

The Québec government, NGOs and minority group associations in the face of racism and antiracism: how to express it

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INTRODUCTION

Subject

This paper analyzes variations and breakdown in the discourse on racism and antiracism in the 2000s. It relies on documents from various Québec government departments and on briefs submitted by NGOs, general-purpose organizations and minority group associations during the consultation held in 2006 by the Québec government with a view to adopting a Québec policy on fighting racism – a policy that was adopted in 2008. We are proposing a critical look at the social representations of those involved and the theoretical and policy issues that are raised. We even suggest a challenge to the very terms in which the antiracism discourse of the state, NGOs and minority group associations is structured and disseminated in civil society.

Looking back at a few key moments

In September 2001, United Nations member countries and civil society representatives gathered in Durban, South Africa, for the third UN conference on racism, the World Conference Against Racism Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). The Durban Declaration called upon governments to “name and recognize” racism and to prevent and alleviate the harmful effects of globalization on marginalized and racialized populations: “These effects could aggravate, *inter alia*, poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, cultural homogenization and economic disparities which may occur along racial lines, within and between States, and have an adverse impact” (CMCM, 2001a; b). It urged governments to undertake action plans and to comply with the commitments made in various contexts. It noted that the targets of racism (Aboriginals and racialized minorities) were demanding that they be called by their own names.

The year 2001 marked a new era. Since then, various United Nations reports have noted a rise in hate crimes, the contamination of discourse and of political parties by extreme right-wing arguments, the lack or ineffectiveness of government action and an increase in racist and Islamophobic acts. Commenting on the situation of Muslim and Arab populations around the

world, the United Nations special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Doudou Diène, had this to say: “The alert level is at red” (Diène, 2003).

Louise Arbour, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted that, seven years after the Durban world conference and despite a legal framework and directives, “the international community is far from having overcome the scourge of racism, which is extending its tentacles subtly and insidiously” (Arbour, 2007, p. 5).

The Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva from April 20 to 24, 2009, with the aim of assessing the progress achieved in the context of the goals set in 2001, ended its work by adopting, by acclamation, a Final Document in which it “Deploras the global rise and number of incidents of racial or religious intolerance and violence, including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, Christianophobia and anti-Arabism manifested in particular by the derogatory stereotyping and stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief” (<http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/pdf/Durban_Review_outcome_document_En.pdf>, consulted on May 18, 2010). Moreover, the former United Nations special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance¹ recently stated:

“My second regret is that the UN did not take stock of what has or has not been done since the Durban conference against racism, for each UN member country. Based on this digest of the measures taken at the national level, the Geneva conference might have gone beyond ideological debate and delved into real situations, with most countries that adopted the Durban Declaration not having applied it at the national level” (<www.swissinfo.ch/fre/swissinfo.html?siteSect=105&sid=10595368&ty=st>, consulted on April 30, 2009, and translated from French).

This was the context in which the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism was set up in Nuremberg in 2004 under the aegis of UNESCO. This Coalition aimed to develop a 10-point action plan urging governments and municipalities to re-examine their goals and practices. I took part in developing this action plan with my colleague Rachad Antonius. In 2009, 33 Canadian municipalities (including four in Québec) had joined the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination.

In 2005, the Canadian government released a plan titled *Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*. This plan reaffirms the commitments made at Durban.

In 2006, the Québec government in turn released a consultation document with a view to instituting a government policy on fighting racism and discrimination, and it held a public consultation. A strong consensus emerged from the 125 briefs that were presented regarding the need to adopt a Québec policy against racism.

¹ Doudou Diène was United Nations special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism from August 2002 to July 2008.

Meanwhile, the Quebec Government sent up the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (better known as the Bouchard-Taylor Commission).

In the autumn of 2008, the Québec government finally adopted a policy titled *Diversity: An Added Value. Government Policy to Promote Participation of All in Québec's Development*. This policy abides by the following orientations: recognizing and counteracting prejudice and discrimination; revising practices; and coordinating efforts. It was accompanied by a five-year action plan.

Factors (*facteurs structurants*) at the international level have strongly influenced developments in theoretical thinking, public policy, and demands and action strategies from social actors in analyzing racism and antiracism in Canada and Québec. Among these factors, international migration is one of the challenges of the 21st century, leading in turn to a questioning of integration and citizenship models.

We know now that the diversity of the Canadian population will increase during the next two decades. By 2031, between 25% and 28% of the population may be foreign-born (with about 55% of these people born in Asia). Between 29% and 32% of the population would belong to a “visible minority group,” and 47% of second-generation Canadians would fit this category, nearly double the proportion of 24% in 2006. In Montreal, “visible minority groups” would represent 31% of the population, nearly double the 16% in 2006. By 2031, the city’s Arab population would be almost as numerous as the Black population. This growing diversity raised new issues of integration along with the question of racism (Statistics Canada, 2010).

The thrust of theoretical thinking on racism and issues in the international and national contexts require an examination of how government and antiracism social actors view the matter.

This reveals the pertinence of a discursive analysis of racism and antiracism in Québec and of its variations and breakdown.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

Analysis of racism poses a number of challenges such as defining it too broadly and trivializing it by speaking, for instance, of anti-youth, anti-boss or anti-homosexual racism, or by defining it too narrowly, preventing the culturalist and differentialist forms that disguise it from being recognized.

There is no universal definition of racism either in academic texts, in the texts of international institutions, or in those of national or local government institutions.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which was adopted on December 21, 1965, and which came into force on January 4, 1969, does not define racism. This convention limits itself to defining “racial discrimination” in Article 1:

In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life
(<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cerd.htm>), consulted on May 18, 2010).

This very broad vision, encompassing motives for discrimination based on “race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin” ends up, in operational terms, making racism a sort of category “which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life” (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cerd.htm>), consulted on May 18, 2010).

UNESCO, in its Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, suggested in 1978 a definition of racism encompassing distinct manifestations (prejudices and direct or systemic practices) that have negative effects not only on the targeted groups but also on racist aggressors themselves and that create tensions within nation-states and between peoples:

Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relationships between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practise it, divides nations internally, impedes international co-operation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security (UNESCO, 1978, Article 2.2.).

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance points out, correctly, that no definition of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or intolerance is universally accepted (OSCE/ODIHR, 2004).

In 2006 and 2007, Doudou Diène, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, identified new difficulties in analyzing racism. He noted a growing complexity in the area of discrimination because of an amalgam of “race,” culture and religion factors in most recent crises and incidents. Inspired by the Durban recommendations on the need to consider the intersectionality of discriminations (CMCR, 2001a et b), the Special Rapporteur asserted that this amalgam blurs the analysis and diagnosis of racism and discriminations, thereby weakening responses and strategies in fighting racism (Diène, 2006a, p. 4; Diène, 2007a).

Not only can a clear definition of racism not be found, but international instruments and government texts continue to turn broadly to the notion of “race” in combating racism, thereby helping reproduce the classifications and representations associated with it. **We think, however, that the term “race” should be made to disappear in the struggle to eradicate racism, the notion of “race” being a product of racist ideology itself rather than its cause.**

These matters of terminology raise major theoretical issues. But they also concern issues related to the effectiveness of any action plan against racism.

Other problems arise. Prejudices are not always distinguished from tangible practices. In the guise of analyzing neo-racism, it may be forgotten or denied that representations linked to “colonial” racism endure in our societies. Promoting and managing ethnocultural diversity and attaching value to it can be confused with precise, targeted antiracism measures.

From all this vagueness, there results a conceptual confusion when it comes to examining the operational ground of antiracism.

To these challenges is added the specificity of societies that provide the policy context and the cultural repertory from which expressions of racism and antiracism are fed.

At this point, a fundamental series of questions arises. How best to understand the enduring nature of the notion of “race” in the 21st century, in this postcolonial, post-apartheid and post-civil rights era, in the thinking of governments and of organizations devoted to defending groups that are targets of racism? How can the connection with embodiments of colonial racism and expressions of neo-racism be understood? What are the targets, manifestations and new issues that are aroused by the current international context? How can the state role in antiracism be devised? What about the thinking and positions of various NGOs and minority group associations on racism and antiracism?

METHOD

The methodological strategy relies on content analysis of a limited corpus of public documents on this subject.

As concerns the Québec government, we have examined documentation from the departments of immigration and cultural communities, employment and social solidarity, public security, justice, and municipal and regional affairs, as well as the aboriginal affairs secretariat. For purposes of comparison, we did the same type of analysis at the federal level with documentation from the multiculturalism program at Canadian Heritage (Citizenship and Immigration since 2009) and from the departments of human resources and social development, justice, and Indian and northern affairs.

We also analyzed briefs from 29 NGOs, general-purpose organizations and associations with ethnic, racialized, religious or national identities submitted to the Culture Commission during the government consultation on Policy for fighting racism, in 2006 (see Appendix A).

The content analysis covers the following themes: “race,” the racialization process, targets of racism; racist actors (*acteurs racistes*); definitions and causes of racism; its manifestations; its consequences; and visions of antiracism.

It should be pointed out that this analysis is not premised on the evaluative method. We did not seek to take account of the 500 recommendations contained in the briefs from the NGOs and minority group associations that were used in this study, nor did we seek to find out in what sense the 2008 government Policy may or may not have taken these recommendations into account. That type of approach involves evaluating public policy, which lies beyond our scope.

KEY FINDINGS

Canada and Québec answered the Durban call in an international context that was very much affected by the war on terrorism and all-out globalization, causing a flare-up of theoretical thinking on new manifestations and logics of racism and ways of combatting them.

An initial observation (*constat*) is that recognition of racism by the Québec government, together with a Québec policy aimed at eradicating it, marked a considerable advance. It should be recalled that this recognition fits in with what follows logically from the *Déclaration du gouvernement du Québec sur les relations interethniques et interraciales*, adopted in 1986 and unreservedly condemning racism and “racial” discrimination in all its forms, as well as from other measures taken since the 1970s: the *Act Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies and Amending the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, notices on reasonable accommodation, targeted programs for young members of “visible minorities,” etc. This development proceeded alongside federal policies, often converging with them although standing apart in a fundamental area, namely that of views of the Québec political community. Québec has always presented itself as an integrating nation. These differences of approach explain the adoption of a counter-current during the 1980s on integration policy and interculturalism (as distinct from the federal policy of multiculturalism).

To these specific programs for combatting racism, developed in the 1990s, have been added National Assembly motions and statements on remembrance-related issues: recognition of a National Day of the Patriotes of 1837-1838, in 2002; a commemorative plaque in the municipality of St. Armand and a ceremony evoking the 170th anniversary of the abolition of slavery, in 2003; recognition of the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, in 2006; and Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom Hashoah), in 2006. These initiatives contributed to an awareness of the slavery and colonialism that helped form the foundations of New France and, after the Conquest, of the British regime.

Manifestations of racism are richly documented and set out with precision (prejudices, discrimination in acts, residential ghettoization, violence and hate crimes) in the corpus studied. It has been postulated that they are connected with the complexity of the power relationships that existed in Québec and Canadian society.

The 2006 consultation document *Towards a Government Policy to Fight against Racism and Discrimination – For the Full Participation of Quebecers from Cultural Communities* and the 2008 government policy paper *Diversity: An Added Value* identify historic sources of racism, namely the enslavement of Aboriginals and people of African descent, as well as colonialism, both under New France and the British regime. However, the rhetoric of conciliation can be noted around these foundations: “Very early in the history of Québec, there appear situations of racism, in particular the enslavement of Aboriginals and Blacks and, at the same time, situations of harmonious cohabitation, such as commercial and political alliances with Aboriginals and marriages between persons of every origin. This phenomenon can also be observed later with the arrival of waves of migration of diverse origins” (Québec, MICC, 2008a, p.13).

However, no allusion is made to the duty of remembrance, despite the wording in the seventh core principle in the 2008 policy stating that: “Government actions must take account of the particular dynamic of various groups and of the historical traumas they have experienced” (Québec, MICC, 2008a, p. 23). This poses a major tension for liberal democracies. The theme of remembrance is part of the questioning of narrow conceptions of nation and citizenship conveyed by societies in the postcolonial era, a spectacular questioning that has marked recent decades. These conceptions of citizenship push a new duty of justice to the forefront, aimed at the past. They issue a challenge to all societies that wish to question the relationships of domination that stemmed from colonialism, starting by identifying and recognizing the impact of the wrongs that were caused and their current repercussions (Labelle, Antonius and Leroux, 2005). The duty of remembrance has a very tense relationship with attempts to rehabilitate the benefits of the West’s “civilizing mission,” in a number of countries.

Among NGOs, general-purpose organizations and minority group associations, these repercussions from the colonial past are more strongly identified and felt. Lines of argument are also more highly developed concerning the impact of the Middle East conflict and the effects of the war on terrorism. These are clearly challenged, given the human rights abuses arising from them; this involves a serious trend at the international level. The events of September 11, 2001, are perceived as the primary cause of the new upsurge in racism, particularly toward Arabs and Muslims (Muslim Council of Montreal, CCIQ). NGOs and some minority group associations have been denouncing security certificates, aimed almost exclusively at Muslims, as well as an upsurge in profiling of a racist character. The crucial role of the media and the Web in strengthening prejudices of a racist nature is also a major area of concern for those who appeared at the Culture Commission.

Their briefs provide an abundant illustration of manifestations of racism in diverse areas of social life, whether popular prejudices or systemic discrimination. The consequences of racism on individuals and the community are emphasized in bold strokes: attacks on dignity and mental health, withdrawal and isolation, mistrust and aggressiveness, a negative perception of Québec society, a waste of labour resources, and an adversarial posture toward the Québec identity. To sum up, this is a major obstacle to real or substantive citizenship.

Despite this recognition, a second observation is that racialized thinking (or the process of racialization) remains highly evident in the discourse emanating from

government, NGOs, general-purpose organizations and minority group associations. Analysis of racism and of the fight against racism involves an identification approach, leading to categorization of the target groups of racism. These target groups vary from one society to another, and the public terminology generally follows from each society's nation-building scheme. Colonial classifications in the Americas thus modelled ways of displaying otherness. However, contemporary classification can sometimes reproduce the cognitive foundations of racist thinking even while seeking to combat it.

Like scientific or legal texts that still refer broadly to the notion of "race" (even as a social myth), the Québec and Canadian governments have trouble keeping their distance from the process of systemic racialization of otherness, whether this involves designating the targets of racism, racist actors or racist audience (Blee).

The Canadian government uses an abundance of terms such as "racial group," "racial minority," "racial community," "Black race," "White race," etc. The word "race" appears almost 30 times in *Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*. And while Québec's *ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* (department of Immigration and Cultural communities) tries to stay away from this racializing model, which does represent some progress, it nonetheless turns to a notion that is just as open to challenge (*contestable*) as "race," namely the notion of "visible minority". This notion was developed by the Canadian government in the context of employment equity programs in the 1980s and designating "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and who identify themselves as such to an employer" (Canada, 1995).

Government and legal terminology has penetrated the milieu of NGOs, general-purpose organizations and minority group associations, which turn unreservedly to the terms "race" and "visible minorities" whether or not in reference to the Canadian or Québec charters of rights and freedoms. On the other hand, this may result from the influence exerted by the NGOs and minorities on government discourse. In the ideological wake of Canadian multiculturalism, some groups even become ardent and articulate defenders of it. This is the case, for example, of the Centre for Research Action on Race Relations and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Is this influence accepted by Québec as a way of giving state discourse credibility and a certain mobilizing power in the Canadian context? The Québec government faces strong pressure to speak of "races" from some NGOs that are influenced by the radical culture – from the English-speaking world – of critical race theory and even of whiteness studies. For advocates of these ideas, it is a matter of recognizing racism.

In a report presented to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Canada defended the expression "visible minority" in the context of the *Employment Equity Act*. It nonetheless emphasized its limits:

[...] is not used for the purposes of the equality guarantees in either the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* or any of the provincial human rights codes, all of which are key components of Canada's anti-discrimination policy. The term is specific to the *Employment Equity Act* and is part of a

particular program relating to employment only. The only other statute where this term is used is the *Public Service Employment Act*, s. 13(2), which allows for different criteria for groups identified under the *Employment Equity Act* to be used by the Public Service Commission in staffing processes (UN, CERD, Canadian rider, 2006).

However, in 2007, this UN committee noted Canada's reserves. It said it feared that the use of the term "visible minorities" may not be in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Convention (Article 1).

"While noting the position of the State party according to which the use of the term "visible minorities" is specific to the Employment Equity Act and is not used for the purpose of defining racial discrimination, the Committee notes that the term is widely used in official documents of the State party, including the census. The Committee is concerned that the use of the term "visible minorities" may not be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Convention (Article 1). The Committee recommends that the State party reflect further, in line with Article 1, Paragraph 1 of the Convention, on the implications of the use of the term "visible minorities" in referring to "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (UN, CERD, 2007, Subsection 13).

More recently, Gay McDougall, an independent UN expert on minority issues, commented on the inadequacy of this term and its obsolete character:

"Rapid demographic changes have created new demands for deeper levels of disaggregation of data to keep pace with shifts in the economic and social status of specific minority communities. Certain minority communities, such as black Canadians, feel strongly that the catch-all terminology of "visible minorities" under which their data is captured leads inevitably to the neglect of their specific identities and situations and has served to obscure and dilute the differences and distinct experiences of respective minority groups. Unpacking the visible minority data is a first essential step towards the recognition of diverse experiences and challenges and enabling more targeted policy responses" (McDougall, 2010, p. 1).

"While the category called "visible minority" in the Employment Equity Act was at one time a positive step to acknowledge minority communities, it is now too broad to give a realistic picture of the achievements of or problems faced by distinct communities. Certain communities, particularly those with African heritage, feel strongly that this terminology, under which their data is captured, leads inevitably to the neglect of their specific identities and situations" (McDougall, 2010, p. 20).

These reserves by UN observers echo the controversies that persist in the scholarly area. We do not give analytical or conceptual status to the idea of "race." This is why we, among with others, defend the use of the term «racialized group». It has the merit of creating distance from «race». This view of things clearly implies that the target groups of racism are groups that have been the object of an assignment of identity derived from racist ideology.

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Centre for Research Action on Race Relations maintain the term “race” along with racial thinking. The latter, for example, has denounced Québec’s “Franco-centric approach” to antiracism, an approach supposedly attached to French influence, denying differences in identity in the name of the Republic. We object to this interpretation because the expression racialized group comes from an English-language theoretical corpus (with the influence of Miles, Winant, Satzewitch, etc.).

Now, just who are the targets of racism? Their identification is a problem because it covers too much ground. The government tends to treat “cultural communities,” “visible minorities” or immigrants as homogeneous entities. In so doing, it conveys a condescending image of tolerance toward individuals and groups (*ce faisant, il donne à voir un certain regard misérabiliste sur les personnes et les groupes*). NGOs and minority group associations are also imbued with this vision.

Antonius and Icart suggest that a differentiated analysis based on minority status, along the lines of the sex-based differentiated analysis model, would have the merit of targeting social categories that are to be the object of particular rectification measures (Antonius and Icart, 2009, pp.77-78), taking account of social class, a decisive factor in our eyes, and of various other pertinent variables. The action plan titled *Diversity: An Added Value. Government Policy to Promote Participation of All in Québec's Development* advocates the use of status differentiated analysis (*analyse différenciée selon le statut*) in all studies dealing with racism and discrimination (Québec, MICC, 2008b, p. 60). This requires that differentiated analysis also pass through the demanding task of adopting a differentiated identity terminology.

A third observation is that there is a systemic and structure-forming exclusion of Aboriginals as regards the state. Manifestations of racism affecting Québec Aboriginals were not taken into account in the 2006 consultation document, *Vers une politique gouvernementale de lutte contre le racisme et contre la discrimination*. The Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (*Secrétariat des affaires autochtones*) does not seem concerned. The *ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles*, which is primarily in charge of antiracism matters, does not deal with Aboriginal issues. This Department justified the non-treatment of racism concerning Aboriginals by the fact that this involved nations other than the Québec nation and that a solution to their problems entails a broader perspective that is not defined:

“Aboriginals are not targeted by this future policy. Although they can be affected by prejudice and discrimination, just like individuals from cultural communities and visible minorities, and they can benefit from measures implemented under the policy, solutions to the problems confronting them must be considered in a broader perspective that goes beyond the scope of this public consultation” (MICC, 2006c, p. 5).

During the 2006 consultation, nearly all the NGOs, general-purpose organizations and minority group associations that are studied in this work denounced this exclusion, and this includes the two Aboriginal organizations that presented briefs. They say this gesture by the Québec government contributes to the further isolation and marginalization of Aboriginals.

It is obvious that we are dealing here with a fundamental issue that nobody seems to know how to confront and that has been avoided for decades in Québec, and elsewhere in Canada.

A fourth observation is that discourse on racist actors is vulnerable to prejudices and reverse racism. On the one hand, government texts do not provide enough information on this subject, probably because studies and surveys are seriously lacking. The government policy of 2008 points out rather tersely that prejudices and discriminatory practices are found in every group, including people in Québec from “cultural communities” and “visible minorities.”

On the other hand, NGOs and minority group associations are becoming more vocal in this area, pursuing a harmful line in certain cases. Some go as far as applying the racist label to “persons of the White race,” “*pure laine Québécois*,” “old-stock *Québécois*,” the majority group, the “Whites,” the dominant society, etc. Not only do these sorts of remarks let prejudices filter through, but they risk compromising a sense of citizenship and belonging in Québec or even provoking a reaction running counter to the goal being sought.

From this it must be deduced that minorities themselves may be getting away from examining racist, anti-Semitic or Islamophobic tendencies spreading within their ranks. It should be recalled here that racism, like sexism, concerns the government just as it concerns citizens as a whole, because both these ideologies are part of the world system’s geopolitical culture (Wallerstein, 1990). To understand the dynamics and the infiltration of racism, not only must we seek a breakdown of these manifestations by context and period, but we must also take account of internal differentiation (social, ideological, political and culture) in any global society.

A fifth observation is that antiracism, interculturalism and the promotion of diversity overlap and that this risks diluting the political treatment of racism. The pages of introduction to the 2008 policy, *Diversity: An Added Value*, reveals this amalgam right off the bat. Premier Jean Charest states that Québec’s common values of the primacy of French, equality between women and men, and secularism are the object of “increased promotion and actions by the Québec government among immigrant to facilitate their integration.” Yolande James, *ministre du ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés culturelles*, advocates a policy of fighting racism and discrimination “that aims to strengthen the conditions enabling Québec to be a welcoming society in which all citizens share common values and can fulfil their potential and their aspirations, with everyone’s rights respected.” Throughout the document, intercultural rapprochement and the fight against racism are constantly interwoven.

The same applies to the Canadian example, where antiracism is continuously associated with multiculturalism.

In the 2006 consultation, some NGOs and minority group associations accused the *ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* of failing to distinguish between racism, integration of immigrants, interculturalism and management of diversity. According to the Québec Bar, “these are different issues that may complement each other in the framework of

actions taken by the government but must be handled separately so as not to dilute the government's obligations regarding the right to equality and the fight against discrimination" (Barreau du Québec, 2006, p. 14).

We do not endorse an approach that suggests putting "race" and "racial thinking" at the core of antiracism, as favoured by some partisans of critical race studies or whiteness studies. Again, this type of radical approach strikes us as inadequate, and we must emphasize the importance of defending a type of antiracism that is free of notions and categories that are the historical product of racist ideology. This does not mean adopting a line of thinking and action that shows indifference or colour-blindness.

NGOs, general-purpose organizations and minority group associations should be able to clarify, solidify and even harmonize their antiracism positions. Confusing different types maintains a masking and dilution effect that minimizes the specificity of racism.

This confusion between types contaminates government views in every department and at every level, including the municipal level, where there are calls to adopt an action plan against racism inspired by the International Coalition of Cities against Racism (Icart, Labelle and Antonius, 2005).

Beyond this analytic synthesis, there emerge more general considerations on blind spots in antiracism that we think it is important to emphasize.

A number of government departments, NGOs and minority group associations point out and deplore the poverty and marginalization of racialized groups but without challenging the neo-liberal agenda, the perverse effects of globalization or the class structure prevailing in Québec and Canadian societies. The same applies to most theoretical texts on racism and antiracism reviewed elsewhere (see Labelle, 2010, upcoming). And it goes against United Nations questioning (Durban world conference, mission reports by Doudou Diène, etc.) on sustainable development. The term "social class" seems taboo or obsolete, and class analysis seems absent. Nonetheless, theoretical thinking on this concept is experiencing a renewal in sociology. Class analysis has always created difficulties in the analysis of racism and sexism, and vice versa. But this is not a reason to avoid it, particularly considering that it would be congruent with the differentiated analysis we are defending.

Among structural factors at the international level which have a strong effect on the "racialization of poverty" in Canada, note has been taken of the current economic restructuring, accompanied by the growth in precarious jobs, the decline of trade unionism, the withdrawal of the state from economic and social regulation, and the acceleration of South-to-North migration. All these factors together have contributed to making racialized groups in the Canadian labour market more vulnerable to segmentation and to a lowering of their economic status (Galabuzzi, 2006a). Poverty is a symptom the causes of which must be examined and dealt with. It therefore does not suffice simply to call for social inclusion in a society with social structures that are inequalitarian, in other words, sticking to the status quo, in the absence of a "societal project." Diversity recognition or management policies (e.g., multiculturalism and interculturalism

policies) are of limited effectiveness unless existing structures of exploitation and domination are challenged.

The infiltration of neo-racism in political party and community movement discourse is another issue that deserves particular attention. Certain criticisms of Canadian multiculturalism and Québec interculturalism provide an opportunity for the infiltration of the neo-racist message risks developing, in Canada and Québec. The tense political climate and media coverage at the time of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, as well as the Québec government's reluctance on the adoption of clear indications regarding reasonable accommodation, interculturalism and secularism (*laïcité*), or on the implementation of the policy for combatting racism, helps feed a strengthening in public opinion of culturalist interpretations that harden disagreements.

In its action plan, the ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles pleads for the state to assume leadership in the eradication of racism. But there may be reason to question having this department as the main coordinator in policy for fighting racism. The same applies to the Canadian Heritage department. Why entrust this sort of mandate to a department dedicated to immigration and so-called cultural communities? This closeness of purposes risks encouraging a crude division between the French-speaking majority on one side and cultural communities and immigrants on the other. This is not how to build a nation or citizenship (*ce n'est pas ainsi que l'on fait nation ou citoyenneté*).

Finally, the citizenship perspective is nearly absent from the debate. Of course, the state and the organizations and minority group associations have concerns of civic participation. But the citizenship perspective is more widely embracing: beyond the legal dimension, it concerns access along with the true exercise of rights and a sense of belonging to a territorially defined political community. Racism in its various manifestations has a corrosive impact on these dimensions: it not only represents an attack on the right to equality, but it also undermines the sense of belonging in Québec. What is called for is a renewed discourse that is less forced and more likely to get people mobilized.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF NGOs, ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF MINORITY GROUPS: ACRONYMS

Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité dans la santé et les services sociaux	ACCÉSSS
Association des Camerounais du Canada	ACC
Barreau du Québec	N/A
B'nai Brith	N/A
Carrefour jeunesse-emploi de Côte-des-Neiges, de Bourassa-Sauvé et de Saint-Laurent et Regroupement des organismes du Montréal ethnique pour le logement	CJE/ROMEL
Centre culturel islamique de Québec	CCIQ
Centre de recherche-action sur les relations raciales	CRARR
Centre Sino-Québec de la Rive-Sud et Service à la famille chinoise du Grand Montréal	CSQRS/ SFCGM
Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse	CDPDJ
Congrès juif canadien	CJC
Conseil des relations interculturelles	CRI
Conseil en éducation des Premières Nations	CEPN
Conseil musulman de Montréal	CMM
Conseil permanent de la jeunesse	CPJ
Fédération des femmes du Québec	FFQ
Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec	FTQ
Femmes africaines, Horizon 2015	FAH2015
Fondation canadienne des relations raciales	FCRR
Jeune chambre de commerce haïtienne	JCCH
Lamine Foura et Touhami Rachid Raffa	N/A
Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux du Québec	OPTSQ
Regroupement des Algériens du Canada	RAQ
Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec	RCAAQ
Réseau des entrepreneurs et professionnels africains	REPAF
Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes	TCRI
Table ronde du Mois de l'histoire des Noirs	N/A
Union des municipalités du Québec	UMQ
Ville de Montréal	N/A
Ville de Sherbrooke	N/A