INTRODUCTION

By Jack Jedwab

This edition of Canadian Diversity addresses issues surrounding the debate about models of diversity in Canada and in other parts of the world. It examines differences in discourse and practice between multiculturalism, which remains the official Canadian model, and interculturalism, which is the term Québec policy-makers use to describe their government's approach to diversity. Proponents of interculturalism frequently claim that their preferred model arises from a rejection of multiculturalism, which they contend has not succeeded in integrating newcomers and their descendants into the societal mainstream. Proponents of multiculturalism contend that intercultural program and discourse is not inconsistent with the recognition of multiple identities and multiculturalism not inconsistent with the desire for cross-cultural exchange. Underlying this debate is the issue of the linguistic and cultural differences between Québec and the rest of Canada which undoubtedly influence the way in which questions around diversity get framed. Several contributors point to the significant place of religious identities in the current debate over models of diversity in Québec and the rest of Canada. Many of the contributors to this edition insist that the debate around the multicultural/intercultural dichotomy is far more complex than is widely assumed. Taken together, the essays offer valuable insights and a basis for broader debates about comparative models of diversity. Such discussion would be most helpful to policy-makers and practitioners in Québec and elsewhere in the country.

Winter and Simkhovych point out that the term "intercultural" is used increasingly in European and international organizations to refer to harmonious and egalitarian forms of integration based on cultural respect, dialogue, and learning. Québec "interculturalism" refers to its approach to immigration and integration with a focus on the distinct "national" Québécois identity. Despite heated debate about how interculturalism differs from multiculturalism the authors contend that the notion of "intercultural" is not entirely lost on non-Québécois Canadians. They conclude that the ideas of multiculturalism and interculturalism are not mutually exclusive. Rather, their difference must be situated within the context of two competing nation-building projects – a context in which Québécois interculturalism reveals traces of Canadian multiculturalism, and multicultural Canada promotes intercultural dialogue.

Weinstock contends that debates about the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism in Québec are being overshadowed by the growing political climate that appears increasingly unfavorable to the view that some form of accommodation is a condition for successful integration. The spirit of openness which animates multiculturalism and interculturalism is under pressure from those who would advocate greater restriction on the expressions of minority religions, and government seems willing to reasonably accommodate those voices. Weinstock concludes that those who believe that the shared goals of multiculturalism and interculturalism are best suited to the harmonious and ethical integration of immigrants have reason to be concerned with recent actions supported by the State.

Solange Lefebvre suggests that the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism are respectively characterized by societal narratives with different expectations around minority integration. Lefebvre analyses the sources employed by the Bouchard-Taylor Commission to compare Québec with certain European countries where there is similar discourse around the relationship between the national majority and ethno-religious minorities. In intercultural Québec and multicultural Canada, there appears to be a greater emphasis on the neutrality of the common space and a greater restriction on the public expression of religion.

Shauna Van Praagh analyzes the February 2012 Supreme Court of Canada decision in S.L. and D.J. v. Commission Scolaire des Chênes upholding the right of the government of Québec to require that a course on ethics and culture of world religions be taught in the province's schools. She suggests that the decision questions the conflict between multiculturalism and interculturalism. The Supreme Court judgement points to a certain degree of co-existence between the two ideas as indicators of societal multiplicity and shapers of interaction.

As a founder of the compulsory Québec course on the ethics and culture of world religions, Jean-Pierre Proulx discusses the rationale behind the courses introduction in September 2008. He outlines that the principal objective was for all Québecers to learn to know, respect and appreciate multiple religious and secular identités beginning with the historic importance of Christianity. Students would be encouraged to debate issues that arise from a plurality of religions. In short, the course aimed to help students to live together as knowledgeable, and open-minded citizens.

McAndrew and Audet contend that the way in which diversity is expressed institutionally is quite complex and cannot be associated with a specific model. Looking at the school system the authors suggest that there are multiple approaches and strategies adopted to deal with diversity and there is a need therefore to move beyond the generalisation that there are two conflicting models in comparing Québec with the rest of Canada. Despite the particular process of institutional change in Québec when compared to other parts of the country, it cannot be said that there is one model of diversity that is applied in the school system rather there exists a varied and complex set of approaches.

Maxwell Yalden suggests that the principal source of difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism policies is in the emphasis given by the latter to reinforcing the "French core" in Québec. In the exhaustive debate arising from the deliberations around reasonable accommodation (the Bouchard-Taylor report) it is clear that emphasis would be placed on the need for minority integration with the majority culture. This is the principal difference with the federal multicultural approach. Yalden contends there remains a need for developing approaches that consider the needs of the minorities while reinforcing their participation in the larger community of which they are a part.

Cooper looks at the linguistic and ethnocultural tensions that underlie discussion of interculturalism. She suggests that much of the social science literature in Québec on the subject of interculturalism has focused upon differences with multiculturalism and pays insufficient attention to the reciprocal intellectual debate between the dominant Francophone majority (the main producers of intercultural discourse in Québec), Aboriginal scholars and other scholars of varied socio-linguistic and ethno-cultural backgrounds. She insists on the importance of doing so because of the way in which we are mutually and discursively positioned in such debates. She laments the relative absence of diverse critical approaches to minority language and national identity in the current body of literature on interculturalism.

My essay compares policy statements and programs arising from the federal government's multiculturalism branch with that of the Québec Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities. Based on such analysis, it is suggested that the differences between the two are far less important than some observers would have us believe, and invites analysts to look more closely at what the government of Canada actually does when formulating criticism around its model of diversity. I also contend that the Québec interculturalism inadequately addresses how and where the Anglophone population and English language institutions are part of the discourse and practice associated with the province's model.

Fleras suggests that both multiculturalism and interculturalism are guided by principles of integration and inclusion despite differences in discourse. He adds that Canada's official multiculturalism is less 'multi' than widely perceived, while Québec's interculturalism is less 'inter' than many propose.

Zapata and Carignan look at the results of a program implemented by the University of Québec in Montreal that proposes a linguistic and intercultural encounter between Québec Francophone students specialized in communications with Hispanophone students enrolled in the University's French language program. The project aimed at promoting mutual respect between the students based on communicating their differences and similarities. During the exchanges, the majority Francophone students chose to learn the Spanish language while the Hispanophones acquired French as a necessary element of their integration. The authors situate the exchanges in the context of ongoing discussion around multi and interculturalism and look specifically at their ramifications for intercultural training programs.

Temelini contends that the principal difference between Québec and Canadian models of immigrant integration are reflected by the presence of a dominant secular Francophone culture in the former and a bilingual polyethnicity in the latter. Hence there is a difference between the two approaches and while multiculturalism may not be in synch with Québec's approach to integration there remain some similarities notably around values.

Gregory Baum suggests that the symbolic dimension of intercultural discourse must not be ignored as it reminds people that Québec occupies an objectively different position than the other Canadian provinces when it comes to the defense of the language and culture of the majority. As a message, l'interculturel informs the immigrants that Québec is eager for their integration into Québec society. He notes however that Québec has yet to do enough to translate interculturalism into action.

Belkhoja looks at the way in which the management of diversity takes place within a minority Francophone context. Beyond the discourses of multiculturalism and interculturalism, the major challenge as illustrated in the case of the Acadians of New Brunswick is the need for adjustment to the historic identity of the group in order to create an inclusive Francophone community.

Darryl Leroux argues that current models of diversity represent a particular brand of nationalism, in both Québec and Canada, that is centred around the dominance of the "two founding" nations. He argues that despite their respective legitimacy, interculturalism and multiculturalism represent continued efforts to limit expressions of racialized diversity in the social and political domain.

Kamal Dib maintains that Canadian discourses about immigrant and minority integration have evolved over the past four decades. He points out that several federal and provincial government programs and policies are now involved in the integration process and Canada has been more successful than any other OECD country in terms of welcoming and integrating newcomers while preserving economic stability. He insists that multiculturalism has played an important role in this regard. Dib suggests that despite ongoing criticism, programs aimed at cross-cultural understanding and the promotion of multi-cultural citizenship contribute to giving Canada an advantage over other countries in preserving social peace. Cuccoletta argues for the need to move beyond multiculturalism and consider cultural approaches that focus less on ethno-specificity and more on cosmopolitan citizenship and a transcultural model based on individual rights and freedoms.

Victor Armony contends that if there is no substantive difference between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec's interculturalism it is due to a relatively weak sense of shared community in the former whereas the idea of such a sense of community is contested in Quebec. He questions the assumption that Quebec's nationalistic impulse puts its approach to integration at odds with the civic model deployed in English Canada. Armony maintains that Quebec's model of interculturalism also requires the adoption of a common public culture, defined by the use of the French language and by certain fundamental values (such as secularism and gender equality).

He concludes that "Canada's multiculturalism and Quebec's interculturalism are two variations of the same model of integration, one that favours civic inclusion rather than assimilation, plays down public displays of patriotism, values diversity in itself, and judges immigrants' contribution to society as mostly positive".