the traditional lobby group. This experience was unfortunately characterized by a lack of openness and by irregularities. (…) Since the signing of the Entente Canada-Communauté and the setting up of the Planning Committee, which was formed as a result of the Entente, the Association féministe has noticed irregularities and criticized these regularly in its correspondence with the Minister for Canadian Heritage, Sheila Copps. But the Association féministe has not received any guarantees from the parties concerned (i.e. Canadian Heritage and the Planning Committee) concerning the democratic procedures which are to be applied in this process. On the contrary, we have noticed worrying violations of such democratic rules.
These allegations are then substantiated with a list of management practices by the traditional francophone lobby group which, according to the Association féministe, violated democratic principles:

- Decisions were approved by assumed consensus rather than explicit expressions of support, i.e. unless an organization was explicitly opposed to ratification of the Entente, it was assumed to have given its approval.

- Decisions were taken at hastily organized meetings, without fixing a quorum of members for binding decisions and without any minutes that could later be consulted.

- No proper procedures were followed in the nomination of members of the Comité de démarrage; instead, they appear to have been picked by the traditional francophone lobby group's president or supervisory board.

Given these serious shortcomings, the Association féministe expressed its disappointment with the current process which, it argues, had been the first promising initiative to integrate the interests of Ontario's francophone organizations in the entire history of francophones in Ontario. The process, the Association féministe argues, fell victim to the traditional group's strong-handed tactics. The feminist organization therefore voices serious doubts as to the process of reconceptualisation.
Au départ, le but visé par le processus de reconceptualisation (...) visait à amener l'ensemble du milieu associatif à se concerter davantage, à se donner des priorités et à favoriser des formes de représentation fondées sur les principes de l'équité, de l'inclusion et de la démocratie. Cette démarche semble dorénavant brouillée par les besoins corporatifs du groupe de lobby traditionnel, son goût pour la hiérarchie et le contrôle de la créativité et des ressources du milieu.

In the beginning, the intended goal of the renewal process (...) was for the entire realm of [francophone] organizations to work together more closely, to determine priorities and to privilege types of representation which are based on the principles of equity, inclusion and democracy. These steps now appear to have fallen victim to the organizational interests of the traditional francophone lobby group, its predilection for hierarchical structures and control over the creative potential and the resources of this realm.

Whether these allegations are true or not, they do express a profound sense of frustration concerning past procedures both in the management of government funding and in organizing francophone interests in Ontario. And the Association féministe is concerned that any new structure that is to be set up will repeat the mistakes of the past. Instead, the Association féministe argues that the fundamental changes in francophone Ontario should be recognized. No longer can it be assumed that all francophones feel represented by the traditional francophone lobby group. A new and diverse leadership has emerged and needs to be recognized.

Let us recall the memorandum by the Association féministe, which was quoted earlier (see p. 129). Together with the above allegations, it leaves the reader in no doubt that the Association féministe is a strong advocate of an appropriate representation of the diversity of francophones in Ontario. And it clearly denounces any attempt to constrain this diversity through a centralized and monolithic organization. But precisely because there
can be no suspicion that the *Association féministe* would want to encroach upon the independence of any francophone group, it has no trouble positing the existence of an overall francophone community, referred to as *la communauté francophone*. If we recall the report by the Planning Committee, on the other hand, which is a group which might more easily be subject to the suspicion of wishing to create homogeneity, the term *la communauté francophone* was very carefully avoided (see Planning Committee (the working document), p. 129). In addition, the memorandum of the *Association féministe* is not exactly clear on how more particularistic interests are to be defended. It states that *certaines causes* can be taken up jointly but that francophone women of any given type (e.g. racial minority, lesbian or handicapped) are better served by their own organizations because it is within these organizations that they can influence decisions more easily. Which ones are these organizations, though? Are they women’s groups or are they racial minority or handicapped groups, for example? If people have dual or multiple affiliations, it means that there are several avenues they can pursue in the defence of their concerns. But even the *Association féministe* does not address the issue of how individuals ought to decide which avenue serves them best.

*Planning Committee (final report)*

Considering the above-mentioned memoranda, we can appreciate that the Planning Committee faced no easy task in coming up with its own final report. Whatever proposals they would make would be expected to incorporate to the greatest extent possible the positions and ideas of the various members of Ontario’s francophonie. However, given the fact that many of these members were quite openly at loggerheads over the future of francophone Ontario, no magic solution could be expected. Thus, the Planning
Committee's final report contains, at the very beginning, a survey of the many different views held among Ontario francophones. It also outlines the new constraints faced by le monde associatif due to government cutbacks and the increased number of organizations.

The solution proposed, however, appears an almost outright admission of the impossibility to come up with a fair and equitable mechanism of attributing funding.

As it seems highly unlikely that any organization would disqualify itself by claiming not to be efficient and effective, criteria of efficiency and effectiveness would have to be applied externally by some third party. The terms efficiency and effectiveness are so vague, though, that they would be subject to a great deal of interpretation and difficult to operationalize for concrete funding decisions.

In order to circumvent the problem of allocating funds through one central organization, the Planning Committee thus proposes the establishment of several, fairly independent subcommittees, which would allow the specificities of organizations in different domains to be respected. This includes the recognition of the specific circumstances of francophone newcomers:
Les minorités ethnoculturelles et raciales sont de plus en plus nombreuses parmi nous. Elles composent la majorité de la clientèle de certaines institutions dans certaines régions de la province. Et même si généralement elles sont d'accord pour être servies en français, une partie importante de leurs besoins diffère des revendications historiques de la communauté francophone. (Comité de démarrage 1997:17)

The ethnocultural and racial minorities make up an increasing proportion of our group. They constitute the majority of users in certain institutions in some regions in our province. And even if they tend to agree on the importance of French services, many of their needs are different from the historical demands of the francophone community.

We see here, again, how carefully the Planning Committee treads on the issue of community. The title of its final report avoids any mention of community to designate the totality of French speakers in Ontario, preferring to refer to the objective of its work as the reconceptualisation of la francophonie ontarienne. And in the passage cited above, the commonality of francophones appears to be reduced, indeed, to the demand for services in French (elles sont d'accord pour être servies en français), while the needs of francophone newcomers are juxtaposed to the historical demands of la communauté francophone. This wording, of course, raises the question whether the communauté francophone is seen as restricted to those with a historical stake in Canada. It is around these issues that much of the debate at the Rencontre provinciale turned.

Framing the Discussion – the Opening Remarks

It is difficult to give an adequate account of the debates which took place during the weekend of 20-22 February 1998. Given the large number of participants and the fact that the audience was divided into two separate convention rooms (linked via video-
transmission), the discussion took place in a very controlled fashion by observing a list of speakers. This had the effect that reactions to speeches or other remarks were sometimes delayed as they were placed in a queue of speakers who had already indicated their desire to speak. The discussion, therefore, is traced here more in terms of thematic connections rather than mere temporal succession.

The pivotal issue during the whole weekend was the extent to which the diverse strands of Ontario’s francophonie could be brought together in a way that would guarantee a certain amount of unity. A common front vis-à-vis the public and particularly the federal government should be presented, without encroaching upon the autonomy of the many components of Ontario’s francophonie.

Late one Friday evening, the Rencontre provinciale was ready to get under way. Many of the participants had covered great distances in order to attend the forum and the speeches on Friday evening constituted the opening remarks rather than any serious work on the new structure. After the chairperson had welcomed the participants, Diane Marleau spoke in her capacity as federal minister responsible for international co-operation and la Francophonie. She was also standing in for her colleague, the federal minister of Canadian Heritage, Sheila Copps, whose funding formula was very much at the centre of the debate for most participants. Her remarks vacillated between an explicit recognition of la communauté franco-ontarienne and a more cautious conceptualization of Ontario’s francophones, when she referred to the stakes involved in the future of francophones in Ontario (les enjeux quant à l’avenir des francophones en Ontario). Thus, she was careful not to prejudge the debate and certainly to avoid any impression that she was biased in
favour of the Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent, even more so since she had been introduced as a Franco-Ontarian from Kirkland Lake.

The forum which brings us together tonight is of great importance not only for you, who are taking part, but for all francophones in the province. (....) Roughly a dozen meetings have been organized with regional organizations, with provincial associations in specific sectors and with the ethnocultural communities. These meetings bear witness to the willingness of the committee to obtain as wide a consensus as possible. (....) As this forum communautaire provincial takes place, a new stage in the relationship between Franco-Ontarian community and the Government of Canada as well as between francophone organizations is entered. (....) I encourage you to continue to work in a spirit of openness and co-operation. Let us look for what is good for our community and not for our own individual concerns. (....) Together we are strong. We must work together to win and all Canadians will benefit, especially francophones.

Clearly, there is something in the speech for everyone: it satisfies the interests of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent, it underscores the importance of community for national unity and it emphasizes the need to continually renegotiate the terms under
which Canadians of various origins establish a commitment to Canada (*le plus vaste consensus possible*). To what extent these ideas, which all possess some merit on their own terms, are actually compatible was left for the forum’s participants to fight over, at which point the federal minister had, of course, long since taken leave of them.

The next person to speak was Noble Villeneuve, provincial minister responsible for francophone affairs. His speech was given almost entirely to a positive rendering of the actions taken by the Government of Ontario to help the francophones in the province: from the creation of exclusively francophone school boards to the funding of various francophone institutions and language support programs, he presented a positive picture of his government’s record in francophone affairs. He avoided any mention of the restructuring effort about to get under way or the nature of the francophone community in Ontario. What he did, though, was to begin his speech by talking about his personal acquaintance with one of the prominent participants in the forum, the former member of parliament, Gilles Beauchamp, whom he referred to as an old colleague at Queen’s Park and neighbour in Eastern Ontario. He ended his speech by referring to another member of the audience, Paul Desjardins, whom he also referred to as a friend and former colleague. Villeneuve did not talk about his vision for the francophone community of Ontario but if the way his speech is framed is any indication, one is probably not remiss in assuming that he is attached to a rather traditional concept of the Franco-Ontarian community – and his remarks were greeted by applause lasting twice as long as that following the speech given by Diane Marleau.
Albert Grondin, former president of the traditional francophone lobby group and head of the Planning Committee, opened the debate proper by thanking the members of the Planning Committee for their work. He emphasized the amount of work that had gone into preparing the Committee's final report and the recommendations for a new dialogue in francophone Ontario. He finished on what appears initially to be a conciliatory tone of openness towards debate as he stated:

Les formes que nous voudrons bien donner à cette concertation, à cette représentation politique ne dépendent que de nous, elles ne sont pas décidées à l'avance. elles dépendent de notre créativité.

The shape we want to give to this dialogue, to this representation depends on us alone. It is not decided in advance, it depends on our creativity.

In the next sentence, however, his speech made a remarkable about-face and turned into a thinly veiled admonition not to derail this community effort. These remarks stand in marked contrast to the avowed openness expressed in his previous remark:

Ceux et celles qui sont venus chercher un tel mécanisme peu importe la forme, ceux et celles qui sont venus chercher un tel mécanisme sont au bon endroit et au bon moment. Ceux et celles qui cherchent autre chose ou qui voudraient tenter d'empêcher la communauté d'arriver à un mécanisme peu importe la forme ne sont pas au bon endroit et devraient faire ailleurs ce qu'ils ont à faire.

Those people who have come here to look for a new way of working together, no matter what shape it will take, those people have come to the right place at the right time. Those people who are looking to do something else or who wish to try and stop the community from arriving at such a new way of working together, no matter what shape it will take, are not in the right place and should do what they have to do elsewhere.
Who are these other people? And what is it they are trying to do? Some members of the audience might have been left to wonder what he meant but others would certainly have interpreted these remarks as an open invitation to consider the non-traditional francophones as culprits if the weekend’s events were to lead in an unwelcome direction. And it is significant, in this context, that Grondin made no mention of the pluralist character of Ontario’s francophones but pointed out that his main concern was the development of *la communauté*.

The opening volley having been fired, the discussion quickly turned to the central issue of diversity vs. unity among Ontario’s francophones. Immediately after Grondin, Stephan Nouba, representative of the Groupes raciaux, went up to the podium. He began his speech by emphasizing that it was not the traditional francophone lobby group that was hosting the event, an impression he felt had been created by some of the earlier speakers. This, he underlined, was an event bringing together francophone groups from across Ontario, regardless of their historical background. He then moved on to say that, contrary to what some might expect of such an event, the Groupes raciaux were not interested in having their interests mixed up with those of other groups.
Nous ne voulons pas mélanger nos préoccupations avec celles d'autres groupes en tant que tel. Nous avons une spécificité suffisamment précise comme communauté pour déterminer de manière collective les intérêts autour desquels nous fonctionnons. (...) Il s'agissait pour nous de faire en sorte que le gouvernement fédéral accepte que nous existions et que nous sommes francophones. Nous voulions ensuite que notre spécificité soit reconnue non seulement à l'intérieur de l'entente mais dans ces applications d'où l'ajout de la mention Groupes ethniques francophones qui est dans l'entente Canada-Communauté à laquelle de toute façon nous tenons définitivement.

We do not want to mix our concerns with those of other groups as such. We have particular characteristics as a community, which are sufficiently specific and which allow us to determine in a collective fashion the interests around which we will work. (...) What we had to do was to make sure that the federal government accepts that we exist and that we are francophone. We then wanted to have our particularity recognized, not only within the Entente but also in its applications, thus the addition of the term Groupes raciaux francophones that is now a part of the Entente Canada-Communauté. This is something we absolutely insist on.

Coming directly on the heels of Grondin's remarks, through which he had warned those not committed to community building that they ought, in effect, not to be present at the Rencontre provinciale ("Those people who ... wish to try and stop the community from arriving at such a new way of working together ... are not in the right place and should do what they have to do elsewhere."), it is difficult not to see Nouba's remarks as a direct challenge. Far from any closing of the ranks, intended by Grondin, the Groupes raciaux want to be visible and recognized and their attachments to the francophone community are argued to be rather tenuous.

When Nouba talks about community or 'us', he refers to nothing beyond the francophone racial minority. Past experience, he argues, has shown a pattern of exclusion of the racial
minority organizations from the funds available to francophone groups. Their participation at the Rencontre provinciale is therefore intended to rectify this situation.

Nous nous sommes rendus compte d’un non-respect des engagements explicites qui nous avaient été faits. Nous nous sommes rendus compte à l’effet du non-respect de l’esprit de l’entente. (...) Donc en ce qui nous concerne nous sommes venus partager les moyens par lesquels pouvoir arriver à quelque chose qui ne nous permet pas d’exister mais qui nous permet d’être déterminants sur les évolutions qui sont les nôtres. (...) Donc, nous sommes venus simplement pour dire que nous voulons que l’on donne un sens à l’équité, laquelle détermine l’inclusivité. C’est à dire en fait que les décisions (...) permettent ensemble que nous puissions être visibles, cette fois-ci dans le bon sens du terme. Nous avons été tellement absents par la faute des autres, peut-être par notre absence, nous voulons donc ne pas disparaître par la suite et je dirais que c’est dans cet esprit que nous venons ici, que nous vous expliquerons les éléments qui constituent la trame de ce que nous voulons faire, nous ne sommes pas ici en terme d’organisation, nous sommes ici en terme de communauté et à ce titre là, nous ne pouvons pas voter en effet pour une structure. Nous votons pour des partenariats suffisamment établis à intérêts mutuellement avantageux.

We have come to realize that there is a failure in respecting the commitments that have been made to us. We have come to understand the effect of failing to observe the spirit of the Entente. (...) Therefore, as far as we are concerned, we have come to share the means by which something can be achieved which does not merely allow us to exist but which allows us to steer the changes which affect us. (...) So, we have come here simply to say that we want meaning to be given to the idea of equity, which itself determines inclusiveness. This means that decisions will jointly allow us to become visible, this time in the positive sense of the term. We have been so much absent, due to the actions of others and maybe through our own failure, that we do not want to disappear as a result and I would say that it is with this spirit that we come here, that we will explain to you the components of the framework we wish to create. We are not here as an organization, we are here as a community and it is in this capacity that we are unable to vote for a new structure. We can vote on partnerships that are established to our mutual advantage.
In no uncertain terms, Nouba sketches an entirely different picture to outline the objective of the event. Not a coming together is to be achieved, but a partnership between ‘our community’ and ‘your community’, both of which receive federal funding because they are francophone in a minority context. The language contains no heart-warming, organic allusions to a common destiny as a francophone minority community within a sea of English (as we shall see in other remarks by Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent) but it is the rather cold language of a business contract. If there is a possibility of obtaining money and if co-operation increases this possibility, then this creates common ground as intérêts mutuellement avantageux.

The next speaker is Moustapha Bari, representative of the Communautés ethnoculturelles. His tone is somewhat more conciliatory than Nouba’s. His main concern is the fact that whatever decision-making body evolves from the Rencontre provinciale, within such a body, groups representing francophone newcomers will never be in a majority. Thus, there is, in effect, no guarantee that any money will be made available to projects and organizations which are important to newcomers. He therefore demands that a certain amount of money be set aside as soon as it is received from the federal government and that it only be spent by and for ethnocultural and racial minority groups. His discourse envisions at first a distinct separation of old and new francophones. Later on, though, he argues that once the conditions préalables have been fulfilled, the newcomers may become a potential that the communauté franco-ontarienne can draw on.
On parle beaucoup d’intégration des communautés ethno-culturelles dans la société francophone de l’Ontario. Est-ce possible dans ces conditions que nous, qu’on puisse enfin être intégrés dans cette société ? Je dirais que non parce que comme l’a dit tout à l’heure [refers to remarks by another speaker] si j’ai bien retenu ce qu’elle a dit : elle a dit il faut diviser les gens en fonction de leur couleur ou de leur race. C’est très bien dit ! Nous sommes tous des francophones différents par la culture certes, mais ce que nous voulons, ce que nous voulons devant nous c’est d’être intégrés dans la société francophone de l’Ontario. Mais toutefois, pour être intégrés, il faut qu’il y ait des conditions requises à remplir. (…) Je dirais que la première condition qui est nécessaire pour cette intégration dans la société franco-ontarienne d’abord, c’est de nous permettre, c’est nous permettre de prendre des décisions en ce qui concerne les sujets qui nous concernent directement de près ou de loin. La deuxième condition nécessaire, c’est de nous permettre enfin de définir un montant de l’enveloppe des sommes allouées aux communautés francophones de l’Ontario parce que je ne crois pas que ça sera vraiment réalisable cette intégration sans que ces conditions soient remplies. Et je dirais que nous sommes des Canadiens francophones vivant en français en Ontario.

There is much talk about integrating the ethno-cultural communities into the francophone society of Ontario. Is it possible under these conditions that we, that we might finally be integrated into this society? I would say, no, because as someone had said earlier [refers to remarks by another speaker], if I understood correctly what she had said, she had said that people need to be divided depending on their colour or their race. That’s well put! We are all francophones, from different cultures certainly, but what we want here is to be integrated into the francophone society of Ontario. But still, in order to be integrated, certain necessary conditions must be fulfilled. (…) I would say that the first condition that is necessary for this integration into Franco-Ontarian society is to allow us to take decisions in those areas which concern us directly, both in the stricter and broader sense. The second necessary condition is to allow us finally to have an amount of money in the overall budget for the francophone communities of Ontario because I do not believe that this integration can be realized without those conditions having been fulfilled. And I would say that we are francophone Canadians who live in French in Ontario.
Following these opening remarks, the assembly retired until the next day, when the debate started in earnest.

The first person to speak on Saturday morning was Gisèle Montour, who was responsible for the Planning Committee’s proposals for a new province-wide francophone structure. The Planning Committee’s final report had largely avoided the term community and Gisèle Montour could be seen to deal very carefully with this very sensitive term in her presentation, which outlined the Committee’s proposals for a new mode of collaboration between Ontario francophones.
Alors les prémisses pour en arriver à un modèle, c’est que le modèle devait proposer une nouvelle façon de faire les choses, une nouvelle façon de travailler ensemble qui respectait l’autonomie des différentes composantes qui assurait l’équité parce que comme on a entendu hier, c’est Moustapha qui disait hier inclusivité, c’est beau mais inclusivité ça veut pas dire amener tout l’ monde. C’est drôle ? Mais c’est pas que ça veut dire inclusivité. Inclusivité ça veut dire, oui amener tout le monde, mais s’assurer que tout le monde a une chance égale et comme nous les francophones on comprend très bien ça parce que c’est qu’on demande à notre gouvernement fédéral : de nous donner des droits qui sont au-delà des droits de la majorité parce que nous sommes une minorité. Alors, l’inclusivité dans le cadre de la communauté francophone de l’Ontario, c’est de donner, de regarder qui est désavantage parmi nous et de leur donner des choses additionnelles pour qu’ils puissent finalement se rehausser au niveau de tout le monde, comme communauté. Alors équité dans le cadre de l’inclusivité c’est à dire, c’est à dire que c’est un concept difficile à saisir mais comme communauté parce qu’on l’applique depuis cent ans, on est probablement celle qui est la plus en mesure de le saisir.

So, the premises upon which a model can be worked out, it’s that the model should suggest a new way of working things out, a new way of working together that respects the autonomy of different components and ensures equity because, as we heard yesterday, it’s Moustapha who said yesterday, inclusiveness, that’s great but inclusiveness, that doesn’t mean taking everyone along. That’s strange, isn’t it? But that’s not what inclusiveness means. Inclusiveness, what it means, yes, it means taking everyone along, but also making sure that everyone has an equal chance and as francophones we understand this very well because that’s what we ask of our federal government: to give us rights which go beyond the rights of the majority because we are a minority. So, inclusiveness within the framework of the francophone community of Ontario, it’s to give, to look at who is at a disadvantage among us and to give them something extra so that they can finally rise to the level of everyone else, as a community. So, equity in the sense of inclusiveness, that’s, that’s a difficult concept to grasp but as a community, because we have applied it for a hundred years, we should be the ones who can best understand what it means.

This is, in effect, one of very few statements that very clearly outlines the dual minority status of the new francophones and which is not made by a new francophone but by one of
the traditional francophones (although in the somewhat neutral capacity of spokesperson for the Planning Committee). As Montour juggles with the term *inclusivité*, (the meaning of which is certainly not fixed), an important parallelism is drawn between the situation of the new francophones and the traditional Franco-Ontarian community. Gisèle Montour argues that it is the Franco-Ontarians themselves who should be most sympathetic to the demands for autonomy on the part of the new francophones since the struggle of the new francophones for special recognition is similar to the Franco-Ontarian struggle for recognition within the anglophone majority in Ontario (a point which had already been raised in Memorandum by the Groupes raciaux, p. 129).

**The Discourses of Unity and Diversity**

After the opening remarks, much of the discussion at the forum continued to gravitate around issues of unity and diversity. There were principally two camps that emerged. Those emphasizing unity tried to convince the participants that the francophones of Ontario could only move forward by highlighting what unites them as a group. On the other hand, there were those in favour of recognizing diversity, arguing that the francophones of Ontario will only have a future if they recognize the complex and multi-layered make-up of their community. Between them stood one voice, here referred to as the *reconciler perspective*. While the unity vs. diversity issue was overtly at the centre of the debate, the underlying ideas and assumptions reveal a great deal about how various francophones view the relevance of ethnic and linguistic affiliation in the Canadian polity. Thus, between the lines, emerged several sub-themes. While these sub-themes were not independent and were used in order to promote a particular vision for Ontario’s francophonie (which is either geared toward highlighting its unity or towards emphasizing
its diversity), the implications of these sub-themes exceed the immediate context and speak directly to different conditions, under which the imagination of a multicultural democracy is possible.

*The Unity Camp:*

The National-Provincial-Linguistic Identity Question

The first day’s speeches demonstrated the frailty of Ontario’s francophone community and those within the unity camp tried to re-establish a sense of homogeneity and quell any dissenting voices by using a fairly blunt attempt at rallying everyone to a common cause. This attempt I refer to here as the *national-provincial-linguistic identity question*. A number of speakers simply asked the audience three questions: *Are you Canadian? Do you live in Ontario? Do you speak French?* The implication was that whoever answered affirmatively to all of the questions ought to be able to put the contentious issue to rest and ought to be considered ‘in’; whoever was unable to answer affirmatively obviously did not fulfil any one of the three simple conditions and should thus be considered to be ‘out’.

The complexity of belonging or not belonging to the Franco-Ontarian community was thus cleared of any historical or structural complexities and reduced to one of exclusively contemporary relevance. In doing so, however, the expected response almost took on the significance of a patriotic pledge of allegiance. Consider how the first participant to use the national-provincial-linguistic identity question introduced it under the guise of a spontaneous survey (signalling openness and interest) but immediately restricted any potential respondent by requiring a yes-no answer (signalling a closing of the ranks among the yeas and the exclusion of any nays).
Serge Blanchet : J'aimerais faire un petit recensement auprès de certaines associations ici et la question : Êtes-vous -- la fédération culturelle, l'association féministe et les minorités visibles -- Êtes-vous -- trois questions que j'aimerais qui soient répondues par un oui ou un non pas par une grande explication -- Êtes-vous Canadien ? Êtes-vous Ontariens ? Et parlez-vous français ? Alors à ce moment là j'aimerais savoir : c'est quoi le problème qui se passe ici aujourd'hui ? Et qu'on asseoir pis qu'on marche dans la bonne direction parce que je crois que la réponse est 'oui' que vous soyez et n'importe qui, n'importe d'où, n'importe quand, n'importe quelle couleur. Et si vous êtes capable de répondre 'oui' aux trois questions qui vous êtes posées, Canadiens, Ontariens et français, on va toutes vers la même direction. S'il y en a qui peuvent pas répondre 'oui' à cette question là, je me demande qu'est-ce qu'ils font ici aujourd'hui ?

The implication of the injunction is clear and reminiscent of Albert Grondin's admonition not to derail the community effort: if you answer 'yes', you belong to the community by hook or by crook, if you answer 'no' you simply ought not to be there. Community belonging becomes a simple issue of responding to three questions, based upon which on va toutes vers la même direction.

Serge Blanchet: I would like to conduct a little survey among some organizations here and the question is: Are you -- the Cultural Federation, the Feminist Association and visible minorities -- are you -- there are three questions I would like to have answered by a yes or a no and not by some long explanation -- Are you Canadian? Are you Ontarian? And do you speak French? Well, then I'd like to know: What is this problem we are dealing with here today? Let's have this established and go forward in the right direction because, I believe, the answer is 'yes' that you are, no matter who you are, no matter where you are from, no matter when and of which colour you are. And if you are able to answer 'yes' to the three questions you have been asked, Canadian, Ontarian and French, we all go in the same direction. If there are people who cannot answer 'yes' to this question, I wonder what they are doing here today.
This line of argument proved quite successful, finding favour with a number of speakers later on during the Rencontre provinciale. It had by now become the custom for speakers to introduce themselves to the audience before speaking. When the president of the traditional francophone lobby group intervened on a procedural point, she introduced herself in the following way:

*Chantal Charest:* Canadienne, Ontarienne et francophone. Je veux tout simplement poser une question de clarification...

She then continued with the procedural point she wanted to make. Gisèle Montour, speaker of the Planning Committee, also used the national-provincial-linguistic identity question in her appeal to unite all francophone forces while conceding that the needs of some francophones may be different from others:

*Gisèle Montour:* Je vois que nous avons les mêmes rêves, nous avons les mêmes aspirations, nous avons les mêmes besoins de développement, des besoins différents c’est sûr mais nous sommes ici pour la les mêmes raisons. Oui, je pense que tous les gens ici se sentent Canadiens, ils se sentent Ontariens, ils se sentent francophones. Ils veulent que la communauté grandisse.

*Gisèle Montour:* I see that we have the same dreams, we have the same hopes, we have the same needs for development, various needs, certainly, but we are here for the same reasons. Yes, I think that everyone here feels Canadian, they feel Ontarian, they feel francophone. They want the community to grow.

The careful avoidance of the term community, which could be observed in the Planning Committee's report and her earlier speech, now gives way to a simple claim that everyone
wants la communauté to grow. It was then a short step to arguing that, in the interest of collective francophone goals, personal objections need to be set aside. Using the organic imagery of a marriage in which one supposedly needs to overcome selfish individual impulses for the greater good of the marital union, the next speaker argues that components of the francophonie must sacrifice something for the greater good of the community.

Pierre Michaud: Il faut qu’on se dépasse individuellement et comme organisme individuel. C’est important de réaliser ce qu’on a à défendre individuellement, c’est encore aussi plus important de réaliser ce qu’on a à défendre et faire d’une façon commune comme collectivité francophone. On peut parler de mariage maintenant. (...) Dans une union les parties souvent sacrifient des choses pour le bien du commun. C’est pas différent chez nous. C’est pas différent ici.

Pierre Michaud: We have to overcome our personal and collective individualisms. It’s important to achieve the things we must defend on an individual basis, but it is even more important to achieve the things we must defend and act jointly as a group of francophones. We could talk about a marriage now. (...) In a marital union, the two parties often sacrifice things for the greater good of the union. It’s not any different for us. It’s not any different here.

Unification Across the Ethnocultural-Lesbian-Communist Divide

While the issue of internal diversity among Ontario’s francophones was not explicitly addressed in the previous remarks, other speakers, whose comments are discussed below, did broach it. They focused on the need to unite as francophones, regardless of any other affiliations. The pattern of argument in the remarks quoted below is surprisingly similar: the speaker professes tolerance and a spirit of inclusion, then takes a mocking stance towards some people’s need to have their difference explicitly recognized and concludes by asking everyone to join forces and work together.
In addition to exhibiting this pattern, the first example quoted here also openly challenges the justification for the Groupes raciaux and communautés ethnoculturelles to exist as two separate groups.

On nous a dit depuis des années que l'union fait la force pis ça me ramène à la question de tout à l'heure. Pourquoi vous divisiez-vous? Pourquoi ne travaillez-vous pas ensemble pour être un groupe fort et uni? (...) Pourquoi on regroupe pas ces deux groupes là [Groupes raciaux / Groupements ethnoculturels] ensemble parce qu'il semble y avoir une confusion dans les documents qui sont présentés par eux-mêmes, qu'ils ne sont pas capables de définir clairement parce que c'est pas clair pour tout le monde la différence entre Groupes raciaux et Groupements ethnoculturels. Dans ma tête à moi de jeune inclusif qui veut travailler avec la communauté pis qui voit tout le monde égal -- homme, femme, jaune, rose, barré candy -- tout le monde sont pareils pis c'est comme ça qu'on rend les choses inclusives. Dans mon avis lorsque les gens sont de couleur ou d'une race ou d'une ethnie et on les traite différentes, c'est ça la définition de la discrimination. Nous ne voulons pas discriminer, nous voulons travailler.

We have been told for years that 'united we stand, divided we fall'. So, that brings me back to the question asked before. Why do you divide yourselves? Why don't you work together to become a strong and united group? (...) Why don't we put these two groups together [Groupes raciaux / Groupements ethnoculturels] because it seems that there is a confusion in the documents which they themselves have submitted, they are unable to define it clearly because it's not clear for everyone what the difference is between Groupes raciaux and Groupements ethnoculturels. For me, as a young inclusive person who wants to work with the community and who sees everyone as equal — man, woman, yellow, pink, striped candy-colour — everyone is equal and that's how we make things inclusive.

In my view, when people are of a particular colour or of a particular race or of a particular ethnicity and they are treated differently, that's the definition of discrimination. We do not want to discriminate, we want to work.

The underlying assumption contained in the above speaker's position is that the Rencontre provinciale as a whole is somehow able, by majority vote, to decide on the legitimacy of certain groups. His view of inclusiveness is not one that allows the recognition of
difference but rather one that intends to abolish difference. The conceptual imprecision contained in this remark, as incidentally in many others, is the blurring of an important distinction:

a. difference used as the ideological underpinning of racist notions of racial superiority and;

b. difference as a recognition of the existence of unjust systems of exclusion that continue to exist in society in spite of legal equality, and thus a commitment to overcoming inequality through special intervention (such as affirmative action programs).

Failing to make this distinction can lead to the uncritical dismissal of difference not only in the racist sense of a., which is, of course to be welcomed, but also in the sense of b., which negates the need to intervene on the part of those who continue to face discrimination. Thus, an overtly tolerant and non-racist stance may reveal itself underneath as assimilationist in its denial of group-specific protection.

Consider the next remark, which begins by arguing that the struggle of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent within an anglophone society is no different from the struggle of blacks within a dominant white society, thus comparing the discrimination against Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent with the discrimination faced by blacks in society at large – a comparison which appears not altogether cogent.
Gilles Beauchamp: Votre lutte [remark directed towards Moustapha Bari of the Groupements ethnoculturels] n'est pas différente de la nôtre. C'est la même chose, j'ai été dix ans et demie à Queen's Park. (...) Mais il y a toujours des gens qui ont travaillé à dire: Non tu n'es pas comme moi! Est-ce qu'il y a de la place pour les jeunes francophones gais? Est-ce qu'il y a de la place pour les féministes, pour les gens du secteur culturel, économique, les personnes âgées? On pourrait travailler toute notre vie mais il semble ce qu'on a fait jusqu'à date c'est de trouver qu'est-ce que t'es différent de moi.

It appears from these remarks that difference is seen as a hindrance and not as a form of enrichment for the community. Those who are different are not excluded but are asked not to emphasize their difference. The next speaker takes this even further, mocking various forms of ethnocultural identification.

Si je vous ai bien compris [speaking to Stephan Nouba of the Groupes raciaux] vous êtes, tu veux, tu veux t'identifier comme une minorité raciale pis t'es différent pis fantastique vient-en dans ma gang. On va être toute différents ensemble! Moi, j'va miser là-dessus à cent-pour-cent. Pis s'il veut venir comme ethno-culturel ou poly-culturel ou polyvalent, multi-culturel, lesbien, radical de gauche, ça me dérange pas du tout. Viens-t'en!

If I have understood you correctly, [speaking to Stephan Nouba of the Groupes raciaux] you [vous] are, you [tu] want to, you want to identify as a racial minority, so you're different, that's great. come and join my crowd. We'll all be different together! I'll count on it one hundred percent. And if he wants to come as an ethno-cultural or a multicultural or ambivalent, multicultural, lesbian, left wing radical, I really don't care at all. Come on!
It is not easy to interpret these remarks. The invitation to join “ma gang”, which purports to be tolerant across all boundaries, could be seen to express a certain amount of irony. As such, these remarks would reveal the speaker’s frustration with the need of some francophones to identify themselves as more than simply francophone. The speaker, however, cannot simply dismiss out of hand the need for separate francophone identities.

What makes his remarks somewhat contentious is the fact that the speaker disparages the need for the expression of various forms of identification by mixing existing groups with invented and more controversial affiliations. The speaker moves from ethno-cultural (an existing group), to poly-cultural and polyvalent (both of which, obviously do not exist), to multi-cultural (an existing term), to lesbi (an existing group) and finally to radical de gauche (which is not an actual francophone group and might be considered to be beyond acceptable democratic positions). Some might see this as an attempt to surreptitiously delegitimize existing groups, such as ethnocultural and homosexual groups (Grimard and Labrie, 1999).

The next quote, while somewhat less acrimonious and more sophisticated, could, nonetheless, be interpreted in a very similar fashion.
Si je suis ici aujourd'hui c'est pas parce que je suis membre du groupe de lobby traditionnel comme tel o.k. Je suis ici parce que je suis francophone et c'est le seul point de rencontre où il y a risque d'avoir un consensus, un groupe qui soit créé pour représenter la francophonie. Si j'étais de communauté raciale, si j'étais féministe, si j'étais socialiste, communiste, appelez-moi comme vous voulez, j'aurais mes groupes respectifs dans lesquels j'appartiendrais pour pourvoir développer cette partie de moi-même mais le point commun, unique pour lequel on est ici c'est pas parce que je suis blanc, c'est pas parce que je suis ancien québécois, c'est pas parce que je suis enseignant, c'est parce que de base je suis fran-co-phone et pour défendre ma francophonie. (...) Je crois qu'il est essentiel que chacun des membres, groupe ethnique, féministe, groupe de lobby traditionnel, multi-cultural, racial, apparteniez à ce groupe là (...). Je veux qu'à la fin de cette journée et demain que vous fassiez bande unie avec tout les autres francophones et tous les autres groupes o.k. Mais ce que je ne serais pas capable d'accepter c'est qu'un moment donné vous soyez en parallèle.

The plea which issues from this remark is clearly born out of frustration with an event which, for some, had focussed too much on difference and too little on unity. Can the speaker truly be criticized for voicing this frustration? Again, we should be mindful of
parallelisms which are established in listing various group affiliations: Si j'étais de communauté raciale, si j'étais féministe, si j'étais socialiste, communiste, appelez-moi comme vous voulez, j'aurais mes groupes respectifs dans lesquels j'appartiendrais pour pourvoir développer cette partie de moi-même. What the speaker appears to be suggesting is reasonable and tolerant, at first glance. Why should people not pursue their various non-francophone identities in other organizations? But are the identities the speaker lists really of the same order? The first two are existing and established groupings within the francophone community, the latter two are not only different in that they are political affiliations but they would be considered by many to belong to the realm of unacceptable political radicalism. By putting all four on the same footing, the speaker may overtly profess tolerance but, at least in my view, implicitly signals to a large part of his audience that he considers ethnocultural and feminist orientations to be unacceptable detractors in the cause of building a strong and homogeneous francophone community.

Political Manoeuvrability

The final argument from the unity camp to be considered here is the need for francophones to unite in order to ensure that francophones are seen as an influential political force.
Je regarde ici et j'ai l'impression qu'en tant que membre de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, je suis vraiment malade. J'ai la phobie de la représentativité, j'ai la phobie, la peur d'avoir un groupe fort, solide qui me représente pis qui supporte la communauté au niveau provincial : , pis au niveau national. (...) On va séparer, on veut être tout seul, O.K. un groupe multi-culturel veut être tout seul, le groupe féministe veut être tout seul, le groupe de lobby traditionnel voudrait être tout seul, tout le monde veut être seul. Alors où on s'en va avec ça ? On s'en va tous en parallèle pis on s'en va vers la dissolution.

A former member of the provincial legislature focuses on the same fear that the community is beginning to fray at the edges, making joint political action impossible.

I look around here and I feel that, as a member of the francophone community of Ontario, I am really ailing. I am frightened by representativeness, I am frightened by, I am afraid of a strong and solid group which represents me and which supports the community at the provincial and at the national level. (...) We'll split up, everyone wants to be by themselves. Okay, a multicultural group wants to be by itself, the feminist group wants to be by itself, the traditional francophone lobby group wants to be all on its own, everybody wants to be on their own. So, where does that take us? We develop in parallel, not together, and we end up disbanding.
Gilles Beauchamp: Cette idée de rotation, collégialité, c'est un beau principe de démocratie et lorsque mes bonnes amies de l'Association féministe ont dit y faut avoir plusieurs cibles je peux vous assurer que ce n'est pas le cas. Si vous offrez plusieurs cibles, si vous êtes tellement nombreux comme porte-parole principal d'un secteur, d'une région ou de l'ensemble de la francophonie, les politiciens qu'est-ce qu'ils font? Ils déposent leurs fusils et disent non je ne joue pas. (...) Il faut des leaders dans chacun des secteurs, dans chacun des thèmes, il faut des porte-paroles tout partout bien sûr votre Association féministe, la fédération culturelle vous en avez des porte-paroles vous en avez des leaders, vous en avez des experts pis bien sûr faites le, mais qui parlerait au nom de la communauté franco-ontarienne avec Jean Chrétien ou Harris ou peu importe d'autre, qui le ferait?

The Reconciler Perspective:

Before considering the arguments of those who insist on the need to recognize difference inside the francophone community, it would be useful to consider one speaker's contribution, which attempted to reconcile the opposing camps. What transpires through his seemingly well-intentioned remarks, though, is a rather patronizing attitude. He comments on the speeches given by the representatives of the Groupements ethnoculturels and the Groupes raciaux.
J'ai été très impressionné par vos interventions monsieur Stephan Nouba, monsieur Moustapha Bari. (...) Nos enfants sont les vôtres, on construira un avenir ensemble et vous dites que les gouvernements ne vous voient pas là-dedans. Ben moi, j'ai trois enfants, mon filleul s'appelle Emmanuel Mamba, il a 5 ans, il est d'origine zaïroise et moi je vous comprends et moi je vous aime. J'ai été directeur d'une organisation francophone à Toronto pendant 4 ans et 70 % de mes clients étaient des ethnoculturels. (...) C'est eux qui donnent aujourd'hui à la franco, franconotarie sa couleur unique au monde et je pense que vous êtes là pour rester et pis on va bien vous recevoir. J'avais un commentaire, une question à vous faire, une question qui est un peu complexe. Moi, je suis persuadé que je pourrais vous représenter parfaitement dans toutes vos aspirations. (...) Je vous aime beaucoup, je vous comprenais, je suis minoritaire aussi. Est-ce que vous accepteriez ça si vous me rencontrerez? Voyez que j'ai vraiment un esprit ouvert ce que je veux dire, c'est que je voudrais éviter peut-être le sectarisme. À savoir que selon moi un noir peut me représenter dans sa culture et sa profondeur humaine comme moi je peux vous représenter, de même quelqu'un du Maroc (...) libanais et est-ce que vous êtes d'accord avec ça?

I was very impressed with your remarks, Mr. Stephan Nouba, Mr. Moustapha Bari. (...) Our children are your children, we are building a future together and you say that the governments do not see you as a part of it. Well, I have three children, my godchild is called Emmanuel Mamba, he is five years old and originally comes from Zaïre and I understand you and I love you. I was president of a francophone organization in Toronto for four years and 70% of my clients were of ethnocultural origin. (...) It is these people who give to the franco, to French Ontario its unique colour in the world these days and I think that you are here to stay and we will receive you well. I had a comment, a question I wanted to ask you, a question that is a little complex. I am convinced that I could represent you perfectly in all your endeavours. (...) I love you very much, I understand you, I am also a member of a minority. Would you accept this if you were to meet with me? Notice that I really have an open mind, what I want to say, what I want to avoid is a possible sectarianism. That's to say I believe that a black person can represent me in his culture and in his deep human nature as I can represent you, the same as someone from Morocco (...), Lebanese and do you agree with that?

The speaker is trying to offer himself as a potential arbitrator between the new and the long-established francophones. To this end, he documents his personal involvement with
black francophones (as a godparent and as director of a social services institution). His remarks are delivered in a variety of French that clearly identifies him as being originally from France and he might hope that black francophones will see him as a trustworthy ally, since he is an immigrant like themselves and can be assumed to be familiar with France's former African colonies. He then professes to understand and love non-white francophones. Finally, he asks ethnocultural francophones whether, given his impeccable credentials, they would be prepared to accept him as a spokesperson on behalf of their concerns.

A number of elements in his remarks, however, could be seen to betray a position that is contrary to his professed openness towards non-white francophones. Firstly, one might ask why he feels it necessary to emphasize his affection for black francophones and explicitly refer to the basic humanity of black people (a black person can represent me in his culture and in his deep human nature). Secondly, the speaker's professed ability to represent black francophones becomes doubtful when he argues that his own identity as a member of a linguistic minority is comparable to that of being a member of an ethnic minority (I love you very much, I understand you, I am also a member of a minority.)

While it is difficult to compare how discrimination is subjectively experienced, one might, at least, question whether the discrimination experienced as a black person in a predominantly white society can be compared with that of being a Frenchman among Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent. The presumption inherent in the speaker's remarks that colour does not matter and that, therefore, a white person should be able to speak on issues of particular relevance to non-whites, ignores the central issue of the need for an equitable symbolic presence of people of various origins at public fora.
What appears to motivate the speaker’s remarks is, in the final analysis, his fear of disunity among Ontario’s francophones (je voudrais éviter peut-être le sectarisme). In order to achieve this goal, he posits a wishful equality between francophones of various backgrounds rather than addressing the very real inequalities which do exist and are, in the end, one of the prime motivators for the restructuring effort.

It is useful to consider how the representative of the Groupes raciaux reacted to these remarks. If a white person can represent black francophone issues, then, according to the reverse argument, a black francophone ought to be unequivocally accepted as a spokesperson on Franco-Ontarian issues. The reality, as Nouba argues, is unfortunately quite different. He argues that in interviews with mainstream media, for example, it would simply not occur to most journalists to ask a black francophone about the current state of Ontario’s francophonie. Therefore, there is little incentive for black francophones to try to be seen as possible representatives for Franco-Ontarian causes. Rather, they first need to address the needs of the black francophone community itself.

Stephan Nouba: Nous n’avons rien contre (la communauté) franco-ontarien, nous n’avons rien contre tout cela mais (...) lorsque l’on parle à un journaliste de Radio-Canada, un Franco-Ontarien, il ne me voit pas là-dedans. Pourquoi, voulez-vous que moi je l’endosse quand eux ils m’appelleront jamais pour cela?

Stephan Nouba: We have nothing against the Franco-Ontarian (community), we have nothing against all this but (...) when you talk to a Radio-Canada journalist, a Franco-Ontarian, he never sees me in there. Why then, should I support it when they would never call me about it?
The Diversity Camp:

Moving across the spectrum of different positions on how the francophone community ought to conceive of itself in the future, we will now take a look at those who are in favour of recognizing and working through the implications of a diverse francophonie. The position taken by the representative of the Groupes raciaux, which is quoted below, is a response to one of the remarks made by someone in the unity camp who suggested that the division into Groupes raciaux and Groupements ethnoculturels be abolished. The response is a refusal to engage the discussion at the level suggested by the unity camp. Nouba argues that the Groupes raciaux and Groupements ethnoculturels are independent and thus on the same footing as the Franco-Ontarian community. The question of justification, he maintains, does not even pose itself: one's desire to exist as whatever collectivity one wishes to exist is all the justification needed.
Stephan Nouba: Il est déjà un problème interne à ceux qui sont habitués à se rencontrer dans la communauté francophone qui n’a rien à voir avec nous. (...) Nous ne sommes pas devant vous comme organisme communautaire XYZ (...). Je vous assure c’est, c’est pas mon intérêt, ce n’est pas au nom d’un organisme que je parle. Quand nous entendons les gens s’adresser à nous. Pourquoi XY? Je leur dis: Mais vous avez compris? Pourquoi vous êtes ce que vous êtes? On est ce qu’on est à partir de ce qu’on est le plus à l’aise. C’est la seule réponse qui vaille. Donc que les questions viennent en tant que pourquoi êtes-vous minorité raciale et ethno-culturelle? Ma première réponse, c’est que, je peux pas rien dire: On est ce qu’on a choisi d’être.

He then continues to focus on a perceived contradiction in the federal government’s policy towards la francophonie: in Africa, Nouba argues, Canadian officials are happy to consider African francophones as francophones. African francophone immigrants living in Canada, however, are not necessarily considered to be a part of the Canadian francophone community.
Stephan Nouba: We are addressing the federal government by telling them that in 1995 we made them aware of the fact that in documents which you distribute around the world you say that there are francophones in Ontario, you go to Africa and you meet people whom you call francophones but take account of the fact, before going to Africa, that there are francophones here. You are not going to tell them that they are francophones there and here you tell them that they are not. (...) We are not just passing through, that's in the past. We are people who are here and are here forever. That may please you or not please you, but it's a fact. So, starting at that point, we have to look after the future of our children and that future will lead through a clarification of the roles and the places within either the Ontarian francophonie or, quite simply, within the Canadian community, the society of Ontario.

The challenge faced by francophone newcomers is not their unwillingness to become a part of Ontario's francophonie but the mode of their integration: how can the francophone community be inclusive without becoming assimilationist? And: how can the members of various sub-groups stay autonomous without sliding into sectarianism?

The answer proposed by Moustapha Bari, a representative of the Groupements ethnoculturels, is that the integration of old and new francophones should follow a path of
considered deliberation and reflection. A close look at his remarks reveals that he uses a number of terms that remind us of the Age of Enlightenment, such as *raisonnement*, *logique*, *lucidité*. The objective of his contribution is to argue that a consensus based on reasoned debate should be possible. Diversity is thus presented as an impediment only if we fail to appreciate the commonality of all human beings underneath.

This is really too bad, I think, because, in effect, we are francophones and we would like to become integrated into the Franco-Ontarian community but it seems to me that we are not understood. There is no sensitivity on the part of those francophones to finally say, these people here, they would like to become integrated with us but we have to give them the means, we have to, in fact, respect their cultural autonomy, their way of doing things. And, as a consequence, their needs must be recognized. I believe everyone can understand those issues with reasoning and logic. (...) I believe that we want to reach a consensus between all those concerned as francophones and disregard skin colour and accent. We all speak French. I believe that we have to achieve a certain understanding which is reasonable and which is well-studied and which is enlightened and I believe that all of us here in this room, that we are able, after all, to reflect on all these models and, at the same time, to reach a consensus which we can all agree on.

**Ce qui est malheureux je trouve parce que effectivement on est francophone et on aimerait s'intégrer dans la communauté franco-ontarienne mais il me semble qu'on est pas compris. Il n'y a pas une sensibilité de la part de ces francophones là de dire effectivement ces gens là, ils aimeraient s'intégrer avec nous mais il faut leur donner les moyens. Il faut respecter effectivement leur autonomie culturelle, leur démarche. Il faut aussi voir en conséquence leurs besoins. Je crois tout le monde peut comprendre cette problématique avec raisonnement et avec logique. (...) Je crois que nous voulons arriver à un consensus entre tous en tant que francophones et non faire abstraction à la couleur de peau, à l'accent. On parle tous français. Je crois qu'il faut qu'on arrive à une certaine synthèse qui soit raisonnable qui soit bien étudiée et qui soit bien lucide et je crois que nous tous dans cette salle on est capable effectivement de faire des réflexions sur tous les modèles et en même temps d'arriver à un consensus qui nous conviendrait tous ensemble.**
While the preceding quote clearly focuses on the possibility for consensus based on the fact that, above and beyond all differences, what everyone shares is the French language, the next quote takes a more pragmatic and political perspective towards diversity. Faced with a number of objectives that Ontario’s francophones wish to achieve, Stephan Nouba argues, Ontario’s francophonie must find a solution where the interests of new and old francophones are served.

Permettez de pouvoir faire savoir notre différence qui ne remet pas en cause l'unité mais qui montre en fait qu'il y a une pluralité d'objectifs guidés par rapport au même objectif. Nous sommes d'accord pour une francophonie qui est forte. Nous sommes d'accord pour une francophonie dans laquelle on travaille ensemble. La question se trouve de quelle manière travaillons-nous ensemble et surtout comment pouvons nous rassurer qu'effectivement nos décisions par moment seront celles qui passeront et par moment seront celles des autres?

Allow me to tell you about our difference which does not put unity at risk but which shows, in fact, that there is a diversity of objectives with respect to one shared objective. We support a francophonie that is strong. We support a francophonie where people work together. The question which must be answered is: how are we working together and, above all, how can we ensure that it is our decisions which are, in effect, adopted at one point in time and the decisions of others which are adopted at other points in time?

Part of such a pragmatic view of the francophone community is the argument that no community ever remains the same. In modern times, Stephan argues, a community must modernize in order to advance.
Je voudrais dire, en ce qui nous concerne, nous voulons contribuer à enrichir pas à appauvrir la francophonie. Elle est devenue plus riche donc elle devient plus complexe et il appartient aux gens comme vous et moi ou autres d'avoir la capacité de faire les concessions inévitables pour qu'une communauté avance, une communauté peut pas marcher comme elle a été lorsque vous avez d'autres personnes qui y vient. Nous sommes, nous avons des choses que nous apportons de richesses (...) Mettez-vous à notre place et regardez derrière, votre histoire, vous comprendrez qu'on ne veut rien casser, on veut tout simplement dire une communauté moderne que nous bâtissons pour l'avenir a à répondre à des questions d'ordre moderne et à apporter des solutions modernes. Ces solutions veulent dire que il y a, il y a des gays et des non-gays, et des féministes dans nos communautés, traitons les en disant, en disant qu'est-ce qui nous rejoint, qu'est-ce qu'on peut défendre ensemble et comment peut-on servir la particularité, c'est tout ce qu'on demande.

I would like to say, as far as we are concerned, that we want to help and enrich, not impoverish the francophonie. It has become richer and therefore also more complex and it is up to people like you and me or others to have the ability to make inevitable concessions in order for the community to move ahead, a community cannot move along the way it has in the past when you have other people who have joined. We are, we have things, we have something to contribute (...) Put yourselves in our position and look behind you, your history, you will understand that we do not want to destroy anything, we simply want to say that a modern community, which we are building for the future, must respond to modern challenges and produce modern solutions. These solutions mean that there are gays and non-gays and feminists in our communities, let's treat them by saying what it is that unites us, what we can defend together and how we can cater to particularities, that's all we are asking.

As Stephan Nouba demands that both common goals be pursued and that the specificity of the francophone newcomers be respected, the question which hung in the air was, of course, what would happen if these demands were not met. If the Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent showed themselves to be unwilling to change their community’s identity to include the newcomers, what could the newcomers do? A partial
answer to this question was given when a member of the Groupes raciaux delegation explained that a number of immigrant francophones had chosen to align themselves with the anglophone community. The speaker charged that many African francophones had discovered racism in the hiring practices of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent and that the avowed solidarity of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent often turned out to be false.

Donc, je pense que vous avez le rôle de soutenir cette minorité qui est la vôtre. Pourquoi je le dis? C'est en décembre dernier, j'ai été à un séminaire à Toronto pour l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants. Mais mon Dieu, je me sentais vraiment géné étant francophone. Je me sentais géné parce que les gens disaient à tous les membres, les conseillers qui étaient là, disaient que le français, la francophonie est mise de côté. Ils disaient que l'anglais et les minorités anglaises étaient tout à fait à l'aise et semble-t-il ils [les nouveaux arrivants] sont mieux dans cette majorité anglaise que nous, les francophones, dans la nôtre majorité francophone. Quand on envoie nos C.V., je m'excuse nos curriculum vitae quelque part, malheureusement à cause de notre nom, on les rejette, on les lit pas. On nous refuse des jobs à cause de notre couleur de la peau. On rit avec nous, comme disait l'autre, mais on nous donne des coups de couteau en arrière du dos et on fait semblant quand même qu'on est amis, en fin de compte c'est pas vrai.

So, I think that it is your role to support this minority which is your minority. Why do I say that? It was last December when I was at a seminar for the integration of newcomers in Toronto. But, my God, was I ever embarrassed of being francophone. I felt embarrassed because people said to all the members, the counsellors who were there, they said that French, that the francophonie is being put aside. They said that English and the English minorities were completely at ease and it seems that they [the newcomers] feel better in that English majority than us, the francophones, in our francophone majority. When we send our C.V.'s, I am sorry, our curriculum vitae somewhere, unfortunately, because of our name, they are discarded, they are not read. We are being refused employment because of the colour of our skin. People laugh with us, as the other person had said, but we are being stabbed in the back and people pretend to be our friends, but in the end, that's not true.
What transpires in the preceding quote is not only a sense of frustration but also one of disappointment. The Franco-Ontarian community, it seems, is unwilling to adopt what would be its best members. Instead, these francophone newcomers, to their own great disappointment, are driven into the arms of the anglophone majority. Faced with such a reality, the discourse of the unity camp must appear disingenuous and the only possible conclusion for African newcomers seems to be that they go their own way.

If, at the end of this chapter, the reader is left with the impression that Ontario’s francophones are a community in turmoil, torn between the forces of centralization and diversification and without any guarantee that a francophone community can actually be spoken of, he or she would not be mistaken. The next chapter will attempt to classify the disparate voices heard so far and suggest that they are linked to three different visions of community.
Chapter 5 - The future of minority communities within multi-ethnic democracies

This final chapter proposes to accomplish two main objectives. Firstly, the multiplicity of positions surrounding the role of community which we observed in the preceding chapter will be classified into three different types of community discourses: the universalist discourse, the communitarian discourse and the multiple identity discourse. Secondly, it will be argued that the multiple identity represents not only a powerful new strand in the current situation within Ontario's francophonie but that multiple identities constitute a growing phenomenon in the life of post-modern minorities. In a third step, a proposal will be made on how minority communities can be reconceptualized in order to integrate the fact that many people have multiple affiliations with different groups in society. This proposal builds on Habermas's ideas of discourse ethics and suggests that both the nation-state and minority communities should be regarded as overlapping communication communities. Such a perspective would allow countries with a diverse population to move away from the notion that minority communities have a clear membership whose attachment is based on pre-established notions of language, culture and/or ethnicity. Instead, what gives rise to communities are the needs of individuals who wish to have their various identities publicly recognized through communication with others. The proposal will further develop the idea that even citizenship in general can be reconceptualized from an attachment to a particular community or state to a commitment to a communicative ideal of democratic procedure.

Universalist Discourse

As was argued above (see Justifying Liberalism: Universalism and Inclusion), the major identifying characteristic of a universalist stance is the idea of commonality rather than
difference between human beings. We will now look at some discourse samples in which the speakers adopt a universalist discourse in order to argue for their idea of how the francophone community should develop. We will look at discourse samples taken from the events which were discussed above but also at a few samples which come from other sources. A close look at them will reveal that these discourse samples are indicative of quite divergent positions with regard to the civil society concept that they inherently propagate.

The first discourse sample is from Léon Gwod\(^{38}\) (1998), who wrote a one-page article in *infomag*, a small bi-monthly magazine published by the National Federation of French-Canadian Women. Léon Gwod came to Canada from Burkina Faso, is married to a local French-Canadian ("la fille de l'habitant") and works in a manual position in an Ottawa office building, a job with which, by his own admission, he is not entirely satisfied. He appears to be a resolute Franco-Ontarian and, at first sight, this might appear to contradict the fact that I refer to him as an example of the liberal discourse. What he does, though, is to set up the category of Franco-Ontarianness almost as a kind of general francophone citizenship for francophone Canadians living in Ontario. While he admits that becoming Franco-Ontarian was difficult for him, he, nonetheless, feels, quite in contrast to many Afro-Francophones I have talked to, that all francophones in Ontario should identify themselves as belonging to one Franco-Ontarian community and not try and draw further distinctions.

\(^{38}\) Unlike all the other names, which have been changed to maintain confidentiality, Léon Gwod is the actual name under which the article in *infomag* appeared.
Léon Gwod: "I really earned my status as a Franco-Ontarian. Through school, through work, through blood and through paying taxes. And I cherish it. (...) What really gets my back up is when we make exceptions for difference which are really based on exclusion. The apologetic nature of such exceptions not only caters to a certain populist demagoguery but, what is worse, it arises from an identity cock-a-doodle-do which, sooner or later, ends up in lunacy. I think we can live our differences or be a part of some exclusive club without constantly letting the newspapers know about it or categorizing people based on which side of the bridge they are from. (...) I humbly dare advance the idea that the future of our community, which is already scraping the bottom of the barrel, should be built more energetically on its language-based growth potential rather than its ethnic one.

Through his remarks, Léon Gwod supports the notion of a bilingual country with official language minorities in each province but without admitting any further heterogeneity within those linguistic minorities. His discourse is anti-communitarian since he echoes two familiar liberal positions: a) the promotion of cultural difference may further entrench social or ethnic divisions in society ("What really gets my back up is when we make exceptions for difference which are really based on exclusion.") and b) cultural differences
should be restricted to the private sphere ("I think we can live our differences or be a part of some exclusive club without constantly letting the newspapers know about it...").

The second discourse sample is also underwritten by strong liberal beliefs and is taken from an interview conducted with Stephan Nouba. He is in his mid-forties and, after having worked in France for a long time, now works as a legal consultant in Ontario. He is considered to be a leader, albeit not uncontested, of the francophone ethnocultural minority movement. The interview was conducted jointly with another student, Miriam, to whom he refers in order to illustrate his universalist convictions.

Stephan Nouba: "Si je prends par exemple le Canada et je l'oppose avec la France, j'oppose avec la France. En France l'individu qui est Miriam peut s'élèver et dire : 'Moi, Miriam, je veux ça!' Alors qu'au Canada, non, malheureusement, ça fonctionne pas comme ça (...). Ici les gens fonctionnent en communauté. Tu as les Franco-Ontariens, tu as les Italiens, tu as les Grecs, tu as ceci cela. Et ça pose un problème difficile, donc dès que tu vis au Canada, tu trouves, même si les gens ne l'acceptent pas, tu trouves que les divisions sont déjà faites. Tu es francophone, tu es anglophone, tu es minorité visible, tu es ceci. Donc dès que tu viens, tu dois entrer dans un moule. Tu te rends peut-être pas compte mais c'est comme ça que tu vas fonctionner en tant que tel. Ce qui veut dire donc que le système est beaucoup plus, donne peu de place à l'individu et donne plus de place à sa

Stephan Nouba: "If I take Canada, for example, and I compare it with France, I compare it with France. In France the individual person called Miriam can stand up and say: 'I, Miriam, want this!' Whereas in Canada, well, unfortunately, it doesn’t work like that (...). People here work as groups. You've got the Franco-Ontarians, you've got the Italians, you've got the Greeks, you've got this and that. And that creates a serious problem when you begin to live in Canada, you find out, even if people don't accept it, you find out that all the boundaries are already drawn. You are francophone, you are anglophone, you are a visible minority, you are this. So, when you get here, you've got to fit into a slot. You may not realize it but that's how you're going to function as such. That's to say the system is much more, it leaves very little space to the individual and
Les gens qui viennent d'Afrique, qui sont des unilingues, vraiment francophones, se trouvent à conforter leur unilinguisme. Et c'est d'ailleurs très amusant, parce qu'en fait s'ils étaient aux États-Unis, il parleraient anglais. Mais ils arrivent au Canada, on leur dit: 'mais on parle français et anglais'. Donc d'un coup ils n'apprennent plus l'anglais, ils restent dans le français même si les rapports par rapport au français sont très limités dans leur réalité de tous les jours.

At a later stage in the interview, Stephan Nouba explained that he was not an anti-francophone but, given the fact that a large number of recently immigrated francophones are unemployed, felt that the official rhetoric of bilingualism was misleading people into thinking that there were economic opportunities attached to speaking French. The few francophone jobs available, he argued, were being jealously guarded by the old Franco-Ontarian community, so that any chances for socio-economic advancement lay in the acquisition of English.

Now let's turn to some of the events which were already discussed above. One of the clearest examples of the frustration felt with Canada's communitarian model and a simultaneous desire to replace it with a more universal approach to civic belonging can be found in a remark made at the Ottawa meeting of the Consultations complémentaires (see p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt repeated here).
It is time that we start acting as citizens of Canada. (...) it bothers me when I see people ask children, who are not white, where they are from. These days we have to make it clear to these children that they are born in Canada, that they are Canadian like everyone else (...). If not, we'll get lost in all this multiculturalism talk.

The speaker here voices a clear preference for what was referred to at various points during the meeting as the American model: equality between citizens should be achieved by eliminating difference and by aspiring to create an identical mould of civic belonging for everyone. The above quoted remark, however, provoked an immediate response in defence of communitarian citizenship (see p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt repeated here).

It's true that we have to integrate into the Canadian community BUT we still have to be aware that we are unique. Because there is that uniqueness. We mustn't lose it. The others should know, the English as well, that there is that difference.

Integration into the Canadian polity, the speaker argues in this response, should respect rather than deny difference. Only through knowing who one is and through making this separate identity known to others can integration into the larger community take place.

It would not do justice to the complex discursive positionings which were observed, though, if we assumed liberalism and communitarianism to be dichotomous and clearly separable. A liberal position is not restricted to those who are in favour of abolishing all group differences and who want to set up a pan-Canadian civic identity as the only valid
citizen status. As we saw in the first quote of this section, some of the most ardent defenders of the francophone community employ liberal arguments. But there is not necessarily any contradiction in being in favour of the francophone community and engaging in a liberal discourse. What a liberal discourse is really all about is the drawing of a circle around a group whose internal heterogeneity is ignored to presume equality based on assumed homogeneity. This circle may be drawn around the nation as a whole or any given subgroup. Consider the remarks made by the minister at the Rencontre provinciale (see p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt repeated here).

*Let us look for what is good for our community and not for our own individual concerns. (...) Together we are strong. We must work together to win and all Canadians will benefit, especially francophones.*

One might be inclined, at first glance, to consider this a very communitarian discourse. And when seen from the perspective of an overarching pan-Canadian identity, it clearly is. But when we consider it from below, from the perspective of the many different groups which make up Canada’s francophones, it looks very different. From their perspective, they are asked to disregard differences within the francophone community and to sacrifice these differences to the unity of all francophones. Of course, this is not the pure national-liberal position, which does not allow for any further distinctions below the national level of general citizenship. What it has in common with that position, however, is a reluctance to accept and deal with recursive group differentiation.
This could be graphically illustrated as follows:

The modified liberal discourse (on the right) distinguishes itself from the pure liberal discourse (on the left) only through reproducing the homogeneity assumption at a lower level. It is identical to it in its refusal to admit that any further recursive and mutually embedded affiliations should be recognized. When seen in this light, what I had earlier identified as the national-provincial-linguistic identity question (see p. 129) reveals itself as an arbitrarily imposed delineation of admissible and inadmissible differentiation. The relevant circles which may be drawn are: Canada, province and the anglophone/francophone divide. Down to this level, communitarian distinctions are valid. Where they go beyond, such as demanding the validation of diversity within the francophone community, they are disallowed. Let us reconsider some discourse samples from the Rencontre provinciale as an illustration:
Are you Canadian? Are you Ontarian? And do you speak Franco, um French? Well, then I'd like to know: What is this problem we are dealing with here today? (see p. 129)

We have to overcome our personal and collective individualisms. It's important to achieve the things we must defend on an individual basis, but it is even more important to achieve the things we must defend and do jointly as a group of francophones. We could talk about a marriage now.

(...) In a marital union, the two parties often sacrifice things for the greater good of the union. (see p. 129)

In the first quote, the speaker wants to cut off any further debate through the use of seemingly factual criteria. In the second quote, the speaker recognizes that internal differences may exist but that, similar to a married couple, individual particularities must be sacrificed for the greater good of the union.

We can sense the frustration in these remarks. The desire by some people to have more affiliations recognized than that of belonging to the francophone community of Ontario is perceived to be unreasonable and unpractical. Let us consider two more discourse samples which argue the same position but which are, interestingly, taken from very different speakers. The first speaker is a provincial politician who has been active in the francophone community for a long time. The second speaker is a recently arrived francophone immigrant from Africa. In spite of their different backgrounds, however, their remarks, made at different events, argue that further subdivision of Ontario’s francophones is counterproductive. In both quotes, the speakers even mention the diverse
components of the francophone community but conclude that focusing on these differences leads people away from searching for the important common ground:

There are always people who have insisted on saying: no, you are not like me. Is there any room for young gay francophones? Is there any room for feminists, for people from the cultural and economic sectors, for older people? We could work at this all of our lives but it seems that all we have done so far is to find out how you are different from me. (see p. 129)

The only thing which unites us here, I guess I might as well say it, it's the truth, it is French, it is the French language that we all speak. That's why I think, it's true, it's true, one has to take into consideration all the elements, who is francophone, who is not, in which way someone is francophone but it is also time that one, that we bring all these things together, put them together (...) so that we can work together. After all, the only thing that's for sure in all this talk about I am this or I am that or I am representative of this, it is that we are hardly a group yet as francophones in the sense of a grouping of people. And when we will be in that group, we will still be little divided sub-groups. In the end, we will never get anywhere with this, we'll never finish. (see p. 129)

What is clearly absent from these remarks, however, is any principled and convincing argument why one should stop drawing concentric circles of belonging at the level of francophoneness. As much as some radical liberals have difficulty justifying the nation-state as the level at which civic equality should come into existence (while in principle all
of humankind ought to be included), so are the speakers quoted above unable to give any logical reason why the francophone community should be regarded as the bottom level of allowable distinctions in a pluralist society.

Let us now turn to the communitarian discourse, which is different from what we have seen above. It contains an admission that once one begins to regard communities as a valid level of civic belonging, one cannot deny smaller communities the rights which one claims for larger communities.

Communitarian Discourse

In contrast to liberals, there are those who believe that equity cannot be achieved by ignoring difference but only by acknowledging it. As Taylor (1994) has argued, our identities depend on our socialization in a particular culture, and where this culture is not the dominant culture, a failure to recognize the minority culture may implicitly diminish its members' chances of succeeding in the wider society. A diverse society, which is serious in its commitment not to denigrate minority communities, should therefore attempt to help members of minority communities to ensure that these communities flourish. According to this view, members of minority communities ought to be encouraged to retain aspects of their minority culture rather than assimilate to the majority culture. Being a francophone in Ontario, one would thus make use of the francophone community and its institutions rather than attempt to downplay one's francophoneness. As was already pointed out, though, adopting a communitarian discourse means not just supporting the levels of group distinction one finds personally expedient but extending the right to form communities recursively, i.e. Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent employing
a communitarian discourse to justify their community's existence cannot deny groups within their own group the same right.

Such a recursive community rights orientation was evident in the discourse of many parents and teachers who attended the Complementary Francophone Education Hearings (see “Consultations complémentaires”, p. 129). These parents and teachers from various ethnocultural groups, almost all of them of either African or Caribbean origin, had gathered to discuss problems with the public French-language education system.

Consider the following example: Nicole, who is of Haitian origin, illustrates the concerns of ethnocultural francophones by recounting her first day as a substitute teacher in a public French school. After having been shown around the classrooms by the principal and having noticed that in many classes black students constitute the majority, Nicole realizes, upon entering the staff room, that the teaching staff is exclusively white.

La première fois j'ai appliqué dans cette école uh moi je pensais uh est-ce que t'as une classe d'accueil quand on m'avait montrée et pourtant quand j'ai dit à la directrice c'est quoi ça ? C'est une classe d'accueil ? Elle a dit non. Elle a dit presque toute l'école est comme ça. Elle a dit c'est une école néo-canadienne. Elle m'a dit l'ensemble de l'école est néo-canadienne. Qui est vrai mais j'allais dans la salle des enseignants c'était plus pareil. J'était la seule noire. Alors, ça c'est un peu frustrant.

The first time I applied for a job at that school, I thought: Is this a class for newly arrived French-as-a-second-language speakers that they're showing me? But when I said to the principal, what's this, is this a French-as-a-second-language class, she said no. She said that almost the entire school is like that. She said that the school is New Canadian. She said the whole school was New Canadian. True enough, but when I went into the staff room, it wasn't that way, at all. I was the only black person. Well, that's a bit frustrating.
Nicole is concerned about representation. From a later conversation with her, it emerged that during her hiring interview she was asked why the school board should give her a job. She responded that above and beyond being a qualified professional, she believed that given the number of black students, the school urgently needed a teacher who was black. Seen from the perspective of liberalism, such an argument undercuts the important principle of meritocracy: one should neither be denied nor awarded a specific position because of one’s membership in a particular ethnic group. For those of a more communitarian orientation, however, the non-representation of a particular group in positions of power (e.g. teachers in school) sends an unacceptable signal to society in general (or pupils in this particular case), namely that black francophones may be pupils but cannot become teachers. Based upon her utterances, she could be argued to be taking the francophone community to task and implicitly saying that they cannot deny a minority within their own minority, i.e. black francophones, the same type of special assistance that the francophone community demands from the anglophone majority. In other words, if a significant part of Ontario’s population is French-speaking and public French schools are set up as a consequence, then there is no reason why a significant part of that French-speaking population, namely black francophones, should not demand that a certain percentage of francophone teachers be black.

Many parents during the education hearings effectively called for interventionist policies, such as affirmative action programs, to be put in place. This was not only in order to hire more teaching staff which would be representative of the student population but also to ensure that the schools’ curricula better reflect the cultural heritage of their students.
On disait [dans notre atelier de discussion] qu'il était important pour les élèves de retrouver des gens de la même culture et des enseignants (...) de toutes les communautés pour refléter la diversité des cultures.

We said [in our discussion panel] that it was important for students to have people from their own culture around them and have teachers from all the communities in order to reflect the diversity of cultures.

Ce qu'on pourrait peut-être demander c'est d'influencer les preneurs de décisions pour qu'il y ait sûrement un quota ou bien qu'il y ait plus de représentativité au niveau des politiques d'embauche. (see p. 129)

What we might be able to demand is to influence decision makers to make sure there's a quota or even for the hiring policies to be more representative.
La première chose c'est la possibilité dans certaines écoles où, où il semble qu'il y a beaucoup de frictions entre la la communauté d'acceuil et la, et les Groupements ethnoculturels, à ce moment là eh de demander qu'il y a un ombudsman. Tout à l'heure vous avez parlé d'un agent de liaison. Peut-être que c'est le même rôle mais c'est un modèle que j'ai déjà vu appliqué ailleurs. L'ombudsman est là, il est représentant des Groupements ethnoculturels et quand il y a un problème il fait la médiation entre les gens, les élèves des communautés multiculturelles et leurs parents et l'administration scolaire. (…) Finalement, peut-être ça serait d'essayer que la communauté se prenne en charge (…). Ça pourrait être une façon aussi d'avoir une vigilance dans la communauté. (see p. 129)

First of all is the possibility in certain schools where, where there appear to be a lot of tensions between the host community and the [singular], and the [plural] ethnocultural communities to demand at that point that there be an ombudsman. Just before you talked about a liaison person. Maybe that's the same function but it's a model I've already seen used elsewhere. The ombudsman is there, he is the representative of the ethnocultural communities and when there is a problem, he mediates between people, the students from the multicultural communities and their parents and the school administration. (…) In the end, maybe that would be a way to try and have the community take responsibility (…). That might be a way for the community to show some vigilance.

What is important to realize in these remarks is that the community that is mentioned, the quota that is demanded and the vigilance that is called for do not refer to the francophone community as a whole. Instead, the francophone community as a whole is now cast as the majority context within which the black francophone community is demanding a certain amount of recognition. Thus, the black francophone community is saying to the overall francophone community: do unto us as you would have done unto yourselves. This recursive demand for community-within-community recognition is difficult to deal with for the francophone community as a whole. As was seen in the previous section, one way of
dealing with such demands is to revert to a modified universalist stance, which suggests that the general level of the francophone community ought to be regarded as the bottom-most legitimate level of community identification.

At the Rencontre provinciale, however, there were also other voices. Consider the following remarks made to the whole assembly by one of the organizers of the event who, and this is quite important here, is of traditional French-Canadian origin:

*Inclusiveness, what it means, yes, it means taking everyone along, but also making sure that everyone has an equal chance and as francophones we understand this very well because that's what we ask of our federal government: to give us rights which go beyond the rights of the majority because we are a minority. So, inclusiveness within the framework of the francophone community of Ontario, it's to give, to look at who is at a disadvantage among us and to give them something extra so that they can finally rise to the level of everyone else, as a community. So, equity in the sense of inclusiveness, that's, that's a difficult concept to grasp but as a community, because we have applied it for a hundred years, we should be the ones who can best understand what it means* (see p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt repeated here)

As she struggles with the term *inclusivité* which, from the broad context, can be interpreted to mean a general policy of reaching out and including all members of Ontario's francophonie, a very clear parallelism is drawn between the relationship of the francophone community vis-à-vis the federal government and the relationship between
those who are disadvantaged among us (meaning newly immigrated francophones) vis-à-vis the francophone community. Her argument in favour of recognizing francophone newcomers as a distinct group is based on the experience of the francophone community as a whole, which, she argues, was able to flourish as a minority because the Canadian majority consented to give it special rights. Her remarks are, in effect, an appeal to Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent not to deny the black francophone community the rights that they themselves had once demanded as a minority from their respective, i.e. English-Canadian, majority.

The same point is made in the position paper by the Groupes raciaux, which was drawn up for the Rencontre provinciale:

As much as it would be unnatural for anglophones to speak on behalf of Franco-Ontarians, would it be acceptable that Franco-Ontarians claim to, either directly or indirectly, speak on behalf of the ethnic francophone groups in areas which are clearly their prerogative and over which their legitimacy is and must have priority. (see p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt repeated here)

We see clearly here the argument that recursive recognition of embedded minorities must be implemented unless, as a majority, one is willing to arbitrarily breach the principle one upholds as a minority.

One of the problematic points about the community rights discourse, however, is that it assumes an uncontroversial notion of a person's belonging and identity. Even the notion of embedded communities assumes that, at some stage, there is a core community within
which one feels completely at home. But individuals are not homogeneous entities and may entertain feelings of multiple belonging. Sometimes, as the next section shows, such multiple identities can lead to arguments about who has the right to represent whom.

The Discourse of Multiple Identities

Both the liberal and the community rights discourse are, in my view, based on a concept of identity which does not fully incorporate the true complexity of one’s identity. At a basic level, they assume that one is either simply a citizen or one is a citizen through being a member of a particular community. In reality, however, categories are not sealed and people move across and between them. Is it possible to imagine a political structure which would recognize the individual in his or her multiple affiliations to various communities and thus neither entrap the individual within a particular group (the danger of communitarianism) nor cut the individual loose from all links with communities and consider him or her as a free-floating civic atom (the danger with universalism)? An attempt at answering this complex question will be made below. This section will focus on evidence in the empirical data that a need for such a concept of multiple identities exists.

The most striking example of the need to have multiple identities recognized was already discussed. It occurred in a heated exchange during the Toronto Forum for Francophone Organizations, which was discussed in quite some detail above (see pp. 129-129). But there is a number of other discourse samples which underscore the same point.

The position paper submitted by francophone feminists to the Rencontre provinciale, for example, argues for a multiplicity of voices among Ontario’s francophone community.
We believe that all francophones in Ontario can defend certain causes together, each with their own voice and colour. We also believe, however, that francophone women whether they belong to ethnic, cultural, lesbian or disability groups are better served within their own organizations where they dispose of greater control over their own development. For these reasons, we believe that it is unacceptable, as is the goal of our governments and some of our leaders, to reduce to one single voice what the highly diverse francophone community in Ontario has to say. (see p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt repeated here)

During the discussions of the Planning Committee, which prepared the restructuring meeting for Toronto’s francophonie, the issue of what constitutes the identity of Toronto francophones kept recurring in the discussions. The overall objective of organizing such a meeting was obviously to bring francophones in Toronto closer together. However, there was a marked reluctance among some participants to try and create a more closely knit francophone community. Consider the following two samples:

Monique Bédard: what becomes important are those meeting places in different locations but not necessarily

Claude Maurais: in a neighbourhood

Monique Bédard: but that we can go and find the community rather than feeling hemmed in by the community. (see p. 129)

And Monique Bédard continued a little later in the same vein (see p. 129):
Even if there were a French neighbourhood, that would not solve the issue for a good many of us. (...) There is also, I think, the development of a, of a community which identifies itself almost as bicultural and which therefore, and again this is the case for several among us who have grown up in a francophone environment, they would find it suffocating to live in a uniquely francophone environment and therefore they do, in fact, prefer to navigate between two worlds and it's partly because of that that they come to places like Toronto rather than going to Quebec, for example.

Um, so, that's more and more the case when, um, I see children of such mixed marriages, in the end, they identify more and more as having

Claude Maurais: a Canadian culture

Monique Bédard: a mixed identity and so um they wouldn't feel particularly comfortable in a uniquely francophone environment.

When I discussed the above remarks later on with both participants individually, their interpretation of this exchange varied somewhat. Monique Bédard said that she had spoken out so clearly to make sure that the restructuring initiative did not turn into an exercise of nostalgia. She was unwilling to participate in any collective project in which there was even an implicit hankering for the old French-Canadian community, huddled around the parish. The francophones of Ontario, she felt, had long outgrown such bucolic visions and ought to view themselves as a modern component of Canada's diverse population rather than insisting on the historical role of French Canadians in the founding of Canada. Mixed marriages (by which she meant here marriages between people
speaking different mother tongues) were now so prevalent that the idea of a uniform identity even within the family unit were outdated.

In contrast, Claude Maurais perceived the heterogeneity of the francophone community as something that needed to be contained. When I talked to him, he recognized that diversity and multiple identities could not be ignored. The phenomenon certainly needed to be addressed. But he felt that, unless all these various identities were bracketed by an overarching identification, not only would the francophone community suffer but Canada as a whole would simply disintegrate. This is why his interjection in the above discourse sample (*une culture canadienne*) is quite significant. While Monique Bédard was not concerned about any civic level of identification for francophones or anyone else, Claude Maurais was clearly concerned that there should be such a common point of reference.

Partly as a result of these discussions, the Planning Committee adopted a resolution that explicitly recognized the need for a pluralist vision of Toronto’s francophone community.

*Due to the feeling of multiple belonging, the francophone community hopes to establish meeting places in order to reach other francophones with whom they may use French. Being francophone does not appear to constitute the totality of identity* (see p. 129)

The definition of community has thus shifted from being a clearly identifiable geographic entity to an entity which exists in the multiplicity of encounters between francophones.

The wording of the second sentence quoted above is rather cautious. This was, to a large extent, the result of some unease among more Ontario francophones of French-Canadian
descent. They felt that the admission that the Franco-Ontarian identity was not necessarily of primary importance to francophones would lead to a weakening of the community.

Some of the strongest support in the push to acknowledge multiple identities comes, not surprisingly, from the newly arrived francophones, who have little to do with the historical struggle of Ontario francophones of French-Canadian descent. They reject being forced into any collective mould and wish to select for themselves which identity they adopt. The reaction of some traditional francophones has been not to deny that African francophones adopt a separate identity but, at least, to ask them to justify which collective identity (or identities) they take up. The leader of the Groupes raciaux, however, flatly rejects any assumption that identities need to be justified to anyone (see also p. 129, only English translation of relevant excerpt quoted here).

_We are who we are depending on what we feel most comfortable with._

_That is the only valid response. So when the questions come, why are you a groupe racial and a groupement ethnoculturel? My immediate answer is that I can’t really say: we are what we have chosen to be._

Having considered the various discursive positions among Ontario francophones with regard to their collective identities, the problem which remains to be tackled is whether or not an idealized political discourse model can be envisioned which would be able to absorb the heterogeneous and spontaneous nature of community formation without rendering the concept of community and of a pluralist democracy meaningless.
The Potential for a Deliberative Democracy

As we emerge from an in-depth observation of a particular minority community, the question we have to ask is whether the fate of this minority and the political-philosophical concepts developed earlier (most notably the concept of a communication community) can offer any guidance to pluralist Western-liberal democracies in general. To what extent, for example, can and should a new multitude of collective identities be recognized by the state or, as Amy Gutmann puts it,

in what sense should our identities as men or women, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, or Native Americans, Christians, Jews, or Muslims, English or French Canadians publicly matter? (Gutmann 1994:4)

The short answer from an ultra-liberal perspective would be to say: Not at all. We should all be treated in the same way and keep issues of gender, race or ethnicity private. As I have argued, though, such a position addresses neither the genesis of our identities nor the complexities of modern pluralist societies.

Still, we need to look carefully at certain assumptions contained in the above question. Gutmann’s first assumption is that we all have identities that tie us to some people but not all people around us, while the second is that these identities should somehow be publicly acknowledged. The first of these assumptions, namely that social identities exist, is fairly unproblematic. The second assumption Gutmann makes, however, is not as easily defended; namely, that the ethno-cultural aspects of our social identities should play a role in our public lives as citizens. She anticipates criticism when she states:
One reasonable reaction to questions about how to recognize the distinct cultural identities of members of a pluralistic society is that the very aim of representing or respecting differences in public institutions is misguided. An important strand of contemporary liberalism lends support to this reaction. It suggests that our lack of identification with institutions that serve public purposes, the impersonality of public institutions, is the price that citizens should be willing to pay for living in a society that treats us all as equals, regardless of our particular ethnic, religious, racial, or sexual identities. (Gutmann 1994:4)

This remains a powerful argument: the affiliation through citizenship to a neutral state supposedly guarantees equality. Where this assumption is inaccurate, though, is in its uncritical bias towards the majority culture. The state is most easily seen to be neutral by those people whose collective cultural background most closely overlaps with the cultural origins of the state structure itself. But identity itself is dialogically constructed with relevant others in one’s social group and the evolution of one’s identity is crucially linked to that social group’s vitality. If that group is a minority culture, its lack of presence in the public arena leads to a denigration of individual identity.

To point out, though, that minority cultures play an important role for a positive development of their members’ individual identities is not to suggest that any minority culture is worthy of support. Minority cultures must not contravene liberal values. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of public education. As much as a modern pluralist state should encourage the presence of minority cultures, it cannot do so at the
expense of the very liberal values, such as freedom of expression and tolerance, which make pluralism possible in the first place. This is pointed out very clearly by Jim Cummins:

(...) affirmation of identity is not an uncritical process. It does not imply that educators or students should accept all cultural manifestations in a "liberal" non-evaluative way. Many cultural practices and social structures violate the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (...). Students should be encouraged to reflect critically on both their own cultural background and on the culture of the host society in order to identify and resolve contradictions. (...) Affirmation of identity thus refers to the establishment of the respect and trust between educators and students that is crucial for each to reflect critically on their own experience and beliefs. (Cummins 1996:4)

What is required, then, is a concept of citizenship that assigns the recognition of various collective identities a place in which these identities can flourish without endangering the base structure of the state itself. T.H. Marshall (1950) had shown that, given the economic stratification of our societies, welfare rights must be considered as democratic rights. We now face the same sort of question as a result of the ethnocultural diversity of our societies. A new deal which respects both the interests of minorities and those of the state and which bridges the competing demands of liberalism and communitarianism needs to be found. The discourse samples and analysis discussed above show that the liberal vs. communitarian tension is not only built into Canadian civil society but is also taken up in
the discourses through which new immigrants and members of an established linguistic minority map out a place for themselves in Canadian society. What the examples also show, however, is the inadequacy of that very liberal-communitarian dichotomy, if it is conceived as such. People are complex and may identify and feel that they belong to more than one group. The traditional notion of community, however, presupposes a certain fixed, physical membership and the community rights discourse runs the risk of assigning membership to communities without regard for the individual's own identification. Even Charles Taylor, one of the foremost representatives of communitarianism, recognizes that unjustly claiming someone to be a part of a community to which they do not wish to belong, or only partially belong, may be illiberal. Consider Taylor's response to a question he was asked in an interview with the journal *Citizenship Studies*:

*Do you believe that the logic which leads different groups to demand collective rights or special treatments such as affirmative action could boil down individual identity to a simple by-product of a community?*
[Charles Taylor:] This is indeed the greatest danger. I believe that we must start by acknowledging the complexity of identities. In a truly free society, complex identities can flourish; meaning that, on the one hand, political identity does not try to suppress differences and limit their public presence, and, on the other, that distinctive communities do not monopolize the life of their members. This, however, is often the case with very demanding groups such as African-Americans who ask black women not to support feminist groups in order to keep the black unity strong. (…) In this context, the possibility of being an individual with a complex identity - that is, one of many dimensions - is questioned. Therefore, identity claims pursued in this fashion pose very real threats, not only to our political environment, but to the freedom of each and every one of us. (Ancelovici and Dupuis-Déri 1998).

The challenge now is whether communities could be imagined differently. Would it be possible to move away from the notion of community as a group of people towards a notion of community as a coming together of discourses in the sense of a communication community, as was discussed earlier?

Habermas argues that the ability to communicate is a human capacity and, as such, of universal value. Thus, it is this capacity and its activation as discourse which could be regarded as the universal bedrock of democracy. He argues that we may disagree about which moral values our society should support but we should all be able to agree on how to talk about it. Habermas proposes that, along with our ability to communicate, comes
an ability to recognize what a discussion should look like in which people can speak freely as opposed to one in which oppression and coercion predominate. Habermas, as indicated above (see pp. 111 and 122), calls such a coercion-free context an *ideal speech situation*. Habermas’s work on discourse ethics (which grows out of his work on discourse theory) fills an important conceptual void: it links the advantages of liberalism to those of communitarianism. It suggests itself as a concept which is able to handle successfully the heterogeneity of pluralist societies and the multiple affiliations of their citizens. It neither denies the need for community affiliation in multicultural contexts, nor does it give up on the needs of an overarching liberal ethic which links and protects the individual citizen beyond his or her community affiliations.

Linklater (1998) points in the same direction when he states that, beyond any cultural differences, there exists a universal obligation to engage the other in dialogue on equal terms. In the case of the Ontario francophones, this poses a problem insofar as the community has historically been organized around a strong component of cultural and not just linguistic heritage. Thus, the particularistic and substantive moral issues that used to be at its core are now being superseded by a reorientation towards a community organized around language rather than culture. This does not mean, however, that substantive moral issues are no longer important. Rather, they must be located at a different place in the community. No longer can they be considered as constitutive of the community. They play a more peripheral role in the personal choices of community members. Thus, the concept of a communication community does not obliterate cultural difference. It assigns it a new place. This becomes clear when we consider how Linklater takes up Habermas’s
notion of universality to argue that universality is capable of acknowledging difference and that progress need not be equated with merely Western concepts of society.

*Progress involves the decentring of world-views in the manner described by Habermas (...); it involves a conception of dialogue in which universality is wedded to multiculturalism; it requires that the moral stance against wrongful exclusion which makes greater universality and respect for difference possible is divorced from the notion of inevitable unilinear progress and historical finality. (...) [Discourse ethics] does not offer putative solutions to substantive moral debates, envisage historical end points or circulate political blueprints. (...) Concrete decisions about substantive moral arguments are left to agents themselves.*

*(Linklater 1998:90/92)*

The idea of a communication community does not exclude respect for local or cultural difference; it does not prescribe how or even that the francophones of Ontario should conceive of themselves as one collectivity. What a multicultural and respectful discourse ethics entails is made clear in the following remark, in which, interestingly enough, Linklater proposes a communicative situation which resembles the ideas proposed by those Ontario francophones who demanded that the notion of multiple identities within the francophone community be respected.
Sensitivity to social context is therefore a primary feature of the more advanced approaches to generalisability in ethics. The search for agreement through open dialogue with concrete others guards against the danger of reaching a social consensus which obscures or neglects individual or cultural difference. (Linklater 1998:95)

And this is where we can see a direct connection with the current evolution of Ontario’s francophonie: the Rencontre provinciale, for example, was about a search for a new collective vision through open dialogue. Evidently, the modalities and premises of this dialogue were being hotly debated and some of the discourses employed attempted to delegitimize the premises upon which some members wished to be considered as equal participants. Dialogue alone does not guarantee equality and “the endless scrutiny of agreements for evidence of hidden influences and constraints upon genuinely equal participation is a necessary commitment for any dialogic community” (Linklater 1998:99). However, the fact that such a debate took place at all is evidence of a considerable amount of mutual respect, particularly given the high stakes involving a possible dissolution of the tenuous links within the francophone community. Even though the debate itself was rife with tension, the fact that the debate did take place demonstrates a general readiness to accept change and to base any redirection of community development in an open discussion among old and new members of the community.
Conclusion: Citizenship in a Deliberative Democracy

We have finally arrived at a point where we must consider whether the empirical data and the theoretical discussion will allow us to make any kind of tentative proposal for a new direction in Canadian citizenship.

One of the particularities of federalism is, indeed, a dual allegiance to two levels of government: the individual state or province and the federation as a whole. Labrie (1995:16) explains:

[Le fédéralisme] donne lieu au dédoublement des polities et suppose donc une double allégeance des membres de la politie, d'une part envers l'État fédéral, et d'autre part envers l'État fédéré, d'où de multiples ambivalences.

A dual civic identity is thus built into the very fabric of federalism and into Canada's constitutional framework. While these identities may, of course, conflict at times or, at least, come under strain, one could argue that such tension, while rendering discussions more complex, is not detrimental to the political unit as a whole but rather enhances it because more than one procedural avenue for democratic expression exists.

Destinataire constant des normes de deux gouvernes, homologues mais inégales, le citoyen a donc à répondre simultanément aux messages et signaux des gouvernes distinctes des deux paliers de la Fédération.

(Labrie 1995:16)
The concept of allowing multiple identities to flourish in a pluralist democracy and of having them recognized through a flexible concept of communication communities could be developed into an, as yet unrealized, extension of the existing concept of Canadian federalism.

If we accept the ideas of a discourse ethics and a communication community, what would the application of such ideas mean for Canada? The concepts of discourse ethics and a communication community are still highly theoretical and the question is to what extent they could be grounded within an existing national framework like Canada's. The challenge would be to develop a concept of citizenship that is both thin enough to be open to cultural or linguistic difference and thick enough to maintain or develop allegiance to a common political project.

Habermas extends his concept of discourse ethics into a communicative blueprint for democracy, which he calls *deliberative politics*.

After discussing this concept, I will outline why the concept of a deliberative politics may help us to re-imagine the way Canada deals with its pluralist nature. This will lead us, in a final step, to a proposal which sees the boundaries between Official Language Minorities and Multiculturalism dissolve into a new type of polity that recognizes the need for communitarian affiliations but supports the concept of community only if it is seen as a transient and porous entity that depends on its members' spontaneous identification with it.

The political structure of a country like Canada must always strive to balance two competing objectives:
1. allow its citizens enough freedom to lead a life which is as free and self-fulfilling as possible (liberalism) but also

2. maintain the commitment of every citizen to a common political project (republicanism\textsuperscript{39}).

The first objective has already been encountered and discussed as the basic liberal agenda. The second objective may appear to resemble that of communitarianism but it is rather different from it in a number of ways. While communitarianism has a more cultural and local scope, republicanism is concerned with the more distant and political ties to the state as a whole (as opposed to one of many communities within the state). \textit{Deliberative Politics} is a concept Habermas (1996:277ff.) develops in order to achieve an integration of all three.

The primary objective of the democratic process from a liberal point of view is to equip the state so it can best serve society. Society is seen as a system of market-based transactions undertaken by private individuals. As a consequence, the political process should be one that channels our private interests in such a way that they are reflected in the actions of the state. Politics essentially fulfils the function of communicating our collective private needs to a state apparatus in a way that best ensures a prosperous common society.

\textsuperscript{39} Republicanism in Habermas’s terms should not be identified in any way with policies pursued by the Republican Party in the US. On the contrary, as Habermas quotes F.I. Michelman (1988:283), he makes it clear that what Michelman calls \textit{bumper-sticker republicans} are, if anything, closer to the liberal notion of a free-market polity: “The political society envisioned by bumper-sticker republicans is the society of private right bearers, an association whose first principle is the protection of lives, liberties and estates, of its individual members. In that society, the state is justified by the protection it gives to those prepolitical interests:...” (Michelman 1988:283, in Habermas 1996).
From a republican point of view, however, politics should do more than just transmit private needs to the state. The political process is one that should also reaffirm the citizen's desire to be part of a society in which every individual is accorded the same rights and which is founded on principles of mutual solidarity since we are inheritors of a common societal project. Thus, while from a liberal standpoint, there are only two sources of societal integration (administrative power and collectively voiced individual interests) the republican view includes a third: solidarity as based on a common project.

Crucially, proponents of a republican ideal feel that in order to allow citizens to chart their own course, there must exist a public sphere which is autonomous but political and not under the influence of either market forces or the state apparatus. This public sphere can only function, however, if it rests on civil society as a solid foundation. The crucial achievement of both an underlying civil society and an openly accessible public sphere is that it safeguards the independent ability of citizens to engage in a free discussion of policy alternatives.

Habermas argues that a major difference between the liberal and the republican concept is to be found in their different treatment of citizen rights. From a liberal perspective, citizens mainly possess negative rights of non-interference and protection from private or state intervention. From a republican perspective, citizens possess positive rights that guarantee them participation in the political process through communication. The state's purpose, according to one of the authors Habermas quotes to underline his point about republicanism, is to ensure a public sphere "within which persons can achieve freedom in the sense of self-government by the exercise of reason in public dialogue." (Michelman
Furthermore, from a liberal standpoint, the basic system of rights is pre-existing and based on some higher law. This pre-existing legal framework broadly ensures that the radius of action for day-to-day politics does not encroach upon basic democratic principles in such a way as to prevent diverse opinions from being voiced and winning support. From a republican standpoint, however, rights are never pre-ordained or immutable but generated by the community to serve the particular conditions of that community, including its moral convictions. To summarize broadly: in a liberal state, citizens will be led by their personal and strategic interests in their choice of political alternatives. Liberals would argue that this utilitarianism does not detract from the quality of the system, but rather enhances it. People are not likely to be led astray by demagogues if they only act on their pure, healthy self-interests. In a republican state, on the other hand, citizens are not expected to form their political opinions and decisions purely on the basis of market forces but are expected to engage in a dialogue. This process of political communication should be as independent as possible of either the market forces or the state apparatus.

Republicanism in the Habermasian sense is a precursor to the concept of a deliberative democracy. It does, however, suffer from two disadvantages.

- While a republican approach may appear favourable as it includes a space for public discussion, it suffers from the significant faults of being both overly idealistic and based on a homogeneity of background and purpose in the general public that no longer obtains in modern Western societies.
• A further problem is that a republican politics is grounded in the notion of the
sovereign. While the sovereign is no longer the king or queen as monarch (except as a
figurehead in a constitutional monarchy), this personalized notion is still maintained in
the imagination of the body of citizens who constitute the political sovereign
collectively.

What is required in modern democracies, though, is not a democratic approximation of the
static model of the sovereign but a procedural model which accepts the contingencies of
modern democracies on its own terms. This is where the concept of a deliberative
democracy based upon the idea of communication communities suggests itself as a
solution.

At the core of Habermas’s proposal for a deliberative democracy are the conditions and
processes of communication which provide the institutions of public opinion and decision-
making (i.e. representative associations and publicly elected bodies) with their legitimacy.
These conditions and processes of communication are precisely what was discussed under
discourse ethics and further developed in the concept of communication community.
Habermas (1996:286) argues that rationality is thus shifted from the universal human
rights (liberal perspective) or the morality of a particular political community (republican
perspective) to the rules of discourse and argumentation that are based on the structure of
human communication. Discourse theory no longer necessitates that a deliberative politics
depends on the actions of a collectively acting citizenry but institutionalizes
communicative procedures instead. Opinions which are shaped first in informal contexts
(such as citizens’ associations that are independent of both the economy and the state) are
channelled into voter decisions in institutionalized contexts. Thus, influence and power are communicatively generated and are then transformed into state authority. In a pluralist democracy, it is a myriad of cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups that will participate in this process. We can see how this might be implemented in practice if we look back at the various gatherings and associations discussed in the empirical section. The francophone gatherings and associations described above would be a pivotal element of citizenship practice in a deliberative democracy. If, as we saw in one of the examples above, a group of African francophone parents desires changes in the education system and they decide to meet and form an association, this would be precisely the sort of deliberative democratic practice Habermas has in mind. It reinforces democracy simultaneously at the level of community and at the overarching republican level, provided the deliberations that take place respect the principles laid out in discourse ethics. There is no contradiction between community and the state as a whole if universal and democratic principles guide discussion in both contexts.

If we apply Habermas's thinking to debates about civil society, we begin to see that debates about communitarianism vs. liberalism are secondary. What is of primary importance is the manner in which public debate around such issues takes place. Habermas considers associations as venues for such debates since they provide a forum in which deliberative democracy can be put into practice. The centres of power are no longer seen as concrete instances (such as the people constituting the democratic sovereign) but they are part of a communicative process:
The discursive notion of a democracy corresponds to the idea of a
decentred society in which, however, the existence of a public political
arena provides an opportunity for perceiving that very society, for
identifying with it and treating issues of general concern. (...) more than
anything they [the deliberatively mediated political communication
processes] require the initiatives of opinion-forming associations which
arise and reappear spontaneously and over which political control is very
difficult to exert. (Habermas 1996:291f., transl. CQ)

This moves us from discourse as process to discourse as community. The procedural
aspect of discourse can become concrete through the spontaneous appearance of
associations in the form of communities of discourse. What informs such communities is
not any deeply rooted and ethnically or culturally defined membership but rather a sense
among its adherents that it responds to some common concern. And such communities
play a particularly important role in countries like Canada, whose basic legal and political
framework is being revised in view of changes in the composition of its society. Rights
always need to be interpreted and when new citizens come into a country, their
appropriation of rights gives rise to certain reinterpretations. Immigrants do not call into
question the basic legal framework but they may wish to set new priorities and contribute
their own moral objectives to that framework. Habermas refers to this as actualizing
rights:
The process of actualizing rights is indeed embedded in contexts that require such discourses as an important component of politics—discussions about a shared conception of the good and a desired form of life that is acknowledged to be authentic. In such discussions the participants clarify the way they want to understand themselves as citizens of a specific culture, which traditions they want to perpetuate and which they want to discontinue, how they want to deal with their history, with one another, and so on. And of course the choice of an official language or a decision about the curriculum of public schools affects the nation's ethical self-understanding. (Habermas 1994:125)

The evolution in the francophone minority of Ontario can be understood through Habermas's notions of discourses and communities. New francophone groupings will continue to form. These are issue-focused, transient communities of people with a common concern. They are communities of discourse and neither make the level of community disappear (which it should not, given its important role in constituting a pluralist society) nor exerts undue pressure of allegiance over all potential members of such communities.

The central argument has been that the current models of civic belonging, whether they are based on liberalism or communitarianism, do not provide adequate blueprints for the aspirations of new communities. The settlement experience of francophone immigrants in English Canada has presented us with a revealing test case in the landscape of Canadian pluralism: the francophone immigrant communities extend beyond the established bilingual
or multicultural categories of Canadian civil society. The pluralist nature of Canadian civil society consists of both liberal and communitarian elements. This was argued to constitute the background against which newcomers must establish themselves in Canada. In the empirical data, it was seen how all members of the francophone community use discourse to construct their social and civic place in Canadian society. Liberalism and communitarianism were found to permeate that discourse. It was also shown, however, that, ultimately, as dichotomies, they are unable to respond to the complex interplay of people's multiple identities, on the one hand, and their need for belonging to a community, on the other. The idea was advanced that communities could be treated as communities of discourse. The rise of such communities of discourse and the deliberations which take place within them were argued to be highly important for pluralist societies. The creation of such new communities should not only be fostered by the state. The state should, at the same time, also loosen its commitment to the traditional view that bilingualism and multiculturalism present fixed fault lines in structuring Canadian society. Reality is far more complex and dynamic. Building on ideas of Jürgen Habermas, the way in which deliberations take place was argued to be more important than, at least initially, their actual content since whatever moral differences might divide people from each other, agreement should exist that the debate should be as open and coercion-free as possible. Only on this basis is it possible to reach decisions to which everyone will feel committed. In this light, many of the francophone meetings could be re-interpreted as civic gatherings that engaged people in the practice of deliberative democracy and allowed them to begin to carve out a new and creative role for themselves in Canadian civil society.
Canada is, of course, only one of many contexts in which we can see a weakening of the traditional concept of community. Whether through economic necessity or technological advances, traditional communities are dissolving in many parts of the world. In Germany, demographic changes and economic factors have pushed the government to adopt a scheme that invites skilled foreign workers to immigrate to Germany. Faced with an aging population and a serious shortage of computer experts, the new scheme was officially launched in August 2000 under the telling name of 'Green Card' — the untranslated use of the English term signalling a long overdue recognition of the fact that Germany has become an immigrant country. There has also been an overhaul of Germany's antiquated citizenship laws, which came into effect in January 2000 and now allows limited forms of dual citizenship. Their primary goal is to prevent further alienation of the thousands of Turkish children who were born and have grown up in Germany but have so far only been able to carry Turkish passports. Recognizing the dual identity of this group by allowing them to maintain both citizenships did, however, give rise to a major conservative campaign against dual citizenship, which caused the government to modify its initial plans. Carriers of dual citizenship are now required to give up one of their passports when they turn 23 years old. Such reluctance, however, only serves to underline the need to move beyond concepts of clearly bounded and exclusive belonging to a national community. As Germany becomes increasingly multicultural, it will need to deal with its minorities who, interestingly, are beginning to use the English term “community” in its untranslated form to identify themselves as integral but different components of Germany’s population.

At the supranational level, we can also witness a redefinition of community. While Germany grapples with its internal minorities, the European Union is on its way to
considering its constituent member countries increasingly as types of communities which are part of but also answerable to a larger whole. When a coalition government assumed power in Austria at the beginning of 2000, it included the highly controversial right-wing Freedom Party of Jörg Haider. The European partners reacted in concert and froze bilateral contacts with Vienna. Importantly, though, the reaction was not directed at an undemocratic election or objectionable measures put in place by the new government. The disdain of the other member countries was based on the neo-fascist and xenophobic remarks made by Mr. Haider and members of his party. It was felt that European society as a whole was affected by the events in Austria. Austria was thus treated not as an independent state but as an integral part of a type of European-wide community which felt that it had a perfect right to concern itself with the internal affairs of one of its member communities. This is, of course, only one of the more visible examples that demonstrates the extent to which a European society already exists. The ability of citizens within the EU to take their grievances beyond the national judiciary system to the European Court of Justice could be cited as another. Citizenship in the European context thus clearly exceeds the national level.

On an even larger scale, if we look at the growth of the Internet, we are witnessing the creation of worldwide communities. Whether we consider international e-commerce or the international protest of citizens' groups against the World Trade Organization, networks are being established across national boundaries based on transnational concerns and opportunities that have not existed in the past. For example, one of the most powerful institutions that will determine the way in which the Internet evolves, the International Association for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), is holding
worldwide elections to determine who will sit on its board of directors (die tageszeitung, 20 July 2000). And a primary for the Democratic Party in the American state of Arizona was carried out with the help of online voting (The Economist, 24 June 2000).

All of this raises questions that are directly linked to the formation and internal functioning of communities. How are procedures for worldwide elections on the Internet determined and on which (or whose) traditions are they based? Who is eligible to vote? Should eligibility be determined purely on the basis of citizenship or should it depend on who is affected by the decisions of an elected body (e.g. environmental issues which transcend borders)? What are the rights of citizens as they enter global networks? If citizens organize themselves across traditional boundaries, what will serve as a model for their organization? These issues can only be addressed if we revise our concept of community. Take the future of the French language in Canada as an example. It used to be an issue mainly for French Canadians. Today, the economic value of being a French speaker is linked to a worldwide marketplace. We need only think of the extent to which service industries such as call centres or Internet content providers can produce and deliver their goods worldwide. But if the stakes stretch across traditional boundaries, so do the stakeholders. What we are likely to see, is the appearance (and disappearance) of communities centred around the interests and concerns of their members. All of these communities do, however, depend for their functioning on mutually agreed principles. Democratically elected governments will need to cooperate to provide a global framework within which such communities can prosper. While a large amount of self-regulation is possible, a basic legal framework should exist which ensures that all and not only a select few stakeholders can express their views and gain influence within these new communities.
Again, Canada can be viewed as an example: while communities enjoy a large amount of freedom, all of them are subject to the laws of Canada. Deliberative democracy is not an abdication of democratic supervision but rather an enabling umbrella. An indication of how this may work for worldwide communities can be gleaned from an initiative that was launched by the G8 countries at their summit in Japan in July 2000. In the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society (G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit Meeting 2000), the G8 countries state:

_We renew our commitment to the principle of inclusion: everyone, everywhere should be enabled to participate in and no one should be excluded from the benefits of the global information society. The resilience of this society depends on democratic values that foster human development such as the free flow of information and knowledge, mutual tolerance, and respect for diversity. (...) A solid framework of Information Technology related policies and action can change the way in which we interact, while promoting social and economic opportunities worldwide. An effective partnership among stakeholders, including through joint policy co-operation, is also key to the sound development of a truly global information society._

Some may be inclined to view such pronouncements with a certain degree of cynicism, especially when one considers that many countries have difficulty meeting the most basic needs of their population. Still, one should not diminish the importance that the world's most powerful countries have posited here the existence and future development of a
common global society. With communication and information being at the core of this trend, we are bound to see as yet unimagined forms of community and organization. Such global communities will not replace but rather complement the many other societies or communities to which people already belong. On which basis will people decide to identify with the myriad of communities and societies that are becoming available to them, from their local surroundings to global networks? And how will the resulting communities develop as their membership is in a permanent state of flux?

It is hoped that the proposed combination of normatively oriented research on civil society concepts and empirically oriented research into the construction of social reality, to which this thesis hopes to have contributed, will enable us to better understand not only the challenges and opportunities of Canada as a pluralist democracy but that any insights can be extended to other contexts in which issues of community and citizenship are beginning to play an important role.
Bibliography


Comité de démarrage. 1997. La reconceptualisation de la francophonie ontarienne - Pour une meilleure concertation.


Habermas, Jürgen. 1984b. Vorstudien und Ergänzungen zur Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. Frankfurt/M.


Juteau-Lee, Danielle. 1991. *The sociology of ethnic relations in Quebec : history and discourse, Lectures and papers in ethnicity ; no. 2*. [Toronto]: Robert F. Harney Professorship and Program in Ethnic Immigration and Pluralism Studies Ethnicity Core Area Dept. of Sociology University of Toronto.

Kingsley, Marie-France. 1998. Le rôle de l'ACFO dans la production et l'institutionnalisation légale et politique de l'identité franco-ontarienne, Département de science politique, Université Laval, Québec.


