ABRIDGED VERSION
RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY
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RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

November 30, 2007
The list of persons encountered in interviews and the list of researchers and intervenors who commented on the Report appear in Appendix 1 of the full version.

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FOREWORD

This text is an abridged version of a document produced by the Conseil des relations interculturelles entitled Avis sur la prise en compte et la gestion de la diversité ethnoculturelle (A Report on Recognizing and Managing Ethnocultural Diversity). The Council was created in 1984, with the mandate of advising the Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities on the planning, coordination and implementation of policies concerning intercultural relations, immigrant integration, intercultural contact and cultural openness towards diversity.

The Council is happy to be able to take part in the work of the Consultation Commission on accommodation practices related to cultural differences. Its contribution is consistent with the broader view adopted by the Commission, i.e., the Council is similarly willing to go beyond a narrow focus on the sole issue of reasonable accommodations in order to contribute to the broader analysis of ‘relations between cultures [and] the shared rules for living together’ and to advocate the inclusion of this diversity.

In order to lighten this document, all references have been omitted here but are included in the full version of the report, which will be available on the Council’s website at: www.conseilinterculturel.gouv.qc.ca by the end of December 2007.
THE OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

In October 2003, the Conseil des relations interculturelles (the Council) was mandated by the Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities to produce a consultation report on the management of diversity. The Council was asked to propose ‘directions for priority actions associating the government, the business community, the civil society, recent immigrants and the members of the cultural communities’. In May 2005, the new Minister further specified the mandate for the Council to work out a general outline establishing “the [democratic] principles that apply to ethnocultural diversity, including the management of diversity”.

THE CHALLENGE

The mandate is the extension of a previous document produced by the Council indicating the existence of certain challenges inherent in managing ethnocultural diversity in the fields of health and social services and urban life. The Council was referring to patients who refused to be treated by employees whose ethnic origin differed from their own. He also mentioned that some women asked for swimming pool hours to be adapted due to their religious beliefs.

With respect to the integration of immigrants, the approach that prevailed over the last decades in Quebec was based on providing services oriented towards selection, settlement and integration. This approach however reaches its limits when it becomes apparent that such measures begin to prove less effective as the diversity in the composition of immigration starts to increase.

The socioeconomic situation of certain immigrants thus does not improve, even many years after having settled in Quebec. In the last twenty years, their situation has even deteriorated if we compare it to that of immigrants who were admitted into Canada prior to the early eighties.

Thus, in Quebec, the unemployment rate of native persons is 6.3%, 17.8% for those settled for less than five years and 13.4% for those settled for five to ten years. The immigrants’ descendants (the second generation) born in Quebec (or elsewhere in Canada but living here) sometimes encounter problems similar to those experienced by their parents. Other non-immigrants identified as visible minorities long settled in Quebec for several generations, often for as long as those identified as the majority, also encounter similar problems.

PART I – DIVERSITY

1.1 A Picture of Ethnocultural Diversity

The General Data

In Canada, the relative weight of Europe as the continent of birth of immigrants went from 50% in 1991 to 40.3% in 2001. The relative importance of the other continents in 2001 was 26.9% for Asia, 21.1% for the American continent, and 11.5% for Africa. These data express the complexity of diversity, in particular because interbreeding transforms society.

Furthermore, the Council estimates that over 20% of the population in Quebec can be identified as an ethnocultural minority composed of immigrants, persons identified as visible minorities (immigrants or not) and persons born in Canada from one or both immigrant parents (second generation).
This more recent diversity constitutes the most important change and it will be even greater in the near future. For example, it is expected that immigration in 2011 will count for 100% of the growth in manpower. Since immigration has a cumulative effect on diversity, this will end up characterizing the whole of Quebec society. And this cumulative effect will probably not present itself only with respect to origins, but will also involve folkways and customs, even if Quebec does not promote multiculturalism and advocates adherence to ‘shared values’.

Therefore, it appears important that we examine immigration policies and those aimed at immigrants because nation-states recruit immigrants who fit their integration policies, hence their participation can be assessed on the basis of the existing integration measures and programs.

1.2 Economic and Demographic Stakes

The Economic Interest

Immigration can be perceived as a pool from which it is possible to draw substantial resources. This economic stake can be the focus of a strategic positioning to recruit and retain immigrants in a specific territory. Nation-states, provinces, regions and cities can be in competition to attract and retain a specialized workforce.

The selection of immigrants according to economic needs raises questions involving the recognition of their qualifications. In Canada and Quebec alike, this tends to be poorly done because of numerous factors: arbitrary and rare recognition in business and education settings, prejudiced perceptions of occupational experience and training acquired abroad, discrimination in the job market, or overly strict regulations of professional corporations.

We may consider that a society that does not facilitate economic integration through jobs that fit immigrants’ qualifications is in a losing position. Moreover, for about 20 years, the situation of immigrants has deteriorated as compared to that of immigrants who were admitted into Canada prior to the early eighties, as much with respect to job market access as to revenues.

The Demographic Interest

A society runs the risk of losing doubly if an immigrant decides to migrate somewhere else because of this difficulty of entering the job market. An immigrant recently admitted in a country will not necessarily be inclined to leave it quickly for another, for this involves a process that can be long and costly. On the other hand, choosing another province is always possible on Canadian territory.

This view, in which immigration appears as a resource, assumes nonetheless that immigrants must be considered, and must consider themselves, as full citizens. This does not seem obvious because of problems that can lead to integration being either a success or a failure, such as adjustment difficulties, isolation, racism, xenophobia, etc.
Integration in a host country is the prime responsibility of the individuals who choose to settle there. This appears obvious when it is a matter of becoming informed about the laws and regulations and obeying them. However, it is also a collective responsibility, which is borne by groups with which newcomers can identify themselves or by the society as a whole.

In a consultation report on immigration levels in 2008-2010, the Council highlighted the integration indicators proposed by the European Council. They appear in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Dimension of Integration</th>
<th>Cultural Dimension of Integration</th>
<th>Social Dimension of Integration</th>
<th>Political Dimension of Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate and duration of employment or unemployment</td>
<td>Knowledge of the official languages</td>
<td>Isolation, presence of the family</td>
<td>Registration on electoral lists and participation in elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational activity</td>
<td>Language spoken at home and in the workplace</td>
<td>Concentration in certain districts; quality of housing</td>
<td>% nominated as candidates and levels of success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host-country schooling</td>
<td>Religion and religious practices</td>
<td>% in social housing, as tenants or landlords</td>
<td>Participation in institutions and organizations, including % at top leadership levels (trade unions, school boards, company committees, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling in the country of origin</td>
<td>Participation in activities with the country of origin for the benefit of the host country</td>
<td>Distribution in schools, results of exams at the end of studies, registrations in language courses for adults</td>
<td>Militancy, volunteering and participation in humanitarian activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of activity</td>
<td>Leisure activities</td>
<td>% affected by disease and causes of death to assess if there is a need for adapting health care.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who perform dangerous or risky work</td>
<td>The use of new information and communication technologies in economic and family life</td>
<td>Birth and marriage rates and interethnic birth rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of occupations with university qualifications,</td>
<td>The feeling of belonging to the territory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of employment sectors with a marked workforce shortage</td>
<td>Salaries, employment status, independent or autonomous work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% benefiting from the State’s assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The Council considers that the indicators should be cross-referenced with determinants likely to explain differences observed, such as birthplace, immigration category, age, gender, year of immigration and area of residency.
1.3 A Definition of the Management of Ethnocultural Diversity (MED) and the Actors

The Intercultural and Actors model

In Quebec, the ‘intercultural model’ prevails. It aims at connecting projects of individuals identified with ethnocultural minorities with the collective project of a society that wants to be inclusive. Each person must be able to contribute to the shared economic and demographic needs, to the permanence of the French reality and to the principle of openness to the world, which form the basis of the moral contract between newcomers and Quebec society.

Diversity is not a problem per se, but when groups express their demands according to their particular situation, which, in their view, is not experienced by a majority of individuals, problems manifest themselves. Problems also appear when groups stigmatize others because of their differences.

A Definition of the MED

While a ‘Francophone community’ or a ‘White community’ are seldom referred to in Quebec, in contrast references are made to notions of ‘Anglophone’, ‘Black’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Arabic’, ‘Muslim’, or ‘Native’ communities – to name but a few – despite the fact that these are not homogeneous. Such notions evoke the existence of social relations specific to ethnocultural relations, where they can have the effect of reducing individuals to a unidimensional identity or dividing groups according to ‘Us/Them’. This is why we propose the following definition of the MED:

1) in general, ‘ethnocultural diversity’ designates a social construction resulting from social relations that develop from a sense of belonging (real or intended) to a group in which ethnocultural categories can identify themselves, or not, whether they are members of minorities (e.g. immigrants, visible minorities, indigenous peoples or anglophones of English-Canadian origin) or of the majority (Francophones of French-Canadian origin);

2) its management is defined as a set of principles that are applied to the regulation of identificatory social relations or to the intention to regulate, just as the State seeks to do for other social relations (e.g., by establishing a labour code to regulate, in part, the relations between employers and employees).

Therefore, it is a matter of managing the relations between groups who, for one reason or another, might consider themselves to be opposed. The form of social relations characteristic of ethnocultural diversity depends at least in part on the political capacity to orient its construction.

However, there does not appear to exist any real coordination between the diverse actors of the State, the civil society and the market regarding the management of ethnocultural diversity; nor between the actors within each of these spheres. The Council considers that this is a major problem that needs to be solved.
1.4 Private Business and the MED

Diversity as a Lever of Global Performance

Affirming the value of ethnocultural diversity is a strategic, political and social response to the transformation of society. Business would benefit from capitalizing on these changes to increase market share and improve competitiveness. Society as a whole benefits from promoting diversity as a motor for change in pursuing the effort to achieve the full integration and participation of all minorities. Various tools have been developed to this end and reasonable accommodation is one of them.

Accommodative solutions must always respect a certain balance between an employee’s right to be treated equally and the employer’s right to strive for a productive work environment. Generally, undue hardship is identified by considering the factors of impossibility, serious risks, excessive costs or the morale or rights of other employees being affected.

Evidence of the profitability of accommodating lies largely on the effectiveness of satisfaction indicators and performance criteria that make it possible to assess the quantifiable benefits (productivity gains, financial results or increased profitability) or to appreciate their more qualitative advantages (personnel satisfaction and business reputation).

Stakes and Levels of Performance

Promoting the MED requires understanding the connection between the cost/investment of diversity and the profitability of a business. In the current state of things, it seems that the profitable reasons for being interested in diversity reflect mostly the interests of big businesses, whereas SMBs appear to be more interested in incentives to hire personnel of diverse origins, for example, through a particular program.

To implement the policy of capitalizing on ethnocultural diversity in Quebec’s development, the institutional discourse must reach businesses at the heart of their concerns and realities and demonstrate the performance stakes on a tangible basis.

This MED orientation avoids limiting itself solely on concerns of employment equity or manpower representativeness, even if these are in fact partially related. In fact, the concern about making diversity profitable and the concern about social justice can be made to mesh coherently together through the use of incentives (assistance programs for integration) and demonstrative arguments (impacts on productivity) in addition to legislative tools (the law on work equity).

Indicators of the Profitability of Diversity

To promote ‘productive diversity’ also engages the business or the institution, more specifically the SMB, in a dynamic process of constant performance improvement and evaluation.

Therefore, the conditions for the success of an effective MED require that it be integrated within the organizations’ strategy, using a thoughtful approach starting from the goals to be reached, an approach that consists in changing practices and making mentalities and behaviours evolve.

It is an approach used in the mind set of organizations in relation to all of its stakeholders and requires the commitment of senior management. Hence the necessity for implementing
measurement tools, diagnostics and result indicators to assess their effectiveness. This is what is expressed in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Measures Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost reduction</strong></td>
<td>- Personnel retention within specific ethnocultural groups in relation to the average of the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Personnel’s absenteeism within specific ethnocultural groups in relation to the average of the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Direct recruitment fees: evolution over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fees related to the litigation for discrimination cases: legal fees and fees for litigation resolutions (evolution over time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manpower shortages</strong></td>
<td>- Number of vacant jobs: absolute numbers and variations over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Number of candidates for vacant jobs (internal and external contests): absolute numbers and variations over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Time necessary to fill the vacant jobs (internal and external contests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility of services</strong></td>
<td>- Diversification of the user in terms of ethnic composition: growth over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Adaptation to existing services: proportion of specific ethnocultural groups who use them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Development of new services: proportion of specific ethnocultural groups who use them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Attitudes of the selected target groups towards diverse services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Better results regarding services offered</strong></td>
<td>- Levels of satisfaction of the user regarding services: variations over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Growth or decline in the use of services: reasons evoked and variations over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Levels of performance, production and quality with homogenous team work in relation to diversified teams (in territories where diversity is strong or weak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to talents</strong></td>
<td>- Profile of qualifications of personnel in place in relation to qualifications required by the organization (via an audit of abilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Personnel’s satisfaction as a whole and within key groups (technicians or young managers who are particularly promising)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reputation of the organization as an employer (via a survey on behaviours) among key groups (e.g. for new graduates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Retention rate of personnel belonging to key groups (e.g. for very promising young managers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Number of candidates for vacant key positions: variations over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall management capacity</strong></td>
<td>- Proportion of management teams with a ‘non-traditional’ origin - Proportion of very promising managers with a ‘non-traditional’ origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Proportion of very promising managers with a ‘non-traditional’ origin who participate in big development programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation and creativity</strong></td>
<td>- Heterogeneity degree within key groups, proportion of persons of ‘non-traditional’ origin in multifunctional team projects or service developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Performance of different key work group types in relation to ‘non-traditional’ ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Expenditures allocated for research and innovation in budget percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Time allowed before a new service is offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Proportion of services offered based on new ways of doing things (introduced within the last three years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reputation in the eyes of the stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>- Attitudes of opinion leaders and the general public towards the organization concerning big questions on diversity (via an opinion survey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Attitudes of local communities towards the organization concerning big issues on diversity (via an opinion survey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Media presence, mentions (positive or negative), types of media coverage, importance of the coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td>- Profile of personnel’s values in relation to those expected by the organization (via a ‘values audit’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Internal surveys concerning personnel’s opinions and behaviours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion of Part I**

Ethnocultural diversity and its inclusion are complex, and the same goes for the economic, demographic and humanitarian interests and issues that are related to them. Socioeconomic integration is not necessarily successful, because it is difficult from the point of view of public policies to have sufficient control over such factors. This is the reason why we have examined the actors who should be at the heart of such management, precisely because it is a matter of social relations. If there is diversity, whether it involves a society or an organization, then it is necessary to manage this diversity to ensure social and/or business cohesion.
PART II – SOME MED INITIATIVES

2.1 A Brief Overview of Initiatives Outside of Quebec and Canada

Contrasting Cases

In the West, various models have emerged for the purpose of managing diversity. In France, for example, the republican model has chosen centralization and standardization. Other countries like Denmark, Germany and the United States favour a somewhat less centralized approach. Public authorities count on local communities to take care of immigrants, reckoning that this is more effective and less costly than the bureaucratic approach.

Western societies thus follow normative models to manage diversity by emphasizing individual liberties and diversity, or the sharing of common institutions and values. These diverse models can be criticized mainly because in some cases, they have led to reactions contrary to what was sought, such as the rise of particularisms.

The Influence of Conventions

It is important to emphasize that several countries adhere to international conventions that have an impact on immigration policies. They can have a shaping effect on policies that concern directly or indirectly the MED of democratic States that adhere to it, even if these policies do not explicitly mention them.

The multilateral management of migrations is in fact affected by numerous international laws that can have an impact on national policies. The conventions mainly serve as guidelines for agencies that host immigrants and refugees.

Ideally, these conventions reflect the ways in which countries view themselves. This is what enables them to develop their policies according to norms that hold them accountable.

2.2 The Canadian Perspective

A Brief Review of Past Initiatives

In 1971, Canada adopted a multicultural policy aimed at integrating immigrants by allowing them to preserve the particular characteristics of their culture. Moreover, it was believed that multiculturalism would foster the forging of a new Canadian identity.

The Canadian Human Rights Act (1977), the Citizenship Act (1977), the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Employment Equity Act (1986) all supported the multiculturalism policy. Hence, without being clearly defined as a system, multiculturalism had numerous legal reference points that favoured its institutionalization.

In 1998, Canada adopted the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. This Act recognizes and aims to ensure that everyone will recognize and accept Canadian ethnocultural diversity as a shared collective wealth.
The Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was created in 1991. It emphasized intercultural understanding. The Department was replaced in 1993 by the Canadian Heritage Department, which created a Secretary’s Office of State on Multiculturalism. Then in 1995, the multiculturalism policy was redefined in order to put a stronger emphasis on social cohesion.

**Some More Recent Initiatives**

In 2001, the Canadian government voted the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The Act is administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, formed in 1994. Its mission is to promote the special ideals shared by the population and to contribute to a strong Canada.

In 2004, Canadian Heritage organized an event aimed at sensitizing public servants about ethnocultural diversity. It discussed partnerships with civil society, employers, and police services in order to assess government policies and programs regarding the fight against racism.

In 2005, Canadian Heritage held a strategic forum entitled ‘Canada 2017 – Serving tomorrow’s Canadian multicultural population’. The forum’s themes were cities, job markets, social and health services and public institutions. Let us also note the publication in 2005 of Canadian Heritage's Action Plan Against Racism.

**2.3 The Quebec Perspective**

*Various Actions in Favour of the MED*

The law creating Quebec’s Immigration Ministry was sanctioned in 1968. Other events soon followed: the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (1975), the White Book on Cultural Development (1978), the action plan Autant de façons d’être Québécois (So many ways of being a Quebecker) (1981), the policy statement on immigration and integration, Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble’ (Let us build Quebec together) (1990) or the Canada-Quebec Accord (1991).

In 1996, the government created the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration (MRCI). Its mission was to foster intercultural contacts and to ensure that Quebeckers as a whole be open to pluralism.

In 2000, the MRCI organized a national forum on citizenship and integration. The forum stressed the importance of defining guidelines to ensure respect for diversity and differences.

That same year, the MRCI submitted a three-year immigration plan for public consultation. The main orientations consisted in fostering an increased volume of immigration adjusted for Quebec’s receiving capacity, the selection of candidates who know French and the choice of candidates with professional qualifications. Prompt support for their integration in the workplace was an imperative.
Some More Recent Initiatives

In its 2004-2007 Action plan for immigration, integration and intercultural relations, the MICC reminded us that in 1990, the government was seeking to facilitate the integration of immigrants while benefiting from their participation in Quebec’s economic development and in the development of a francophone society.

In 2005, the MICC specified the targets to be reached in its strategic immigration plan for the years 2005-2008. It identified two stakes: the strategic contribution of immigration and ‘cultural communities’ to Quebec’s development and prosperity while also improving the quality of client services and modernizing the State.

A model seems to have prevailed for several years. Roughly, the MICC is responsible for the selection, reception and integration of immigrants. Other authorities participate in the design or implementation of policies (other departments and institutions, local communities, etc.). However, we must mention the difficulty in coordinating the activities undertaken within the context of each of the initiatives with the various action plans and between all of them.

In any case, the integration policies must allow political inclusion, equality on the socioeconomic level and equity with respect to culture and religion. In short, since 1960, the different governments in Quebec have recognized the need to foster a sense of belonging to Quebec society while allowing diverse cultures to express themselves within this society.

Conclusion of Part II

Many efforts have been deployed over the years in order for immigrants to be able to integrate within a society open to immigration. The continuity between all of these efforts and their evaluation is sometimes subject to changes in government. Yet, the idea of continuity is central, as well as the coordination of those activities. The action plans and strategic plans should give rise to this coordination throughout the years, and with no interruption.

It is important that these plans be produced in a collaborative way with various social actors who are concerned or engaged with these issues along with all the government departments and organizations. These actors should meet to jointly assess how fully the concrete actions that should enable Quebec to meet the goals targeted in its plans have been implemented.
3.1 A Mutual Adaptation

Access to Services

When the issue is the provision of health care and social services to newcomers, the question of accessibility of services can be raised concerning access to information and the decoding thereof. The MED can demand new practices, all the more so when immigrants underuse the available services due to a lack of understanding of how the rules function.

This is why equitable measures will aim at reducing the inequalities that can affect marginalized groups. Depending on the situation, certain measures could result in the elimination of obstacles, thus making it possible to avoid unnecessary expenses.

Obviously, this is not a matter of transforming our institutions to copy how things are done elsewhere or according to how newcomers understand them. Rather, it is a matter of adapting services according to what is possible and acceptable in order to facilitate the solving of problems and ultimately, the integration of individuals and groups.

In any case, interventions within an intercultural context require that an individual be considered from different perspectives, especially those involving his/her migratory history and culture as well as the impact of these two variables on the different members of his/her family. If there were an initial dysfunction within the family, there could be an increase of problems resulting from its migration. This is why it is so important to apply adequate measures shortly after arrival, such as correctly informing newcomers about the services available.

Models for Interacting with Diversity

The notion of equity nevertheless permeates certain practices. With respect to social and health services, both in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, three models of such services prevail: 1) conventional multicultural services, 2) parallel services offered by immigrant and ethnocultural organizations to members of their own communities, 3) multicultural health services developed to answer the needs of broad ethnic categories rather than specific ethnocultural groups.

Community organizations can contribute in several ways to making information accessible to individuals identified with ethnocultural minorities. Establishing a climate of trust is essential. In some cases, time is required before intervention is possible, especially when the images of health and social services and their associated professions in the host country differ from those in the country of origin.

Yet, not everyone gravitates towards community organizations. Some immigrants, because they originate from countries where the civil society does not appear to be very developed or because community actions are not familiar to them, will have more confidence in an institution such as a local community service center.

The ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux (MSSS) should examine second-line services in order to more broadly sensitize them to the issues surrounding diversity. As for hospitals and geriatric centers, they often tend to ask the CLSC to take over the costs and organization resulting from the presence of immigrants in their services (interpreter fees, organization of appointments, etc.). However, it is necessary to foster continuity between the different organizations.
Communication plans in various institutions should be designed to facilitate the understanding and proper use of social and health services, particularly for newcomers. Access to information about the organization of services is essential to ensure that they will be better used. This may require organizing information campaigns through community organizations, places of worship, ethnocultural media, etc.

Vulnerable Groups

Problems of cultural adaptation affect newcomers more than children born in Quebec. However, the children of immigrant parents (second generation) who were born in Quebec seem to experience difficulties at the social inclusion level. Ethnocultural minorities are often faced with silent racism that takes the form of unfavourable assessments of this clientele, which can appear in all institutions.

The development of innovative partnerships with community groups can therefore prove to be necessary. For example, the stay of a young person in a youth centre is facilitated when groups mobilize persons with whom the youth can personally identify.

Sponsored women with young children are also part of vulnerable groups. They experience difficulties integrating in the host society. And as we know, even when newcomers are highly educated and have work experience, their entry into Quebec society is not always easy.

Besides youths and immigrant families, we can include refugees who may require rapid access to services because of very difficult situations linked to their departure. They do not always have access to services even when it involves their children.

This vulnerability can also characterize longer-settled immigrants such as elderly persons who do not speak French or English, are not integrated at all or have been rejected by their families.

It is important that the MSSS plan highlight the reality of international migrants in order to better comprehend the problem. The MSSS also needs to go further since it mentions no immigrant clientele whatsoever in its 2005-2010 strategic plan. It is therefore imperative, for the sake of risk prevention and promoting the population’s health, that the formation of health policies and Health Department plans at the local and regional levels explicitly include individuals identified with ethnocultural minorities among its population targets.

3.2 The Quebec Reform of Health and Social Services

Management Initiatives of Ethnocultural Diversity

For about twenty years, the government of Quebec has been sensitized to questions surrounding the accessibility of health care for immigrants. After several surveys, in 1989 the government implemented a three-year action plan aimed at improving the access of ethnocultural minorities to services.

Certain goals of the 1989 action plan have been achieved, mainly those targeting the accessibility of services for allophone persons: the creation of a bank of linguistic and cultural interpreters in Montreal, translation services offered by community organizations in other regions, health workers’ training for intervention in an intercultural environment, the creation of committees concerned with diversity, etc.
In 1994, the MSSS presented a plan entitled *Accessibilité des services aux communautés ethnoculturelles – Orientations et plan d’action 1994-1997* (The accessibility of services for ethnocultural communities—Orientations and 1994-1997 action plan). In 1998, a similar plan was produced that insisted, this time, on taking into consideration and maintaining Quebec’s **cultural identity**.

In the course of these years, various sections of the Act on Health and Social Services have come to define a broader range for this accessibility. Other goals, just as important, have not been achieved however; we need only mention the integration of the **intercultural dimension** throughout all MSSS programs, though it is an element central to the accessibility of services.

In short, for several years, **problems** have been reported that have not really been resolved or that repeat themselves over the years. In other words, there have been several changes in health and social services networks without any evaluations, impact studies and the state of the population’s health having been able to concretely demonstrate their benefits.

**The Reform per se**

In 2004, the Quebec government undertook a reform of health and social services. This reform aimed at answering the needs of the population, including **vulnerable clienteles**. The responsibility to the population is to ensure access to the appropriate services and ensure their continuity and quality.

That same year, 95 local health and social services networks were created. A Health and Social Services Centre (HSSC) was established in each of these networks. The HSSC reports to 16 health and social services agencies that coordinate at the regional level the organization of the local networks’ services. Their mandate is to set up local services networks by facilitating the merging of organizations.

The HSSC can guide users towards partners. It constitutes the **first** line, while youth centers and rehabilitation services constitute the **second** line, and university hospital centres form the **third** line. One of the major responsibilities attributed to the HSSC is to implement health promotion and preventive measures for the general population as well as for the vulnerable populations residing in its territory.

The Health and Social Services Act specifically requires that the organization of services take into account the linguistic and cultural particularities of each territory and, within the available resources, make health and social services accessible, in their own languages, for persons belonging to Quebec’s different ‘cultural communities’.

**Obstacles to Overcome**

In the Montreal region, the 2004-2007 local action plans of the 12 HSSC have been submitted and have been analyzed by the Montreal Center Public Health Management. According to the results, ethnocultural minorities have been considered twice. On the one hand, they targeted families with preschool-aged children and, on the other hand, they planned on facilitating interventions aimed at young immigrants.

If this is actually the case for the administrative region of Montreal, one of whose concerns is to improve the health conditions of the young and their families, what is happening elsewhere in Quebec? Even if the vast majority of persons identified with ethnocultural minorities are in
Montreal, other Quebec regions like Gatineau, Montérégie or Laval now have more and more immigrants. Knowing the commitments of agencies and HSSC alike towards these populations will be important.

Therefore, the reform could be an opportunity not only to better define the stakes involved in the MED, but also to suggest concrete actions. It also brings to mind the many structural constraints faced by health professionals whose training was received abroad. In Quebec, few of the professional corporations and professional orders have changed their rules in order to facilitate the right to practice in Quebec, although some efforts to this effect are under way.

Thus, requirements based solely on membership in a professional order can constitute a barrier to the hiring of minorities. And where diversification does occur, the hiring of workers from ethnocultural minorities in certain organizations of the health and social services sector is often done according to an ethnic division of labour.

Pathways to Solutions

That an intervention aimed at solving a problem with an immigrant will cost more money if more time is necessary than with a non-immigrant is a predictable fact. In order to reduce these costs, part of the solution could be to hire health and social services personnel who have a practical or theoretical knowledge of other cultures.

It is of course desirable for the immigrant to adapt, but because we have postulated that Quebec will continue to resort to immigration to solve various problems, these will with no doubt repeat themselves over time.

In certain cases, some HSSCs have had to take ethnocultural diversity into account for several years already, with immigrants representing close to 50% of the population in their territory. Nevertheless, in the HSCCs located in urban districts where diversity is high, this diversity is reflected in the composition of agency personnel in their territory in one case, while it is the opposite in the other case.

Therefore, intercultural training is very important and the presence of diversified personnel has a positive impact on perceptions and on the development of intercultural competencies within those organizations. Given that fact, the preferred approach will be transversal, since diversity is present in all social strata and manifests itself at both the regional and the local levels.

Should we not take advantage of the reform to provide the tools that will enable people to make assessments and ajustments wherever it is necessary? If a shared vision is lacking between the institutions, the population approach advocated by the MSSS might be an opportunity for the HSSCs to develop a common analytical grid that would include ethnocultural diversity among their concerns, at least where it would be relevant.

For that matter, the MSSS considers that the State and the social actors both need to mobilize themselves to fight poverty and social inequality. Diversity is thus included among these concerns, all the more so that a provincial Committee has been created to provide health and social services for persons who are members of ethnocultural minorities.
Conclusion of part III

There is no doubt that some headway has been gained in terms of the MED. This is attested by greater diversity in the composition of agency personnel, in training programs, in sensitization sessions about the MED or intercultural relations, by the production of research on the subject, etc. Diversity is part of everyday’s life, it is being experienced. In other cases, however, some people apparently prefer to ignore the fact that problems related to ethnocultural affiliations may add themselves to current problems.

Why, then, is this diversity being addressed so differently? Given that much research has shown that specific problems develop when an immigrant clientele uses health and social services, the MSSS should be more sensitive to these types of issues. It should, for example, document a picture of the ethnocultural diversity it serves, at least wherever it appears relevant to do so, for instance in Montreal, Longueuil, Laval, Brossard, Sherbrooke and Gatineau. The results would make it possible to work out a coherent policy for the MED throughout the entire health and social services network, at least wherever it is relevant to do so.
PART IV – MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS

4.1 The governmental perspective

The Regionalization of Immigration

The Quebec Government’s concern for regionalization is not recent. Since the early seventies, the government has been providing some services to immigrants in certain regions, mainly through the Immigrants’ Orientation and Training Centres (COFI, in French). In 1979 and 1980, the government oriented over 6000 Indochinese refugees towards regions outside of Montreal. However, the retention rate was very low. It was only in 1987 that the government considered regionalization measures again.

That being said, the issues surrounding employment are central because aiming to settle immigrants in a region where the unemployment rate is very high raises serious questions. It is obvious that seeking to settle immigrants in such a region without first trying to solve the source of the problems would constitute magic thinking. Hence the importance of linking the immigration regionalization policy with a broader regional development policy.

In the early 1990s, concerns about the regionalization of immigration were expressed in the policy statement on immigration and integration. This statement emphasized the difficulties inherent in such an objective.

The government therefore made various recommendations in its 1991 governmental action plan on immigration and integration: coordinating with municipalities and Regional County Municipalities (RCM), promoting regions, sensitizing various publics to the contributions of immigration, supporting the settlement of immigrant entrepreneurs in agriculture, etc.

In 1992, the government further specified its position on regionalization in the direction of a more balanced regional redistribution of immigration and of measures supporting regionalization. The aim was to achieve a more balanced spatial redistribution of immigrants.

In 1996, the Minister responsible for the MRCI mandated the Council in order to pursue the reflection on regionalization measures. The Minister was foreseeing agreement signatures for the establishment of immigrants with Regional Development Councils (RDC). The Council therefore conducted a broad consultation throughout 14 Quebec regions. The resulting consultation report stated the necessity for the regions to become stakeholders in the hosting and integration of newcomers. Hence the necessity for decentralizing the relevant powers.

Despite all these steps, in 2000, the Montreal Census Metropolitan Area contained close to 90% of all immigrants in Quebec; and the Island of Montreal contained nearly 80% of newcomers each year. This is also the case in several Western countries, namely that immigrants establish themselves in large urban centres. The MRCI reiterated its concerns about this fact, including the implementation of policies with numerous regional partners.

Several years later, it seems that the same problems and solutions, more or less, must still be faced, even if the sociopolitical environment is transforming itself. The hope is that more immigrants will settle outside of Montreal, but this does not seem to function very well, even if there are agreements between cities and regions regarding immigration.
4.2 The Agreements about Immigration and the MED

The Agreements’ Impact

Ideally, at the city level, partnerships between diverse stakeholders are necessary for promoting the attraction and retention of newcomers: employers, trade unions, educational institutions, professional corporations, community organizations including, obviously, those who represent immigrants, etc. These actors can set priorities at the local level. However, they need to develop partnerships with the other levels of government at the federal, provincial or territorial levels (multilateral agreements).

This is why some cities and regions have signed agreements with the MICC for the purpose of receiving immigrants. Let us mention that ensuring the involvement of city employees is an essential condition in integrating newcomers, just like the fact of including regional actors in the signature of agreements. Among other things, the agreements allow for the development of a shared expertise.

Still, the openness to diversity seems to have its limits, even when several city employees and partnering organizations participate in working out the agreement. For example, the elected municipal leaders do not want to consider the employability of immigrants or their representation within the municipal apparatus as part of the agreement.

Let us add that in the case of the cities, The Sports, Leisure and Active Living Branch is often responsible for the application of the agreement at the city and district levels. In the case of agreements signed with the regions, they often involve many more stakeholders than in the case of cities. However, various partners can take part in the application of the agreements in the cities, as is the case for the City of Montreal. Nevertheless, one can wonder who should be at once the signatory and the one responsible for the application of the agreements.

For example, when it comes to economic development and mention of it is made in the agreement, should not, in the case of the cities, the Community Economic Development Corporations, the local development centres, and even the Chambers of Commerce also be signatories of the agreement? The question applies especially in the case of cities whose agreement includes only two signatories, namely the MICC and the City.

The Cities

There is no doubt that the agreements can enable the MICC to better plan its activities. Indeed, it is the local communities that welcome immigrants. Since the MICC takes care only of recent immigrants, the communities bear the responsibility for facilitating short and long term integration. Quebec’s cities, according to the Law of Municipal Responsibilities, have diverse responsibilities: culture, leisure, community activities and parks, local economic development, transportation, etc.

The complexity of coordinating operations in each of the selected dimensions is obvious. When it relates to the MED, who should work together on what issues? Which actors must participate or should be consulted within the planning context? It is possible that such issues will stand a greater chance of being resolved if the actors in each field include the MED-related issues in their own operations.
However, which actors will in fact agree to join in partnerships is not necessarily obvious. For example, with respect to social inclusion, we have seen that some immigrants live in precarious economic conditions, so it is therefore necessary that affordable housing be available. Yet who is willing to take on this responsibility? On issues involving democracy, empowerment or the job market, precisely what place do we hold in reserve for immigrants?

How can we solve the initial problem concerning the social inclusion of specific categories of people? It is through a constant dialogue between different actors associated with the State, the market or civil society. And this is not featured in the agreements that the MICC signs with the cities and regions, i.e., that if we call for partnerships, the various actors will not necessarily work in a concerted and complementary manner but rather in a partitioned way.

This can be generalized to all the services. Has the time not come to make the local actors responsible, at least in part, for receiving newcomers by allocating to them the necessary resources? And if this were so, it would require that the MICC watch over the development of various partnerships by municipalities, which the agreements favour besides, by ensuring that there be some coordination between the different activities while setting out clear rules for performance reporting.

With respect to partnerships and mutual coordination practices, Quebec has already developed numerous initiatives in many fields over the past 40 years, which have exerted impacts at the national, regional and local levels.

*The Diversity of Practices*

Let us mention that the overview of various agreements between the MICC, cities and regions enables us to observe that different reactions and practices exist. This is not at all surprising. When the number of immigrants constitutes 50% or 0.1% of the population in a territory, the problems and the approaches are different.

However, in the Montreal districts where the numbers of immigrants have reached a high percentage of the population, the reactions are not the same, in part because of the greater or lesser experience of some territories in facilitating the integration of immigrants.

At times, a degree of confusion may also affect the reception and integration of immigrants when the city’s and district’s positionings are not clear, even when there is great diversity in the territory’s population.

Let us also note that interpretations differ with respect to the implementation and the impacts of the agreements. For certain territories, immigration is an important stake for solving economic and demographic problems, whereas for others it is a reality one must just deal with.
Conclusion of Part IV

Regions and cities alike must participate in the decisions concerning immigration, whether they deal with the levels to be reached or the profiles required to match their needs or specific features, or also because of their humanitarian obligations.

The agreements linking the territories with the MICC should probably further reflect this sharing of resources deployed at the national, regional and local levels for immigration planning and integration. For example, if the MICC signs an agreement with a CRE, it is necessary to make sure that the local coordination committees are stakeholders. The population however should also be consulted regarding these stakes, especially during the preparation of an action plan to receive and integrate newcomers. These agreements should also be concerned with uniting individuals around a shared societal project.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethnocultural diversity in Quebec is on the increase because immigration is a necessity for meeting our demographic and economic challenges. This diversity is also increasing because there is a cumulative effect that takes the form of greater intermingling (cultural as well as genetic) in the population. Quebec society is thus changing in this respect.

When a society becomes aware of this type of transformation, diversity can appear as a threat to the collective identity even when the latter is not explicitly defined, as the recent ‘Us’/‘Them’ debate in Quebec has reminded us. What is worrisome however, is this fragmentation between minorities and the majority, which can also intensify in parallel.

Quebec has chosen to embrace this diversity within the context of the shared values that must be expressed, notably in the form of a moral contract, which must unite newcomers and the host society. Let us recall that in the 1990 policy statement, the idea of a moral contract for integration referred to the binding together of Quebeckers of all origins through learning and using the French language, participating in Quebec’s social, cultural, economic and political life and developing harmonious intercommunity relations. One must not lose sight however of the fact that with respect to immigration, Quebec is in competition not only with other Canadian provinces for attracting immigrants, notably of the economic category, but also with other countries.

However, we observe a difficulty in coordinating the activities involving different actors in the MED. We have seen this in the health and social services sectors and in urban life. There is no shared vision of the MED, which means that certain organizations develop exemplary practices related to immigration whereas others do not even take ethnocultural diversity into account. For example, certain districts of Montreal seem to consider ethnocultural diversity as a problem that they prefer to avoid, whereas others accept it as a reality that is an integral part of Quebec society.

This difficulty in coordinating the MED activities is also present within the MICC and of course within each government department and between the different departments. This is not surprising, given the complexity of this coordination.

The presence of all the actors is required in order to work out immigration and integration policies so that they will be in mutual accordance, but also in order that the actors will be held responsible for the results of the actions. Indeed, the issues surrounding the social, economic, cultural and political integration of newcomers concern Quebec society as a whole and not solely a government department or a hundred community organizations.

This is why the Council notably recommends that the State actors be invited (e.g. the government, representatives of the opposition and the territories), the civil society (e.g. trade unions and groups of organizations) and the market (e.g. employers’ associations and the sectors’ associations) to hold a ‘mini-summit’ and convene Quebec’s active minds to discuss the creation of a task force for the management of workforce diversity so that Quebec’s whole population can contribute with its full potential to its economic development and benefit from it accordingly.

The Prime Minister should invite key actors (members of the government and the official opposition, representatives from the business community, trade union organizations, women’s movements, community organizations, etc.) to this mini-summit because of their recognized status in order to ensure that the task group is created on solid foundations.
The mandate of the task group would be to identify the problems and solutions involved in managing the diversity of the workforce and to enable the whole population to contribute to the full potential of Quebec’s economic development.

The mini-summit therefore would be the place where actors concerned about economic development would examine the setting up of the task force on the management of workforce diversity for the purpose of creating jobs, maintaining employment and developing more highly performing organizations. These actors should obviously not only represent the different spheres and sectors including health and social services, but also the different territories including Quebec’s cities and regions. The goal is to make Quebec’s economy more dynamic through a better use of the human resources already employed, but also through a broader socioeconomic inclusion of various social categories, including the ethnocultural minorities.
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N.B.: This consultation report was adopted during a meeting held on November 19, 2007. Ms. Flora Marlow registered an abstention.
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