

Sex Ed in Ontario: Religious Mobilization and Socio-Cultural Anxiety

by David Rayside

Department of Political Science and the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies
University of Toronto

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Prefatory Note

This paper, recently conceived and too-rapidly executed, is part of an ongoing project on the relationship between religiously-based activism and Canadian political parties, supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The recent controversy over sex education in Ontario was not what I had planned for my CPSA presentation, but it raised several questions and called on many analytical strands relevant to the larger project. Even without having had enough time to fully explore the story, or make sense of it, I thought it worth planting in the midst of a larger discussion of conservatism in Canada.

I could not have imagined telling this story without several people agreeing to confidential interviews. Much of my past work has dependent on the frankness of such people, and my gratitude never diminishes. I am also extremely grateful for the assistance, and enthusiasm, for two research assistants who have signed on for this ride – Paul Thomas and Jerald Sabin, both of the Ph.D. program in Political Science at the University of Toronto. David Docherty provided helpful insights at an early stage in this particular project. And over the last couple of years, Chris Cochrane, now a colleague, has been extraordinarily willing to provide me fresh data on various of the analytical questions I delve into.

Introduction

On the morning of April 20th, 2010, veteran anti-gay evangelical crusader Charles McVety issued a press release denouncing a new Ontario sex education curriculum, and calling for protest against it. Fifty-four hours later, Premier Dalton McGuinty withdrew what were seen the most controversial sections of the Health and Physical Education document (HPE) for a “re-think.” This was an unusual and embarrassing reversal for a Liberal leader widely viewed as strategically canny.

For many observers of Canadian parties and the politics of sexual diversity, this was not supposed to happen. Moral conservatism in general, and faith-based campaigning on issues like homosexuality and reproduction, have been generally seen as ineffective in policy terms, or simply ignored.¹ The political role of evangelical Protestant groups has been given some prominence since the emergence of the Reform and Alliance challenges to the established party system, but most of the analytical literature sees their role as constrained or in decline.² There has been recurrent talk of forging sustained alliances across faith groups in defense of traditional morality, but the divisions between Catholics and evangelical Protestants, and between the conservatives among them and their counterparts in Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Jewish religious constituencies remain deep and permanent.

Controversies specifically over issues related to sexual diversity have recently seemed so much yesterday’s news. Though the federal Conservative Party has been signalling its distaste for public recognition of sexual diversity – snubbing the 2006 International AIDS Conference in Toronto, attempting to impose greater political control over film and video tax credits, refusing to fund “Pride” events in Toronto and Montreal – it has been trying to avoid any major assault on LGBT rights. Most academic and “insider” treatments of the Conservative Party of Canada emphasize its preoccupation with a neo-liberal agenda and not its moral conservatism.

At the provincial level, major right and centre-right parties were focussing more policy attention on their neo-liberal agendas than on whatever morally-conservative initiatives that their religiously-conservative voters and legislators sought. While leader of the Progressive Conservatives in Alberta, Ralph Klein had been willing to toy with conservative positions on homosexuality, but his heart was not in it, and over time grew in his apparent distaste for anti-gay sentiment. He promised a campaign against same-sex marriage when it surged to the front burners, but then gave it up and warned conservatives in general about playing up moral issues.³

Ontario’s Progressive Conservative Party had long tilted away from rallying around a family values agenda. The Mike Harris government (1995-2002) largely stayed away from sexual diversity issues and the other hot button moral issues, and party leaders since then (until now) have been no different. They have recognized that their electoral fortunes depend in part on the votes of moral conservatives, including evangelical Christians, but see the risk of losing more votes by appearing to be too close to those constituencies. The costs of making choices that are seen to align the party too closely to religious communities are reinforced by the widespread belief that William Davis’ 1984 decision to expand Roman Catholic school funding and John Tory’s promise to extend public support to private religious schools in 2007 cost the party

electoral victories.

Public opinion survey questions on sexual diversity in general, homosexuality in particular, show that no region in Canada is particularly fertile ground for anti-gay political campaigning, compared to so many parts of the United States. Same-sex marriage seemed the last major battle, and on that issue, a clear majority of Canadians were supportive of the inclusive position by the early 2000s. Stephen Harper knew that this was a losing issue by the time that Parliament voted on a resolution to re-open the question in late 2006, and pronounced the book closed on the subject.

This view dovetails with the analysis of Clyde Wilcox, who points to severe limits in the policy influence of American Christian evangelicals even during Republican presidencies, and to significant shifts away from anti-gay positions among young evangelicals.⁴ It also dovetails with critiques of the “culture war” views of the U.S. by such thoughtful writers as Morris Fiorina and Christian Smith (the latter writing specifically about schooling), who portray the distribution of American attitudes as more akin to a normal curve than a bipolar one.⁵ What they say about their own country they would say even more forcibly about Canada.

There is another view, evident in a few recent analyses of the Harper Conservatives, that sees religious conservatives as growing in influence.⁶ Evangelicals especially now have more institutionalized presence in Ottawa than ever. They are more strategically sophisticated, and realize that sweeping change is unlikely in the short term, but that incremental shifts are attainable. Little systematic work has applied such ideas to provincial politics, and none to Ontario, though major evangelical networks do have a presence in the greater Toronto area and southwestern Ontario. Conservative Catholic voices are also well represented among Ontario bishops, and notably so in the Toronto Archdiocese.

How does the explosion of controversy over sex education in publicly-funded schools illuminate the question of whether evangelical and conservative religious beliefs more generally are able to shape political debate and public policy in Ontario, and what does this say about Canadian party politics? On the face of it, there is a plausible argument that a well-connected evangelical Christian stopped the McGuinty government in its tracks, even though the Liberal party does not depend on a significant voting block of evangelicals, and the Conservative opposition had ample reasons to stay clear of moral issues. To explore this question, we need to first identify the distinctiveness of schooling issues in debates over sexual diversity, and sexuality more broadly. And then we need to tell the story.

The Persistence of Unresolved Issues in Publicly Funded Schooling

Debates over public schooling in Canada seem so much more tempered than in the United States, where images of vulnerable school children feature prominently in campaigns to prohibit the recognition of same-sex marriage. In many American states and school districts, and in courtrooms across the country, there are continuing struggles over the right of students to form either Gay Straight Alliances or religiously-based groups, the inclusion of sexual diversity in anti-bullying campaigns, and the content of sex education. The federal government actively

promoted abstinence-only education during the George W. Bush presidency, and many states enthusiastically cooperated. All this occurred alongside continuing struggles over issues such as school prayer, and the right of faith-based groups to develop a visible presence in public schools. Despite compelling evidence that young evangelical Americans are moving away from the anti-gay politics of their elders – schools remain the ultimate and most difficult test of tolerance or acceptance. Christian Smith eloquently argues that what most evangelicals want in their children’s schooling is not so categorically different from what others do, but sexual diversity is a challenging test of that view.

Canadian discussions of schooling seem so much less contentious, and there are reasons for that. The public funding of Catholic school systems in Canada in effect syphons off a number of religious traditionalists from concerns about public schools. Evangelical Christians, who represent the core of opposition to any positive portrayal of sexual diversity in the schools, and to explicit teaching about sexuality in general, represent between one-third and one-half of the population segment that they do in the U.S.⁷ And as Sam Reimer points out, the international border makes a difference in the attitudes of evangelicals, with more evidence of accommodative views in Canada.⁸

Still, there are many anxieties about the role of schools that remain in the minds of parents, voters, and to some extent public policy makers. The comparatively low temperature of most debates over schooling has lulled many participants and observers into believing that there is more of a consensus than there is, in part because the politics of schooling have focussed so much on overall funding issues for the last decade.

The recognition of sexual diversity raises unresolved questions about the fundamental role of schooling. Among the points of debate over what values schools should articulate and transmit are these:

- Are the moral or ethical principles conveyed based on a single religious faith, multiple faiths, or secular reasoning?
- Do schools convey values that have traditionally prevailed in society, or encourage questioning of dominant ideas?
- Should educators emphasize that which is common to students and the rest of the population, or emphasize diversity?
- Should schools protect students from certain aspects of the world around them, or fully expose them to even the harsh elements of that world?
- Should educators defer to and privilege parental authority, and leave discussions of such issues as sex and morality to the family?

There is a core of Protestant evangelicals who would locate themselves unequivocally at one end of various of these belief continua, and on some of these issues, they would be joined by members of other religious communities. These complex questions are therefore compounded by multicultural concerns. The religious accommodation of minorities has been a concern for schools over many years, and now intensified by growing numbers of non-Christian students in schools. Many non-European immigrants are Christian, and many others are relatively secular. But there are increasing numbers of parents who take faith seriously, and quite properly expect

some degree of religious accommodation from public institutions. This does not necessarily translate into any particular view of sexual education in schools, or of generating inclusiveness around sexual diversity, but moral traditionalism does appear to be strong in several minority religious communities.

Beyond the most obvious centres of moral traditionalism, there are many other Canadians who would provide ambiguous or uneasy answers to questioning along these dimensions. They would not ally themselves with morally-traditionalist Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, and so on. But they would retain some uncertainty, for example, about how strongly schools should emphasize what binds us rather than what marks our differences. And they would also be unsure about what the division of responsibility was between family and school – in theory and practice. Whether elementary schools should be opening themselves to discussion of sexual diversity is a question that strikes at the very heart of anxiety and uncertainty. So does the question of how frank sex education should be.

It is significant that surveys of Canadian public opinion, which generally show major shifts toward greater acceptance of homosexuality, still show about a 50-50 split on the question of something the law already allows – adoption by same-sex couples.⁹ The link to unease or confusion about “exposing” children and adolescents to sexual diversity is unmistakable.

The Canadian Record on School Inclusivity

Anxieties about raising such questions with young people is reflected in the widespread inattention to questions of sexual diversity in Canadian schools. Despite the considerable gains on other policy fronts, provincial ministries of education have resisted systematic moves toward recognizing such diversity among students, parents, and educators, and in confronting the still-ubiquitous anti-gay language that permeates schools.

The application of pressure from school reformers, and LGBT advocates in particular, was relatively slow to intensify in most Canadian urban centres.¹⁰ Schools-focussed activism emerged earlier, and in many locations more effectively, in the United States, though even there it was only in the 1990s that significant gains were recorded. In both countries, school safety was the principal driver of both advocacy and policy change. Increasing the recognition of sexual diversity in the curriculum – within and beyond sex education – was a far harder nut to crack.

From the late 1980s, there was growing evidence (at first only American) that school inattention to sexual difference among students, parents, and educators had a huge cost in the overall school climate and the alienation (and worse) facing those who deviated from gender and sexual norms. The extraordinary rates of bullying, and sometimes alarming rates of school drop out and suicide among LGBT students, moved a few school districts and boards to take action, though more in the U.S. than in Canada.

There were a few large school boards across this country that were moved to develop new policies. The Toronto pre-amalgamation school board led the way in the early 1990s, but the

development of systematic and comprehensive policies in such centres as Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria, and Montreal still only began in the late 1990s. Even now, there is not a shred of evidence suggesting that the inclusive policies developed in such boards have been uniformly applied at the level of individual schools and classrooms. Indeed, there is much anecdotal indication that implementation is dramatically uneven.

At the provincial level, sustained pressure for change emerged first in British Columbia, from the mid-1990s on. By decade's end, pressure was being applied to provincial governments in several provinces, some of it mobilized by teacher unions like the B.C. Teachers Federation, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, and the Centrale des Syndicats du Québec. Until 2008, no provincial ministry had taken anything like the sweeping policy changes expected of advocates for inclusiveness. Some had developed more assertive responses to bullying, but generally these policies papered over the specificities of the harassment experienced by sexual minority students. The years of inaction occurred under the governmental leadership of parties from all parts of the political spectrum.

Stirrings in Ontario's Educational Policy Networks

Ontario's Liberal leader has styled himself the "Education Premier." The Harris government had curtailed education spending, exerted new central controls on local school boards, and fundamentally alienated teacher unions. Then in 2001, the Conservatives introduced tax credits to compensate parents for private school tuition, and this helped focus the opposition leader on a more sustained defense of public schooling. The 2003 election brought the Liberals to power.

In September 2006, Kathleen Wynne was named Education Minister. She had served as a public school trustee in Toronto prior to her 2003 election, and had been named as parliamentary secretary in to the education minister prior to her cabinet appointment. She also brought to the portfolio a major interest in issues related to equity and diversity – an interest that very much included sexual orientation and gender identity. This concern was amplified by her own sexual orientation and her long-standing same-sex relationship.

In the election held one year after her appointment, the Conservative leader John Tory made schooling issues by promising an extension of government funding to private religious schools. This strategically-curious promise then became a centrepiece of the election, and the fact that Tory was seeking to unseat Wynne in her Toronto riding amplified the Liberals and Wynne's self-presentation as defenders of public education. The Liberals won, or the Conservatives lost, and the school funding issue was given major credit for that outcome. Wynne's standing, already rising, was enhanced by her defeat of the John Tory challenge in her riding.

The core of McGuinty's defense of public education became early childhood learning and a reduction in class size, but Wynne's reputation undoubtedly gave her significant legitimacy for an expansive mandate for change. This was assisted by work already begun within the Ministry on a new and more comprehensive equity policy. By this time, sexual orientation would have been included as routine in any new equity initiative, though not necessarily with any emphasis. There is no doubt that Wynne's promotion to minister would have concentrated the minds of

officials on the importance of getting up to speed on sexual diversity, even if there was an enduring caution about entering policy areas likely to produce stormy weather, and continuing unease about extending beyond sexual orientation to gender identity and the distinctive array of transgender issues now on the equity agenda.

By this time, a few Ontario school boards, including those in Toronto, Peel, London (Thames Valley), and Ottawa, had been developing equity and harassment policies that included sexual diversity. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario had also been a strong advocate of LGBT-specific policies, recognizing the importance of introducing them in primary schools, where students were already picking up the anti-gay language that permeated school hallways and recreation yards.

A few unrelated developments helped to amplify political and administrative interest in sexual diversity. In 2007, consultations began over the preparation of a new Health and Physical Education curriculum (HPE). The existing curriculum had not been reviewed systematically for almost a decade, and the government had been undertaking similar reviews across all subjects for the last few years. Now it was HPE's turn. This was an area known to be more difficult and controversial than most others, so the preparatory consultations were designed to be extensive.¹¹ In the following months, about seventy groups were consulted, this in addition to a systematic survey of teachers in this area prior to the inauguration of the review. There were certainly many physical education teachers who wanted to avoid the sex education parts of their teaching responsibilities entirely, or to stick to the plumbing basics. However, there were increasing numbers of them who were well aware of and disturbed at the persistent homophobic currents within sporting worlds inside and beyond schools.¹²

From the beginning these discussions included Catholic educators, who seemed no different from public system educators in the numbers of them calling for change in the sex education component to HPE. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association had become an advocate for greater attention to LGBT issues, and did not shy away from advocating change in elementary schools. They recognized how much information students were getting about sex from outside the school, and most of them agreed that bullying and harassment based on sexual difference required concerted attention. There are no indications that Catholic educators consulted over the new curriculum were out of alignment with those public school educators who were calling for significant updating of the approach to sex education.

It was widely understood that the Catholic system had the right to interpret curricular guidelines in a distinctive way, a right applied especially to sex education and religious education. They had already developed a Catholic-specific "Fully Alive" program as part of their Family Life curriculum, and were in the process of working out how it would dovetail with the new HPE document. There had already been some movement on the homophobic bullying and harassment, the Education Commission of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops having prepared "Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation" in 2004. And yes, it had emphasized the church's teachings on remaining chaste, it also forthrightly confronted homophobia, and recognized the costs of schools paying no heed.¹³

While all this was happening, since 2004 the political and administrative leadership of the ministry had been devoting considerable attention to school safety issues. A Safe Schools Action Team had been appointed in that year, and delivered its first report, on bullying, in 2005. After extensive public consultations across the province, a second report on safety issues and remedies was issued in June 2006. Debates over safe schools had been much in the news in recent years, with evidence on the expulsion of large numbers of visible minority students in the greater Toronto area leading to charges of discrimination, and exposing the relative absence of policies with respect to expelled students. This helped ensure that the issue remained on the policy front burners.

After the 2007 election, the education minister decided to tackle issues still needing specific attention in the safety policy file, and this led to the re-engagement of the now-experienced Action Team in February 2008, with a mandate to focus on gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour. Led by Liz Sandals, Parliamentary Assistant to the Education Minister, and with an extensive school board background, conducted more focussed consultations, primarily with educational stake-holders and groups with relevant expertise. These included representatives of police forces experienced in youth issues, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and youth social services. The Coalition for Lesbians and Gays in Ontario also presented its views (in June 2008), though by then it was a weak group on the brink of dissolving itself.

The national LGBT group Egale might have been a player in this, and had adopted schooling as a priority issue, but internal discussions delayed the preparation and distribution of a national survey on school climate survey that could have had a role in these consultations.¹⁴ The group had approached Kathleen Wynne as early as 2007, seeking her endorsement of the survey so that it could be more effectively distributed in Ontario schools. She agreed to enthusiastically, but it would take more than a year for the survey to proceed. Eventually, when the first report on the survey was released in March 2009, data on the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic bullying in Canadian schools would bring help bring home the urgency of action, and would help position Egale as a player in educational policy development.

At the end of 2008, the Safe Schools Action Team's report, *Shaping a Culture of Respect*, was delivered, and its call to action raised issues crucial to the review of the HPE curriculum. The first sidebar in the printed report made clear its focus, reporting that sexual orientation was one of the top three motivations for hate crimes in Canada, and that over half of all hate crimes motivated by this factor were violent, and that the second most common locale for such crimes was educational facilities.

The report recommended that a comprehensive strategy be put into place to address school climate issues, one that included curricular responses as well as other prevention and intervention measures. This included the recommendations that "references to gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour are included in prompts and examples in the revised Health and Physical Education curriculum and in as many other curriculum areas as possible."¹⁵ This recommendation was presented at almost the precise time that a first draft of the HPE curriculum was being prepared.¹⁶

The major result of this report was Bill 157 - the “Keep Our Kids Safe at School Act,” passed in early June 2009. The core of the legislation was the imposition of new requirements for educators that incidents warranting either suspension or expulsion had to be reported. Among these was “racist/sexist or homophobic remarks.”¹⁷ Following the passage of the bill was the issuance of an Education Ministry memorandum (# 144) on “Bullying Prevention and Intervention,” posted October 14th 2009. This required that boards develop and implement policies by Feb 2010 (the date at which the act was to take effect). The memorandum did not focus particularly on homophobic and gender-based harassment, but clearly indicated that attention to those dimensions must be part of a comprehensive policy.¹⁸ In December of that year, a conference was convened to talk about implementation issues, with each school board in the province, public and Catholic, expected to send representatives. Egale was listed as a resource, and it soon found itself inundated with requests for help in applying the new initiatives.¹⁹

While this was happening, the Ministry was develop more general policy on equity, following the April 2009 release of a “vision and action plan” entitled *Realizing the promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. This soon led (on June 24th) to another official ministry memorandum (# 119) on “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Politics in Ontario Schools,” requiring boards to develop policies that included the full range of equity issues – including sexual orientation.²⁰

None of this policy development had provoked measurable controversy, apart from the continuing concerns about the impact of safe schools measures on disadvantaged ethno-racial groups. There was certainly no indication of substantial disquiet from religiously-conservative or evangelical constituencies. Part of that reflected the tendency of most such groups to focus on federal policy making. But it may also have resulted from the difficulties that many community groups and social movement activists have in tracking developments in the educational field – one so marked by institutionalized networks of stakeholders centred on school boards.

The Making of Controversy

By late 2009, the final version of the HPE curriculum was ready. The final document was framed by the heavily expectation-laden language used in educational policy networks. It was a carefully reasoned document that had the mark of many editorial hands, including those for whom increased physical activity and health was a priority. The vast majority of the document, in fact, dealt with those issues, and did so without eliciting controversy. When the curriculum did address sex education, there was recurrent reference to “age appropriate” lessons, and much of it was framed as guidelines for teachers in responding to student questions.

The new curriculum was then prepared for official release. Any significant new policy in the Ontario government, and particularly with the growing centralization of policy-making in the Premier’s office, goes through at least a couple of steps that provide opportunities for political warnings to be voiced. One is a “Four Corners” meeting that brings together a representative of the relevant ministry’s top officials, the minister’s office, the premier’s office, and the central

senior civil service. This is designed to ensure overall policy coordination, and to prepare the minister and premier for whatever political turns the issue is likely to experience. The other “check” in the system is presentation to cabinet.

The new policy went through all that, though it seems as if the relative calm that had greeted the various equity-related initiatives in the previous two years reduced the urge to raise flags about managing the communications on this issue. Whether or there were experienced policy makers in those briefings who anticipated controversy, decisions were taken to proceed as if this were no different from any of the other curricula that had been released in recent years. Only a few Liberal MPPs would have been aware of the impending distribution of the finalized HPE document.

On January 18th, 2010, the new curriculum was posted on the ministry’s web site, and a memorandum was sent to all school boards announcing it. By coincidence or design, a cabinet shuffle that same day moved Kathleen Wynne from Education to Transport, replacing her with Leona Dombrowsky, who had been chair of the Roman Catholic School Board in a rural and small-city region of eastern Ontario. Some observers believe that this was a deliberate strategy to shift Wynne out and Dombrowsky in to avoid the issue being framed as the exclusive product of a minister so obviously engaged by sexual diversity issues, but this assumes that red flags had gone up about the new curriculum being controversial. More likely is the Premier’s belief that Wynne had served in the Education portfolio for a long time and that much of her reform agenda had been put into effect. The Transportation ministry, not an obvious promotion, was facing a number of difficult challenges, and her strong reputation as a minister made her a plausible candidate.

After the January 18th posting and distribution, silence followed. Many many people knew about the curriculum; thousands had been involved in consultations; hundreds of school board officials in both Catholic and public systems knew about it and then received copies of it in January. Some would already have sent the new curriculum through the system to ensure adequate preparation for September.

The first sign of protest, though, was a March 2nd story on LifeSiteNews – entitled “Mandatory Curriculum for Ontario Schools Promotes Homosexuality, Masturbation.”²¹ It opened with this: “As of next year, Grade 6 students in Ontario’s publicly-funded schools can expect to be taught that masturbation ‘is common and is not harmful and is one way of learning about your body’” Two paragraphs later, it referred to the Education Ministry’s campaign to promote “equity and inclusive education,” which included “the advancement of homosexuality and transgenderism . . . and the attempt to instil a sense that homosexuality and transgenderism are perfectly normal.”

Oddly, this story on a widely-know pro-life web site, seemed not to spread, and certainly did not raise alarm bells in any part of the political community centred at Queen’s Park. By coincidence, that month, the Education Commission of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops reported to an assembly of bishops that the family life and sexuality program would be the mechanism through which the new curriculum would be applied to Catholic schools. There was no sense from the commission that the new guidelines would be problematic, though there was emphasis

on some of the most obvious points of divergence – for example a later openness to discussion of homosexuality in the Catholic schools than was being recommended for public schools.

Almost three months after official distribution, on April 15th, the *Hamilton Spectator* published a story on the new curriculum. It was spawned by a meeting of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, scheduled that day to discuss a gender equity policy -- following by two years the controversial development of a sexual orientation policy.²² The current elaboration of the board's equity policy was in compliance with policy development in the provincial ministry, though some parents (including the group Public Education Advocates for Christian Education) were expressing disquiet about the existing and expanding policy. Research for this story led the reporter to the new HPE curriculum, which then led to a companion story entitled "Birds and Bees to be Taught from Grade 3".

Evangelical pastor and activist Charles McVety saw that story or was told about it. He was president of Canada Christian College and of the Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC), and had been a tireless campaigner against abortion and LGBT rights claims.²³ His profile was increased by his central role in fighting same-sex marriage, though he had also been featured in news stories since then on his purported influence on the Harper government.

CFAC is in fact not a large group, and McVety's relationship with other major evangelical groups is not always amicable. However, he does have a substantial email list, which includes many journalists and many co-religionists who respond to his calls to action. And because he is unencumbered by a large organization or by the need to process decisions elaborately, he is able to act quickly.

At 9:00 am on Tuesday morning, April 20th, McVety issued a press release headlined with the denouncing line: "Mr. McGuinty, Withdraw Explicit Sex Ed for 8 Year Olds." It announced a web site (stopcorruptingchildren.ca), claimed support from the leaders of family-focussed groups with over 100,000 active members, and announced a rally on the Monday after Mother's Day (May 10th). McVety quoted himself, saying "it is unconscionable to teach 8-year old children same-sex marriage, sexual orientation and gender identity." "It is even more absurd to subject 6th graders to instruction on the pleasures of masturbation, vaginal lubrication, and 12 year olds to lessons on oral sex and anal intercourse."

This of course was in the absence of any governmental "framing" of the new curriculum, so this kind of language heavily shaped the ensuing media coverage and political debate. Journalists with no background in educational policy, and probably no time to comb through the 200-plus pages of the HPE curriculum, were surprised at some of the claims, and saw the issues raised in the press release as newsworthy. This was true even of those reporters who were comfortable with LGBT inclusiveness and wary of McVety's obvious homophobia.

That very morning – Tuesday – a reporter asked the Premier if the claims made in McVety's press release were accurate. McGuinty had a prepared answer, and his aides would certainly have scrambled to prepare one. He expressed confidence in the educators who had prepared the curriculum, and played down the concerns expressed in the press release. He argued that it was preferable to present information to students in a venue over which educators have some control

than to leave the field open to uninformed sources: “why wouldn’t we recognize that we live in an information age and why wouldn’t we present this information in a thoughtful and responsible and open way.”²⁴ But at least one reporter asking for reaction saw the Premier as taken aback by the questioning.

The Liberals had a caucus meeting at noon that Tuesday. It is not clear that the issue was raised there, though some MPP offices were certainly starting to hear push-back.. By the next morning, all Liberal MPPs would certainly have known that there was controversy brewing, when the major dailies hit the streets with major stories on the new curriculum. Any doubt that the issue was being politicized evaporated in Wednesday morning’s legislative question period.

The Conservative opposition decided to seize the issue, though it was not self-evident that they would. Tim Hudak, party leader since July 2009, was not the candidate most favoured by religious conservatives (Frank Klees was), and had tried to stay away from moral issues. He was cut in the Mike Harris mould, and preoccupied by lowering taxes and reducing the role of government. There were also party insiders who believed that this was a risky issue to engage, evocative of the electoral damage wrought by Conservative governments in earlier engagements with schools issues under Bill Davis and John Tory.

However, there are moral conservatives in his caucus, and the sensationalism of the first stories on the issue appear to have made the issue irresistible. So Hudak took the issue to question period, vowing to “stand with moms and dads across the province of Ontario,” and accusing the government of listening only to “so-called experts and elite insiders.”²⁵ Kathleen Wynne was furious, and yelled back at Hudak accusing him of aligning with homophobes. At the same time, there were Liberals who detected electoral advantage in being able to portray the Conservatives as on the same side as Charles McVety.²⁶

On Wednesday afternoon, the Premier once again defended the curriculum, this time with more apparent conviction than in his too-little-scripted response on Tuesday morning. Then Catholic schooling got tied into the controversy. During ongoing questioning on this issue, the Premier indicated that the new program would apply to students in all publicly funded schools, including Catholic. The point was reiterated by Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky. There were soon clarifying statements that the Ministry had consulted the Institute for Catholic Education throughout the development of the curriculum and that everyone involved in the process acknowledged that it would have adaptations for Catholic schools. This apparent mis-step gave a vehicle for conservative Archbishop Terrence Prendergast of Ottawa to weigh in by emphasizing that parents are children’s “first teachers of faith and moral issues,” and encouraging them to voice their concerns about the new curriculum.²⁷

In the midst of this sidebar, a few Catholic educators knowledgeable about the development of the new curriculum talked in generally supportive ways. James Ryan, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, welcomed it in part because it went beyond teaching sexuality as “plumbing” and discussed relationships and choices.²⁸ Some educators argued that frank discussion on the kinds of terms that were being sensationalized in the controversy had been practiced for years in Catholic schools. Writing in the *Toronto Sun*, Moira Macdonald

listed several apparently titillating details of what students were already supposed to be getting delivered to them through the Catholic *Fully Alive* program.

The dominant response from the Catholic side was to emphasize that the general guidelines in the new curriculum were thoughtful and supportable, and that in any event they were to be applied in a distinctly Catholic way. Sister Joan Cronin, of the Institute for Catholic Education, was quoted as saying, “I have great regard for the educators at the Ministry of Education. . . . They would have [designed that program] with the best research available.”²⁹ By and large, educational authorities on that side aimed to withdraw themselves from the controversy, in part knowing full well that there were still strong currents of opinion in Ontario that opposed full public funding for Catholic schools.

Despite this effort at removing Catholic voices from the controversy, there may well have been substantial expressions of discontent about the new curriculum from among Catholic supporters of the Liberal Party. The Premier and his Education Minister were both practicing Catholics, as was the premier’s chief of staff at the time – Peter Wilkinson. They would have been well enough connected to Ontario Catholic networks, and concerned about any negative sentiments from within a constituency that had long been an important source of electoral strength.

What was clearer was push back from among “new Canadians” – communities with large numbers of immigrants who had traditionally voted Liberal. The Liberal caucus has several South Asian MPPs, and though most are socially progressive, they would undoubtedly have received a great deal of constituent reaction to the curriculum. So would MPPs representing areas in the GTA with substantial populations of new immigrants or visible minority communities with strong currents of religious or social conservatism. Suad Aimad, president of Somali Parents for Education, talked of a “big reaction” among Muslims, a community with very conservative views toward sexual diversity.³⁰

The awakening of evangelical Protestant opposition would have flowed quickly from McVety’s email, but not necessarily through the major established groups. Those that would normally intervene on any issue entangled with sexual diversity, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Focus on the Family Canada, did not have time to organize their own response. There was also no set of Sunday services at evangelical churches to assist in mobilizing response. Still, there were no doubt many born-again Christians who would have reacted viscerally to the claims made in the McVety press release, and passed it on through their own networks.

There were voices in support of the HPE curriculum emerging, but few. Several news stories featured parents or educators pointing out how much stray information youngsters were already getting about sexuality and how important it was to provide balanced information, but most appeared too late.³¹ Within the first crucial forty-eight hours of McVety’s press release, only the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario and the AIDS Committee of Toronto had responded officially. Queer Ontario was a new provincial group focussed entirely on LGBT issues, replacing CLGRO, but it was still small and had neither the speed nor agility to respond that quickly. Egale was ironically in final preparations for the launch of a new web site aimed at providing support for LGBT school students, their parents, and educators, but had insufficient

resources to mobilize a rapid-fire response to mobilization on the other side of the HPE curriculum.

On Thursday morning, the story was still in the newspaper headlines, and government ministers were still defending the curriculum, Kathleen Wynne describing Conservative attacks on it as “despicable.”³² However, unease was building inside the Premier’s office, where the issue was taking up enormous time. There were two other major issues creating backlash in Ontario, one the introduction of a Harmonized Sales Tax that would lead to tax increases, and the other a change in prescription drug funding that was provoking sustained protest from pharmacists across the province, so there were certainly Liberal strategists who considered a third war front unsustainable. At least some MPPs were claiming that the backlash on the curricular issue exceeded that on either of the other two. A key Liberal campaign aide, not briefed on the sex ed curriculum prior to Tuesday’s explosion, is thought to have furiously told the Premier’s office that the government had to rid itself of this issue.

There may well have been early results from emergency polling on the issue. And given the kinds of stories that had appeared in the media about what was going to be taught to whom, the polling numbers would not have looked good. With an election due in October 2011, and with Liberals facing shaky support numbers, electoral worries were more than just the province of the election campaign team. There were undoubtedly Liberal MPPs worrying about adding yet another controversy to the growing set of difficult issues they would have to face. And of course they had little or no advance warning on the curricular change, and would have had no information on it except that which was initially framed by the McVety press release.

That afternoon, fifty-four hours after the McVety press release, the Premier announced that the sex education segments of the new curriculum were being withdrawn for a “rethink.” By this time, he had actually read the full curricular document, and while some observers argue that he emerged from that wondering what all the fuss was about, he would have had no doubt how much fodder it had provided to opponents.

Reporters were now hearing from inside the Premier’s circle that McGuinty had not been adequately briefed on this. This had some plausibility, since the briefing he did receive was probably brief and “routine,” but the premier’s office was clearly involved enough at an early stage to have anticipated controversy. McGuinty has operated as centralized a premier’s office as any of his predecessors, so there was no plausible case for laying the blame anywhere else than there³³ This was also, after all, the self-styled “Education Premier.”

The next Monday, April 26th, Education Minister Dombrowsky indicated that her officials were going to be preparing options to “better engage parents on this issue,” though indicating no time line for the preparation of new guidelines on sex education.³⁴ The vast majority of the new HPE curriculum would still be put into place by September. No one was expecting this review to be completed before the 2011 election. And in the meantime, most Liberals did not want to talk about it. During a weekend policy convention in mid-May, hardly a word was uttered about it except in a few small huddles.

Most Liberal MPPs, and certainly many close observers, by now saw this as a significantly mis-managed issue, and a rare example of the Premier's strategic instincts failing him. Their party caucus was once well sprinkled with social conservatives, at times during the 1980s and '90s when major debates occurred over LGBT rights. Now a strong majority was relatively progressive on such issues. There was widespread embarrassment about how this issue had played out, and considerable sympathy for impassioned pleas for support by openly gay and lesbian MPPs Glen Murray and Kathleen Wynne at Tuesday's caucus meeting (April 27th).

Explaining the “Re-think”

How did this happen?

Was the strength of evangelical political networks the decisive factor? Was this an Ontario provincial confirmation of the Marci McDonald argument about the growing political assertiveness of born-again Christians? Yes and no. The largest of the evangelical groups (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Focus on the Family Canada) seem not to have had entered the fray in any obvious way, in part because of insufficient time and also a certain suspicion of Charles McVety. Some years had passed since Ontario provincial politics had sparked much interest in evangelical networks, and their attention was focussed on openings at the federal level.

What the opening salvo in this short skirmish did, however, was frame the issue in ways that maximized a wider set of anxieties about what young kids were being exposed to. First, there remains more widespread public anxiety about the kinds of changes being effected in elementary schools than policy-makers realized. Many press releases from old-style evangelical activists like McVety would have elicited no discernable response, but this one played into issues and questions around which there was no consensus.

Policy-makers at Queen's Park knew that sex ed was always controversial, but they seemed to have been lulled into a false sense of security, in part because there was widespread agreement among educators, youth-related social service providers, and many parents, that the directions being pursued in HPE were appropriate and overdue.. They underestimated the strength of feeling to the contrary, not just among evangelical Protestants who retained a fierce opposition to the public recognition of sexual diversity, and their conservatively-religious allies among Catholics, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, etc., but among a wider population of parents. They also underestimated the susceptibility of many in this wider population to the kind of alarmism that McVety preyed upon – not so much the explicitly homophobic language, but the references to sexual activity. These were parents who knew perfectly well that their children were being inundated by highly-sexualized messages from the world around them, but saw themselves as besieged by that and defending against it. As a result, they saw schools moving into this kind of terrain as adding to the challenge rather than helping. And of course most Ontarians do not have school-aged children, and many do not have day-to-day contact with the kinds of questions that children are asking about sexuality. Even with a well-thought-out communications strategy, and evidence of the urgency for schools to be moving in the directions that the curriculum was taking them, it would have been challenging to avoid a surge of concern about what schools were

teaching.

A significant part of the reason for the Liberal government's "panic" on this issue was that the absence of a communication strategy left crucial players in the dark about it until the issue was framed by opponents. And while much of the media coverage included reasoned response from defenders of the curriculum, the immediate profile given to these stories, and their framing as "controversy," inflamed early responses, and left some MPPs and party supporters feeling adrift without life preservers. Electoral volatility reinforced unease about an election coming up a year-and-a-half away. For these Liberals, the fact that the Hudak Conservatives so quickly seized upon the issue was a heady warning, even if some of them thought in the early hours that the opposition's alignment with moral conservatives would be helpful.

What about "immigrant" communities? There is an important strands of literature on immigration, particularly on Muslims in the west, which emphasizes the comparatively successful "integration" of most groups immigrating to the U.S. and Canada.³⁵ Will Kymlicka points to the relatively high levels of education of immigrants arriving since the development of the current points system, and the range of countries of origin.³⁶ Randal Hansen contrasts the structure of social welfare systems on the two sides of the Atlantic, pressuring all immigrants into the work force more quickly than their European counterparts.³⁷ Irene Bloemraad argues that immigration policy differences give Canada an edge over the United States in regard to integration.³⁸ Michael Adams highlights the comparatively positive views of Canadians toward immigration.³⁹ This does not invalidate claims that there is persistent prejudice against racial and religious minorities, and growing patterns of residential segregation based on inequalities along class, race, and immigration lines. But it does suggest that the kind of barriers to integration that are so pronounced in Europe are less formidable here.

The analytical literature on Muslims in North America points to attitudes toward domestic policy issues that are generally aligned with the Canadian and American mainstream. A 2007 Pew survey of U.S. Muslims was sub-titled "Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," and more limited Canadian data would point to the same conclusion.⁴⁰ Studies of Canadian Muslim or Arabs (who include many Christians and Muslims) emphasize the integration of those communities.⁴¹ In both countries, there are indications of policy views that tilt toward comparative progressive positions, with correspondingly higher-than-average support for Democrats in the U.S. and either Liberals or New Democrats in Canada.

On moral issues, however, the pattern is quite different. There is evidence in Pew, Gallup, and Environics surveys that Muslims in both Canada and the United States are as conservative on gay-related issues as evangelical Protestants, and other writings by or about queer Muslims confirm that.⁴² One Los Angeles study has also suggested that Koreans stand out among Asian Americans for their traditionalist views on sexual diversity, and there is reason to believe the same would be true of Korean Canadians.⁴³ In Vancouver, protests against LGBT-related schools policies have included prominent contingents of Chinese-Canadians, though systematic polling evidence on the extent to which they are markedly more conservative on such issues seems not yet to exist.

Party political polling at the federal and provincial levels would have made clear to Liberals that their traditional appeal to these and other populations that have large numbers of relatively recent immigrants might well be soft. The Conservatives at the federal level have worked hard to lure them in part with appeals to moral traditionalism and law and order policies, so far without striking success. But this remains part of the strategy of targeting specific constituencies with particular appeals, and the provincial Conservatives seem prepared to adopt a similar approach.

Was Liberal concern about Roman Catholic support at issue here? The Roman Catholic hierarchy and other organizations with an interest in education had largely siphoned themselves out of the debate by rallying around the cause of asserting the right of Catholic schools to apply HPE guidelines in specific ways. The hierarchy (along with the Catholic Civil Rights League) certainly had been an active participant in campaigning against rights claims by sexual minorities, and particularly on the question of same-sex marriage. But there are no indications that this was the case here. That said, Liberals would have been acutely aware of the increased support for the federal Conservatives among practicing Catholics in recent elections, and would have been extremely sensitive to any sign of shifts toward the provincial Conservatives.

The key to understanding the spread of protest is that it did not go primarily through highly institutionalized channels. It spread quickly through an important number of highly attentive people on McVety's own email list, and thence through other informal networks. There was not set of Sunday services to help this spread, and no particular sense that evangelical broadcasters were suddenly seized of the issue. But intense mainstream media coverage, including the daytime "talk-radio" shows on popular stations, effected the work of more narrowly cast media by repeating the most controversial references in the curriculum – penises, families headed by two mommies or two daddies, oral and anal sex. No progress on the legal and policy rights of same-sex couples, and no shift in public willingness in principle to accept homosexuality, was sufficient preparation for that.

More deeply at the origin of this controversy was the long standing avoidance of sexual diversity in the vast majority of Canadian elementary classrooms, and the persistent unease with which most teachers, public and Catholic, deal with questions of sexuality. This new set of inclusive and explicit curricular guidelines was entering more of a vacuum than most educational policy makers fully appreciated. It is probably true that most parents, and perhaps even a strong majority of parents, would find the changes being proposed as a helpful addition to their own roles, and a salutary contribution to the education of their children about the world around them. But a sizeable portion of Ontarians were not yet prepared for this.

To the extent that the protest spread, then, it was not simply a function of effective electronic lists or the deployment of advanced technologies. It was the triggers squeezed on areas of persistent unease relating to sexuality and children. The deployment of antiquely homophobic rhetoric by Charles McVety's pronouncements has little credibility in the Canadian politics of the 2000s, but he and others still have an attentive constituency that may reach as high as 30 percent of the public.⁴⁴ And in this case they were linked to the distinctive issue area of schooling, and to very specific elements of a curriculum that provoked intense or diffuse anxiety and confusion in a wider population not normally reachable by evangelical campaigners.

We may well find out that most Ontarians, and an even higher proportion of the parents of school-aged children, support all or most of the directions laid out for sex education in the HPE curriculum. But in the crucial days of April in which they became controversial, enough public noise was created to create significant unease at the highest levels of the Liberal government. By the time supporters were organizing a response, it was too late – at least for the moment.

Does this mean that moral conservatism is a resurgent force in Ontario’s provincial politics? Not obviously so, given the specificities of the issues involved in this controversy, and given the persistent difficulties of forging enduring coalitions across faith communities. Still, sexuality in general, and LGBT issues in particular, still have the power to evoke anxieties about the modern urbanized western world, and Canadian conservative parties have not yet lost their willingness to play on those concerns.

Notes

1. Introductions to Canadian politics rarely give more than passing reference to either religiously-based mobilizing or to specifically-moral conservatism as a significant force in contemporary affairs.
2. Most recent literature on federal Canadian party realignment certainly acknowledges the play of moral issues, but in my view downplays it in comparison to other sources of discontent giving rises to the Reform/Alliance movements and re-shaping the Conservative Party. See, for example, Ken Carty, William Cross, and Lisa Young, *Rebuilding Canadian Party Politics*. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), and David Laycock, *The New Right and Democracy in Canada: Understand Reform and the Canadian Alliance* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002). Literature on the Conservatives in particular, under Harper’s leadership, tend to emphasize either his neo-liberal preoccupations or his pragmatic willingness to bracket his moral beliefs. See for example, Tom Flanagan, *Harper’s Team: Behind the Scenes in the Conservative Rise to Power* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007); and Hugh Segal, *The Long Road Back: The Conservative Journey in Canada, 1993-2006* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2007). Jonathon Malloy has been writing about evangelicalism in Canadian politics, and the broader alliance of religiously-conservative groups that emerged through the debates on same-sex marriage, but sees that period as a high water mark in a story that has kept moral conservatives toward the margins of political life. See, for example, “A Temporary Surge? The State of Canadian Evangelical Activism After Same-Sex Marriage,” in *Borders and Bridges*, ed. David Rayside and Clyde Wilcox (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming).
3. I have written about this in *Queer Inclusions, Continental Divisions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), and in “The Conservative Party of Canada and its Religious Constituencies,” in *Borders and Bridges*, ed. David Rayside and Clyde Wilcox (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming).
4. See Clyde Wilcox and Rentaro Iida, “Evangelicals, the Christian Right, and Gay and Lesbian Rights in the U.S.: Simple and Complex Stories,” in *Borders and Bridges*, ed. David Rayside and

Clyde Wilcox (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming).

5. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2006); Smith, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

6. This is especially evident in two recent volumes: Marci McDonald, *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto: Random House, 2010); and Tom Warner, *Losing Control: Canada's Social Conservatives in the Age of Rights* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2010). To some extent, this view is also implicit in the writings for Reginald Bibby, for example *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2002); and John Stackhouse, "Bearing Witness: Christian Groups Engage Canadian Politics Since the 1960s," pp. 113-28 in *Rethinking Church, State, and Modernity*, ed. David Lyon and Marguerite Van Die (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

7. Tom Warner's analysis of social conservatism in Canada highlights several instances of evangelical Christian campaigning against purported threats posed by gay activists in schools, in *Losing Control: Canada's Social Conservatives in the Age of Rights* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2010).

8. *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), and "Civility Without Compromise: Evangelical Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Issues in Comparative Context," in *Borders and Bridges*, ed. David Rayside and Clyde Wilcox (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming).

9. I talk in more detail about parenting issues in *Queer Inclusions, Continental Divisions*, chaps. 6-7.

10. I write about this in *Queer Inclusions, Continental Divisions*, chaps. 8-9, as does Tim McCaskell, *Race to Equity: The Struggle for Change in Our Schools* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005); Tom Warner, *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); and several authors in *I Could Not Speak My Heart: Education and Social Justice for Gay and Lesbian Youth*, ed. James McNinch and Mary Cronin (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2004).

11. Karen Howlett and Kate Hammer, "Premier Pulls Plug on New Sex-Ed Curriculum: Blindside and Backlash," *Globe and Mail*, 23 April 2010.

12. Under the extraordinary leadership of Bruce Kidd, the Faculty of Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto had included such issues compulsorily in their curriculum.

13. Two guides were prepared, one for a general audience, though mostly for educators, one for parents of students of same-sex orientation. They have a schizophrenic character to them. On the one hand they lay out not only the church's warning on same-sex activity, but also the importance of discouraging the development of romantic attachments. On the other hand, they use language to discredit homophobia that would not be out of place in the most inclusive advice manuals.

14. Eventually distributed in the fall of 2009, with a first report of findings issued in March 2009.

15. *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools*, p. 13.

16. At least one newspaper report flagged the potential controversy in the report's recommendation for more detailed sexual health education, and in earlier grades – "New Approach to Sex Ed.," *Toronto Star*, 29 December 2008.

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17. Included in a list on p. 6 of “Keeping Our Kids Safe at School: Reporting and Responding to Incidents,” a guide issued following the passage of Bill 157.
 18. For example, on p. 7 it indicates that “training strategies must include ways of responding to gender-based and homophobic bullying that are consistent with equity training on cultural sensitivity, on respect for diversity, and on special education needs.”
 19. The ministry was supporting Egale in the preparation of a web site on LGBT inclusiveness for schools, centred on the development of Gay Straight Alliances
 20. Gender identity is not explicitly included in this document or in the strategy released prior to the memorandum.
 21. By Patrick B. Craine.
 22. Carmelina Prete, “Sexual Diversity Policy on Agenda,” *Hamilton Spectator* 15 April 2010.
 23. McVety himself is said to have acknowledged that he heard about the new curriculum from the *Spectator* story.
 24. Kate Hammer and Karen Howlett, “The End of Innuendo: Ont. Schools Making Sex Education More Explicit,” *Globe and Mail* 21 April 2010. See also, Kristin Roshowy and Robert Benzie, “Opponents to Protest New Sex-Ed Curriculum,” *Toronto Star*, 21 April 2010.
 25. Robert Benzie, “Ontario and Sex-Ed: We’re Starting Over,” *Toronto Star* 27 April 2010.
 26. Adam Radwanski, “Premier Pulls Plug on New Sex-Ed Program: McGuinty Meets His Match,” *Globe and Mail* 23 April 2010.
 27. “Archbishop of Ottawa: Sex Ed Standards Can’t Trump Catholic Educational Freedom,” EWTN News, 23 April 2010 (www.ewtnnews.com/new/php?id=472).
 28. Moira Macdonald, “A Hot Catholic Sex Lesson: Shocking Expose About What kids Are Being Taught Already – and the Stunning Reasons Why,” *Toronto Sun*, 2 May 2010.
 29. Quoted in Charles Lewis, “‘Militant’ Gay Agenda Seen in New Sex Course,” *National Post* 23 April 2010.
 30. Kate Hammer and Karen Howlett, “Muslims, Christians United to Challenge Ontario’s More Explicit Sex-Ed Program,” *Globe and Mail* 22 April 2010. Robert Benzie has also written about the strength of response from the South Asian community, and cited its importance for the Liberals, in “Why McGuinty Surrendered on Sex Ed,” *Toronto Star* 24 April 2010. On Muslim response to sexual diversity, see Momin Rahman and Amir Hussain, “Muslim Response to Sexual Diversity in Canada and the United States, in *Borders and Bridges*, ed. David Rayside and Clyde Wilcox (UBC Press, forthcoming)
 31. For example, Siri Agrell and Andre Picard, “Sex-Ed Showdown: Get Real,” *Globe and Mail*, 24 April 2010; John Corlett, “Children Lose out in Sex-Ed Furor,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 April 2010; Andrea Gordon, “Why Sex Ed Should Stay in School,” *Toronto Star*, 30 April 2010
 32. Marcus McCann, “Roll Out,” *Xtra!* 6 May 2010.
 33. Benzie, “Why McGuinty Surrendered on Sex Ed,” *Toronto Star* 24 April 2010.
 34. Robert Benzie, “Ontario and Sex-Ed: We’re Starting Over,” *Toronto Star*, 27 April 2010.
 35. For example, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed. *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and John L. Esposito, ed. *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Experiences in the United States*. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003).
 36. Will Kymlicka, “The Uncertain Futures of Multiculturalism,” *Canadian Diversity* 4,1 (Winter 2005): 82-85

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37. Hansen, "Work, welfare, and wanderlust: immigration and integration in Europe and North America," in *Growing Apart? America and Europe in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Jeffrey Kopstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
38. Irene Bloemraad, *Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
39. Adams, *Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism* (Toronto: Viking 2007). Chris Cochrane points out the important exception of Quebec in the comparative positive view of immigration in Canada (personal correspondence).
40. On the U.S., apart from the Pew survey, the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies conducted a survey in 2009, "Muslim Americans: A National Portrait" (Muslim West Facts Project). Environics conducted a survey of 500 Canadian Muslims in 2006, though with a limited range of questions.
41. See for example, Karim H. Karim, *Diversity, Immigration and Integration: Changing Perceptions of Islamic Authority Among Muslims in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom*. (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2009); and Paul Eid, *Being Arab: Ethnic and Religious Identity Building Among Second Generation Youth in Montreal*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007). See also Haideh Moghissi, Saeed Rahnema, and Mark J. Goodman, *Diaspora by Design: Muslim in Canada and Beyond*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009)
42. Additional polling information was provided to me by Chris Cochrane, on the basis of Ipsos-Reid polling at the time of the 2006 election. The sample sizes are very small, but they show 38 percent of Canadian Muslims supporting no legal recognition of the relationships of gay and lesbian couples, as compared to 21 percent of Hindus, 19 percent of Protestants, and 10 percent or less of Catholics, Sikh's, and Jews. See also Omar Minwalla, B.R. Rosser, Jamie Feldman, and Christine Varga, "Identity Experience Among Progressive Gay Muslims in North America," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 7, 2 (2005): 113-28.
43. AsianPacific American Legal Center of Southern California, "Asian Americans at the Ballot Box: The 2008 General Election in Los Angeles County," (Los Angeles, 2009).
44. See Amy Langstaff, "A Twenty Year Survey of Canadian Attitudes on Homosexuality and Gay Rights," in *Borders and Bridges*, ed. David Rayside and Clyde Wilcox (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming).