

Quebec interculturalism: a version of Canadian multiculturalism or a model with an institutional structure?

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to examine whether the political model for the management of diversity in Quebec is a particular or provincial manifestation of Anglo-Canadian multiculturalism or if, on the contrary, this nation has endowed itself with some tools and mechanisms which make it viable to sustain that it has designed a distinctive institutional structure and model of citizenship which a number of authors have named interculturalism. The article concludes holding such statement. To achieve this aim, this article analyzes the way both Canada and Quebec have dealt with the challenge of managing this living together in culturally plural societies and how this challenge has influenced their relationship.

Key words: interculturalism, multiculturalism, integration, cultural diversity, citizenship.

Resumen: El objetivo central de este trabajo consiste en examinar si el modelo interculturalista de gestión de la diversidad instaurado en Quebec es una manifestación particular o local del multiculturalismo anglocanadiense o si, por el contrario, consiste en un modelo autónomo vinculado al proyecto político de diseño de una estructura institucional distinta y de configuración de una ciudadanía diferenciada. Para alcanzar este objetivo se analizan los presupuestos normativos que subyacen a la manera en que tanto Canadá como Quebec han afrontado el reto de gestionar la convivencia en sociedades culturalmente plurales y cómo este desafío ha influido la relación entre ambas.

Palabras clave: interculturalismo, multiculturalismo, integración, diversidad cultural, ciudadanía.

Introduction

Nowadays a number of phenomena influence the increase and expanse of cultural diversity, at the same time that political and juridical manifestations asking for the recognition of cultural minorities are produced; for long time, many of them have remained cornered. Cultural differences in the same space pose numerous challenges and complex questions on coexistence. Any answer should have it clear, above all, that solutions cannot be uniform. Challenges that imply the recognition and accommodation of diverse cultural identities and the inclusion of rights in democratic constitutional systems require deep institutional transformations.

For these incursions come to fruition, it is necessary to adopt a contextual approach that allows taking into consideration the social scenario and political and recognition aspirations longed for by a concrete community. There should be a case-by-case approach to find measures beyond the positions that deny the construction of singular subjects and the stances that reject identity particularities. Finding ways between these ends should be one of the central objectives of our current occidental democracies.

Canada and Quebec partook of the extended modern ideal characterized by cultural, linguistic, immigration and education policies which favor uniformity, symmetry and homogeneity. However, in recent decades, these two nations and other occidental countries have started to accept that many States are both plurinational, as they comprise more than one national culture, and pluricultural, as in them several cultures concur.

In recent decades, this condition has made noticeable academic and political efforts appear in view of overcoming such monist condition and devise political arrangements capable of making understanding viable, and beyond mere tolerance, mutual coexistence.

In the framework of these initiatives, in the present article the objectives will be: to analyze the way in which Canada and Quebec have faced this challenge in how this has influenced the relation between both nations, as well as enquire if the political model of diversity in Quebec is a particular manifestation of Anglo-Canadian multiculturalism or if, on the contrary, it is an autonomous model linked to the political project of designing an institutional structure and of a configuration of differenced citizenry.

It is possible to put forward a conclusion. The existence of elements that tip the balance in favor of this last affirmation is verified, however there are still important challenges in the consolidation of a political and normative model particular and different from the aforementioned multiculturalism.

For its part, this verification makes us wonder why Quebec decides to take up a proper model to manage cultural diversity, if there is one model in the country: that of Canadian multiculturalism.

Two central issues accompany the objectives previously stated and they will be addressed in this work. First, the analysis of multiculturalism and interculturalism as measures, actions and governmental programs whose purpose is to manage cultural diversity, immigration and integration. Second, to observe the theoretical proposal of some researchers, particularly philosophers, political scientists and sociologists such as Bouchard (2012), Bouchard and Taylor (2008), Gagnon and Iacovino (2003), and Rocher and Labelle (2010), as for the pluralist orientation which they consider should guide the coexistence in diversity of Quebec's inhabitants and which is not the known model of Canadian multiculturalism, but what they have called interculturalism.

This model emphasizes respect for diversity; safeguarding the principle of recognition; integration with measures that prevent exclusion and social inequality; logics of intercultural harmonization on the basis of the principle of reciprocity; dialogue between cultural identities; and the construction of active civilization. In addition, it fosters the reclaim of contextual elements that authorize the justification of some dynamics proper to a particular logic, which is a condition of outward minority —Quebec at the forefront of the Anglophonic Canada and the Anglo-Saxon culture that prevails in North America— and inward majority —Quebec has a dominant French-speaking group— (Laforest, 2010).

To reach these objectives, we start from the analysis of the dual status that Quebec holds. This implies observing, on the one side the relation between the Anglophone Canada and the Francophone Quebec, where the policy of multiculturalism, the paradigm of recognition and the debate on federalism hold a central place; and on the other, relationships inside Quebec between the dominant culture and the historic minorities concurring in it (Anglophones, indigenous autochthonous, Inuit), as well as the articulation that exists between recent immigrants and the previously settled population.

From a methodological standpoint, this work is framed in the scope of applied political theory, as it tries to project the normative theoretical reflections about problems or phenomena of the real political life. A political theorist's academic activity is to interpret, value, clarify and explain the ideas, justifications and doctrines of political thinking, as well as to problematize and critically analyze ethical issues, political beliefs or maxims and design mechanisms to actuate on reality (Wences, 2015).

To do so, political theory uses a set of instruments and has its own epistemological premises. Political theory is accompanied by a philosophical trend that has as a goal to identify, interpret, understand and explain contemporary political processes and political agreements and disagreements as well; moreover, it implies the commitment to assess and specify practices, principles and institutions. In like manner, political theory nourishes on the political ideas, as it helps configure, condition and indicate orders and possibilities for public life and offers tools to contest the epistemological and discursive visions taken for granted.

In addition to the philosophical normative and the historiographic, political theory can also be applied, as it is considered in this paper. According to this, political theory orients its activity so that it can actuate on reality, in view of orientating, motivating and improving it, for political theory cannot be divorced from political action (Taylor, 1983).

Finally, in order to elucidate, understand, explain, criticize, interpret and assess political practices and actuate, political theory also has as a task to clarify and refine concepts in the political discourse and to critically value political beliefs at once (Heywood, 2010).

Quebec and Canada: tensions and understandings

Relationships between Canada and Quebec can be analyzed from various approaches. As underscored by Alain-G. Gagnon (2003), it is possible to do so by means of: 1) the observation of legal premises; 2) by means of studying fiscal federalism; or as he prefers, 3) from the historical-institutional dimensions of their relationships. A fourth possibility—which in combination with the third we will try here— by means of analyzing their models for the management of cultural diversity and the relations which from such models have taken place between these two nations.

Based on these two last approaches, the approximation is divided into four stages: a) the one related to the historical foundation and the establishment of the constitutional order; b) the transition between 1960 and 1982; c) from 1982—year of the so called constitutional repatriation without Quebec's consent—to the first decade of XXI century, a period when the “rupture with the established constitutional order and the emergence of a new political order” (Gagnon, 2003: 139); and, d) the period that considers the relations that in recent years federal government and various Quebec governments have had, up to the accession to power of Philippe Couillard, of the Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ)—on April 7th,

2014—, and Prime Minister Justine Trudeau (Liberal Party), who governs Canada as of November 4th, 2015.

If a brief summary were made, it would be possible to illustrate the first stage alluding to two State documents that reflect the identity of Quebec in Canada: the British North America (Quebec) Act 1774, and the British North America Act, 1867 (BNA Act). The former can be considered the Magna Carta of a policy of diversity and the Canadian and Quebec identity recognition.

BNA Act is a logical consequence of Quebec Act and becomes relevant as two central aspects for this work are formalized there. On the one side, the recognition of British-descent and French-descent Canadians; and on the other, the establishment of a pluralist federal principle. As for the first issue, owing to the time of its establishment, it is clear that cultural opening was restricted to the identification of British and French background; consequently, other ethno-cultural groups were relegated and hurried to assimilate into one of the two foundational monolithic cultures, especially into the British one.

Ever since and up to 1971 the Canadian model to manage cultural diversity was that of Anglo-conformity. On its own, the pluralist federal principle would make room to the establishment of two different traditions of federalism: the universalizing, which defends the instauration of a strong central power, and the communitarian (Gagnon, 2008).

Over time, these two models would accompany the escalating confrontation between two national projects: the Canadian and Quebec's. It is verified in Eugénie Brouillet's (2008: 79): "English-speaking Canadians support a centralizing evolution of the Canadian federation and the symmetry at the level of provincial powers, while Quebecers defend greater decentralization of powers and the instauration of asymmetric federalism".

The second period is characterized by being a transition from the Quiet Revolution to the 1982 Repatriation. It is a period when the social and political actors from Quebec acquire a central role, thus initiates an affirmation processes in the social, economic, political and cultural terrains. This period is fundamental to understand how autonomy was accomplished and what relations between Canada and Quebec nowadays are like.

Even if there would be need of a thorough and extensive analysis, here we will only underscore some central occurrences. In the first place, the establishing of Laurendeau-Dunton Commission on bilingualism and biculturalism; the year previous to the creation of this commission, journalist André Laurendeau had expressed his concern for the accelerated growth of

Quebec's secessionist discourse and the indifference of English-speaking Canada. The definite version of the report produced by this commission came to life in 1969 and on its basis the equity principle between Canada and Quebec was set. Gagnon *et al.* (2013) point out that in spite of the half a century lapsed after this commission's works, the frame it proposed to debate Canada's cultural and linguistic problem is still valid.

Secondly, giving control of the public pension plans, which provided Quebec with great fiscal autonomy and opened the door to set the Box of Deposit and Investments that ended up being one of the most important sources of public funding in Canada.

Thirdly, the election of Pierre Trudeau as the leader of the federal Parti Libéral in April 1968 and months later as Canada's Prime Minister, meant the worsening of relations with Quebec's governments, basically due to the negative of providing Quebec with something that will not be given to other federation's state members and that ended in the repatriation of constitution.

The fourth event that help us understand the social and political changes that occurred in the period from the Quiet Revolution to the 1982 Repatriation is the role performed by Robert Bourassa, Quebec's Prime Minister from 1970 to 1976 and from 1985 to 1993, who pushed the thesis of profitable federalism, cultural sovereignty and later, shared sovereignty. It did not aspire to strengthen Quebec's nationalistic desires in the Constitution, but opted to review the federal system to grant Quebec the necessary resources to face the bicultural nature of Canada.

Fifthly, the governmental recognition of a "special status" for Quebec, in the light of the modification of the federal power balance, and the recognition of the importance for this nation of the promotion and protection of linguistic and cultural interests that it demanded were guaranteed in the Constitution.

In the sixth place, the election of Rene Lévesque (1976-1985), with an autonomous profile, who committed to reach absolute political sovereignty, but was incapable of modifying the tendency of the federal government to repatriate the Constitution with an amendment formula. While Lévesque prepared the *Charter of French Language* that turned French into the only official language, Trudeau intensely worked in favor of Canadian unity and centralization of powers.

Later on, in May 1979, conservative Joe Clark was elected; he manifested his disposition to accept a decentralized federalism and to conceive Canada as a "community of communities". In spite of this, Lévesque's administration was still determined to undertake a referendum on sovereignty-association,

which it finally called in 1980, and in which 60% of the electors voted against. In spite of his defeat, Lévesque retained his post the following year, while the minority conservative federal government was forced to call for elections, and the liberal returned to power; this closed the doors to look for a political response to the problem.

In 1982, every province, save Quebec, accepted the Constitutional Act, whose first part is the constitutional protection of Canadian citizens' rights and liberties. From Quebec, the reading was that far from granting recognition the constitution had been repatriated without a consent and the agreement, in the absence of the Prime Minister Lévesque, the legal stipulation of a Charter of Rights and Liberties, which was interpreted as a consolidation of the Federalism's centralizing vision and the beginning in Quebec of a process Laforest (2014) has called "internal exile".

Some considered a new constitutional order had been imposed unilaterally (Tully, 1999; Seymour, 1999); the political environment was hostile and the "transition, which started early in the 1970's with the intention to include Quebec as a fundamental element in the federation, concluded with an exclusion note, isolation and rejection to recognition" (Gagnon, 2003: 152-153).

This way, early in the 1980's the tension increased noticeably between the centralist project to reinforce the Canadian identity, on the one side; and asymmetric and defending political and juridical recognition for Quebec, on the other. The intention of this project to have a sovereignty referendum in 1980 would harden such tension; no Quebec's political authority recognized the 1982 Constitutional Act; many saw this as the imposition of a uniformed Canadian nationalism (Keating, 2001; Taylor, 1992). As of 1982, political decisions heavily depended on the constitutional amendments, which from certain standpoints impoverished Canada's constitutionalism (Brouillet, 2005).

The seventh event that affected social and political relations between Canada and Quebec in the period we are analyzing is the adoption, in 1971, by the House of Commons, of multiculturalism as an official polity, thus beginning the end of the Anglo-assimilation model. This polity intended, among other things, to seek ways to preserve minority cultures; facilitate the intervention of the members of cultural groups in Canadian society; support encounters between the cultural groups in favor of national unity; and secure that immigrants learn at least one of the two official languages (Bauer, 1994).

Multiculturalism was a policy of open doors for migration, protection to the individual rights of ethno-cultural minorities and against ethical and

racial discrimination. However, criticism to this policy came from a number of fronts. On the one side, intellectuals of the English-speaking Canada denounced that stressing ethnic particularities and tolerance, overlooking acceptance and integration, fostered the dangerous formation of ghettos, which additionally favored the preservation of the traditional values of cultural domination, reducing culture to mere folklore and merchandise (Bissoondath, 1995).

On the other side, academicians and politicians from Quebec considered that behind the support to multiculturalism —and with it, bilingualism, and later the *Charter of Rights and Liberties* and the formal equality of provinces— not only there was a narrow perspective of cultural diversity, but also a strategy to consolidate the Canadian identity and deny the existence of the Quebec nation (Labelle *et al.*, 1995; Bourque *et al.*, 2000).

In this context, and according to Helly (2005), three reasons explain, briefly, the change from biculturalism to multiculturalism. The first, an answer to the reclaims of immigrants from various places for the French or British provinces; the second, a distinctive factor of Canadian identity facing the English-speaking American presence, with clear cultural and economic domination; and the third, a national-unity strategy aimed at weakening Quebec nationalism (Helly, 2005). And according to some authors, such as Donald Forbes (2007), to make Quebec's separatist movement fail.

It is convenient to underscore that criticism from Quebec thinkers, such as Micheline Labelle, François Rocher and Guy Rocher (1995), to multiculturalism does not mean opposition to pluralism and embracing assimilationism; on the contrary, “it is rather a rejection to a model that denies the existence of a political community already established in Quebec” (Labelle *et al.*, 1995: 218).

The 1982 Constitutional Act incorporates the principle of multiculturalism adopted in 1971. Article 27 states that every interpretation of the Act shall be made according to the objective of promoting the maintenance and valuing of the Canadians' cultural heritage; its multicultural heritage is fomented and preserved, as long as it does not come into conflict with individual rights. The only collective rights are those concerning the French-speaking Canadians, the two majority religions in Canada and those related to the First Nations.

Later on, in 1988, such policy was reaffirmed on the law on Canadian multiculturalism that was to become a fundamental characteristic of Canada's identity and heritage. The recognition of diversity as a primordial feature of its society is thus established; securing as an essential value of

individual rights and liberties; equality for individuals and the existence of two official languages; the preservation and valuing of cultural heritage in the context of equal access and participation of all Canadians to economic, social, cultural and political life, trying to overcome discrimination and prejudice.

On the basis of this law, federal institutions are obliged to manage their activities bearing in mind Canada's multicultural reality and in harmony with the national peculiarities, especially the two official languages.

In the beginning of the 1990's decade, the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship was created; this meant the reformulation of new objectives that had as a mission, on the one side, to promote the appreciation and acceptance of the principles of multiculturalism as well as its setting into motion among Canadian citizens and institutions; and on the other, to help Canadians preserve, value and share their culture, language and ethno-cultural identity; and finally, to favor the full involvement of society, both individuals and groups that come from ethno-cultural minorities of Canada.

In autumn 1993, the programs related to multiculturalism were part of a new and more important minister, that of Canadian Heritage. Years later, in 1996, there was a change in the programmatic objectives and the following ends were pursued: "the construction of a fair and equitable society, civil participation (that allows Canadians from all backgrounds to contribute to build our collectivity and country), and identity (favoring a society that recognizes, respects and expresses cultural diversity so that people from all over the world feel that are part of Canada)" (Leman, 1999: 7).

This gives an account of the following: while at the beginning programs related to multiculturalism were the object of various controversies, especially from those who stated these gave an ethnical hue to social relations and foster the juxtaposition of groups (Bissoondath, 1995), later such programs evolved toward social and economic integration, the elimination of discriminatory obstacles, the reform of the institutions and measures of social promotion aiming to secure equal opportunities.

However, this change has not been exempt from criticism by academicians specialized in cultural diversity. Little by little, Rocher, Labelle, Field and Icar (2007) state, multiculturalism, which was presented as a competitive advantage at the economic level and a Canadian innovation that would inspire a number of countries, was reformed in view of promoting the Canadian identity rather than preserving its cultures.

Critics Rocher, Labelle, Field and Icar (2007) point out that this way of understanding and manage cultural diversity, among other issues, ignores

French and British colonialisms; it hides the existence of the First Nations; it denies the national status of Quebecers; it separates language and culture; and masks political and economic inequalities that divide the various national and ethnic communities.

Over the following years of the Constitutional Act —for this work, a third stage— there were some efforts to find an exit to the political and constitutional crisis; the by-then leader of Parti Libéral du Québec, Robert Bourassa tried to reach a number of agreements with the central government, headed by Brian Mulroney, chief of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

Noticeable are, among these efforts, the Meech Lake Accords (1987-1990), which ended up in failure; the appointment of Bélanger-Campeau Commission (1991), which intended to redefine the political and constitutional arrangements that ruled the status of Quebec and its relations with other State members of the federation; and the Charlottetown Accord (1992), fruit of several months of negotiation, but whose result did not meet Quebec's demands, especially the request to be recognized as a distinct society, veto power on any institutional change and guarantees regarding the appointment of Quebecer judges to the Supreme court of Canada.

These failures were ensued by the weakening of trust between Quebec and the rest of Canadian provinces, and also by a mobilization and reorganization of political forces in Quebec. In 1994, Parti Québécois (PQ) won the elections, which would encourage the intentions in favor of Quebec's sovereignty; and for the second time in 15 years, on October 30th, 1995, there would be another referendum to ask Quebecers on their political future.

Unlike the previous referendum, in which the force of “no” won with almost 60% of votes, on this occasion 94% percent of voters produced a result of 50.6% in favor of no, therefore backing a 49.4% the option of sovereignty-association. There were only a difference of 54,228 votes. The constitutional *statu quo* remained, and even though the federal government, Jean Chrétien, opted for a resolution that affirmed the distinct character of Quebec's society in Canada, any sort of asymmetric federalism was rejected. The following years were characterized by confrontations between Quebec's and Ottawa's chieftains, as they entered a non-recognition phase, and according to some perspectives, such as that of Guy Laforest (2014), of democratic weakening.

Over the next years, especially during the administrations of federal liberals headed by Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, opted for centralizing

dynamics which, among other aspects, controlled the access to project funding and determined the destination of expenses in provincial competences (such as higher education, research and innovation, infrastructures, etc.). In time, such dynamics found opposition in other provinces such as Alberta and British Columbia, which disavowed centralizing policies and state intervention.

The new force coalition acted to face this situation. The conservatives led by Stephen Harper reached power in 2006 with a discourse that championed an opening federalism. As months passed, this discourse became blurred, but its initial content stated respect for the provinces' competences, restrict the expenditure of central administration, retake fiscal balance and offer Quebec the possibility of having representation in international organisms such as UNESCO.

In November 2006, the Canadian Parliament recognized Quebec as a nation from a cultural and social standpoint, albeit no legal. However, Quebec's liberal government, led by Jean Charest, was characterized by total lack of enthusiasm to defend the aforementioned initiatives and by the absence of clear claims for central administration.

Parti Libéral du Québec would be in power for other nine years, until September 2012, Parti Québécois won the elections by a thin margin. For the first time, a woman, Pauline Marois, became the Premier as her party won four seats more in the National Assembly of Quebec. Nevertheless, only after eighteen months later her conviction of "we want a country and we'll have it" was frustrated, and in April 2014 PLQ would return to power led by Philippe Couillard.

Relationships regarding the management of cultural diversity between the Marois' local administration and Harper's federal one would tense owing to the *Charte des valeurs* proposed by PQ. However, new horizons of dialogue seem to open with the ascension to power of Couillard in Quebec and Justin Trudeau in Canada in autumn 2015, both liberals.

Quebec: from national affirmation to a citizenship regime

In this section we will look inside Quebec, especially at its map of cultural diversity and the mechanisms adopted to manage it. In particular, we make a brief historical overview of Quebec's policies regarding immigration, integration and pluralism, in view of analyzing if this nation has a proper institutional structure in its cultural management policy or if it has followed the cues of Canadian multiculturalism.

The largest province in Canada currently comprises a French-speaking majority (80%), an English-speaking minority, ten native American nations and the Inuit, as well as an important number of recent immigrants from 180 countries at a rate of 45 thousand yearly, and who speak 150 languages, practice 200 religions and belong to 120 ethnic groups (Piché *et al.*, 2007).

In order to manage cultural diversity, over the last 40 years, Quebec has developed a model of immigration, integration and intercultural relations to facilitate coexistence and social cohesion between the various cultural groups, recent immigrants and the recipient society. By the mid 1970's, a regulatory frame to manage the diversity that would turn the page of national affirmation and assimilationist attitude was set into motion.

In like manner, this nation's government started to distance from the Canadian model of multiculturalism (fostered, as mentioned, in 1971), criticized for not including the particular status of the French-speaking community. Quebec wanted to dodge the obstacles of a policy of cultural homogeneity without falling into the perverse effects that some attributed, correctly or incorrectly, to multiculturalism such as the folklorization of cultures, the static juxtaposition of various groups and the promotion of antidemocratic practices sheltered by cultural relativism (McAndrew, 2003).

Gradually, Quebec shaped a number of policies and democratic institutions worth remembering: 1975 *Charte québécoise des droits et libertés de la personne* (Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms), which recognizes the ethic-community members' right to preserve their own cultural life and establishes respect for individual rights, solidarity and egalitarian democracy between men and women, as well as the adoption of *La Charte de la langue française* (the Charter of the French Language), known as Bill 101, in 1977, which introduces French as an official and common language of the public sphere.

Although the chiefly French-speaking nature of Quebec's society, there is no detriment for the national political communities located in its territory, such as the English-speaking minority, the First Nations and the Inuit community. As explained by Linda Cardinal (2011), the adoption of this policy meant for some scholars, the acceptance of a radical position far from the dynamic of bridge construction and an affront to the liberal principles of individual rights; while for others (Cardinal, 2011), it was the beginning of a series of steps in favor of integration, as it was the road for participatory processes.

From that moment forward, stress was given to the idea that French language was a minimal condition to exercise common citizenship and a

tool for democracy; this is verified by Giroux (1997: 137): “It is important that French language remains at all times and above things as a condition to exercise the citizens’ rights, the nation cannot intend to be a forum to discuss and make decisions without the existence of a language community”.

Some years later, there was a process to produce a policy of cultural concurrence. Quebec’s government, intends to reestablish the status of the French-speaking majority, not only in the sociolinguistic sphere, but it also wants it reflected by a plan on immigration and integration, since both have become “inextricably bound to the Quebec Nation’s destiny” (Gagnon and Iacovino, 2003: 397).

In an official document, *La Politique québécoise du développement culturel* (Gouvernement du Québec, 1978: 79), it is stated that “between slow or brutal assimilation and the preservation of peculiarities included in segregationist walls, there is another plausible voice: that of interchange in Quebec’s cultural bosom”. In 1981, Quebec reaffirms its commitment to the ideal of cultural concurrence as it is verified in a document called *Autant de façons d’être Québécois*, which favors an intercultural approach between the French-speaking majority and ethno-cultural minorities.

Some criticism, such as Constantinides’ (1985), pointed out that these policies fostered by PQ had a communitarian and ethnocentric referent that hierarchized society, placing the majority’s language and culture over those of the rest of Quebec’s residents; conversely, other specialists such as Gagnon e Iacovino (2003: 398) and Harvey (1998) emphasized the idea of concurrence fomented by this integration model and which gives a connotation different than that of the Canadian —mosaic— multiculturalism.

Gagnon e Iacovino (2003: 398) also point out that with this document a new model of Quebec’s interculturalism was configured, as it underscored that the integration of immigrants has to promote interchanges and interactions between the diverse collectivities comprised in society (Gagnon et al., 2014: 9).

A response to these criticism came from the official adoption of the political declaration *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble. Énoncé de politique en matière d’immigration et d’intégration* in 1990. Parti Libéral du Québec had come to power in 1985 and before the previous policy centered on a model of cultural and political representation based on language and the independentist project, it concentrates on the promotion of individual rights of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. Four years later, it won the elections once again and changed direction by adopting a policy that promoted a new integration model, known as common public culture (Harvey, 1991).

The new road has a more liberal undertone and a disposition to recognize identity miscegenation; “the concept of cultural communities gradually surrenders its position to that of Quebeckers with any background, called to mediatize the various belongings both individual and communal, in a civic space essentially defined as processual” (Karmis, 2003: 331).

The *Énoncé de politique en matière d'immigration et d'intégration* marks the beginning of what is known as the “moral contract” of integration, in which rights and duties are established for both immigrants and the recipient society. This document is relevant as it is considered the first that articulates the policy of interculturalism (Rocher et al., 2007), even if the concept does not appear. This document establishes that a) Quebec is a society whose common language for public life is French; b) that Quebec is a democratic society where everyone’s participation and contribution is heard and favored; and, c) Quebec is a plural society, open to diverse cultural contributions solely with the limit imposed by respect for fundamental democratic values and the need for intercultural interchange (Gouvernement du Québec, 1990: 15-16).

These suppositions make it clear the orientation of an integration policy, which is one of the characteristic notes of cultural pluralism, but which acquires various undertones according to the adopted pluralism model.

In this case, the moral contract of integration stresses an ideal more civic than cultural and the traces of assimilationism are blurred, and the focus broadens to cultural interchanges; measures to fight racism, intolerance and discrimination are taken. The recipient society shall be defined in a broader sense and be more political and territorial to be constituted by all those who reside in the territory and adhere to the aforementioned central elements (democratic and pluralist society in which French is the public, common and official language).

This stance was not free from criticism. Over the last decade of the last century, numerous debates were held to search for the definition of a more substantive set of common values “successively called *common public culture, civic culture, societal culture, public common space*” (Karmis, 2003: 331). The main questions were: what is culture? Which are the contours of public life? What can be common in the individuals’ societies? “Does the common have the density of an identity or the lightness of a transient and voidable affiliation?” (Gervais *et al.*, 2008: 63).

In said context, academicians such as Micheline Labelle (2008), Alain-G. Gagnon and Raffaele Iacovino (2003) pay attention to the idea of Quebec citizenship as an integration model; this orientation follows the

path of common public culture as an integration model, but unlike this, it emphasizes a balance between the requirements for unity as an identity base and the recognition to minority cultures.

The objective is to adopt a model that is not assimilationist, but defender of cultural pluralism, falling neither into cultural relativism nor fragmentation. “Deliberation, mutual understanding, and in general, dialogue, as fundamental characteristics of democratic life in the sphere of civil society, hold an instrumental function, by means of a coherent and participatory conception of citizenship” (Gagnon *et al.*, 2003: 401).

This way, the possibilities of enclosing and confinement in a ghetto are discouraged, because the “recognition of particular cultural identities is as a matter of fact the recognition to the right and obligation to participate in the *polis*, not the recognition of culture as one existing in autonomous communities in a spatiotemporal vacuum” (Gagnon *et al.*, 2003: 409).

The *Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et l’Immigration* (MRCI), created in 1996 to replace the *Ministère des Affaires internationales, de l’immigration et des Communautés culturelles*, organized the Forum national sur la citoyenneté et l’intégration, in 2000, the main objectives were: a) to present and disclose orientations regarding Quebec citizenship and integration; b) define the most convenient courses of action in order to understand and appreciate Quebec citizenship, as well as increase a civic participation: and, c) associate governmental, socioeconomic, cultural and regional interlocutors and the communities and autochthonous nations with these actions (*Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et l’Immigration*, 2000).

This governmental initiative raised a lot of criticism, among them complaints about fostering a vision of traditional and homogenous citizenship, the lack of recognition of diversity of Quebec society and the State’s duties in this respect, as well as an excessive propagandistic stress on the sovereign program.

In 2001, the *Commission des États généraux sur la situation et l’avenir de la langue française au Québec* (CÉGSALFQ) was created; it recovers the idea of Quebec citizenship, recommending that the government formalize it. The purpose was to conceive French language as a central element for integration, participation and equal opportunities; seeing it not as a feature proper to the majority, but as an attribution of all the Quebecers, regardless of their origin.

Although the government did not consider this commission’s recommendations, some scholars such as Gagnon *et al.* (2003) keep insisting on the need to collectively reflect on citizenship and the management of diversity.

The liberal government blocked the initiatives related to recover the emphasis on citizenship, and as a token, in 2005, it changed the name of the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MICC), whose programs were progressively reoriented to cultural communities.

MRCI's action plan for the 2004-2007 period had as an objective to secure full participation of cultural communities in the development of Quebec; this pluridimensional approach once again introduces the cultural dimension in governmental management (Bouchard, 2013). François Rocher and Micheline Labelle (2010) point out that there are two axes in this plan that directly refer to integration.

The first refers to a series of measures that intend to favor the fast and permanent insertion of Quebeckers from cultural communities into employment. The second comprises a series of measures aimed at valuing the contributions of cultural communities to Quebec's social, economic and cultural development and favor intercultural dialogue, aperture to diversity and the struggle against racism and xenophobia (Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l'Immigration, 2004).

In spite of the political efforts to prevent discrimination and racism and foster integration, between March 2006 and June 2007 the media notoriety reached by several cases of reasonable accommodation associated to cultural differences generated fears and sentiments of threat among the population.

Political actors entered in a dynamic in which they virtually had to declare about this issue everyday; before the possibility of the extension and increase of a negative perception on the cultural diversity and the accommodation of some of their practices, Quebec's Premier, Jean Charest, on February 2007, appointed an autonomous and independent commission to be in charge of consulting and making a report on the practices of reasonable accommodation between the various cultures that coexist in Quebec.

The commission presidency was composed of sociologist Gérard Bouchard and philosopher Charles Taylor. The Bouchard-Taylor Commission had as an express mandate to design a map of the intercultural harmonization practices that take place in Quebec; analyze the experiences of other societies; set a citizen consultation into motion; and produce recommendations for the government so that these practices are performed according to the values of Quebec's society: plurality, democracy and equality.

Once the tasks were performed, the commission presented the final report entitled *Fonder l'avenir. Le temps de la conciliation* (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008) in 2008. Laforest summarizes the spirit of the document

stating that the objective is “to draw near the concerns of an heir majority of French Canada and Catholicism and the cultural and religious minorities so that these concerns do not turn into solitudes enclosed one upon the other” (Laforest, 2010: 127).

The two central coordinates of the final report are, on the one side, the defense of the integrating pluralism model —also called interculturalism— whose constitutive elements are the protection of rights, supporting the French-speaking nucleus, participation and reciprocity; and, on the other, the principle of open laicity (Wences, 2013). This report is an important reference point as it outlines central keys of Quebec’s multiculturalism (Gagnon *et al.*, 2014).

Disagreements with the report came from various agents. Some consider it rather weak regarding the affirmation of the identity of Quebec’s people. The opposition leader back then —and later Premier— Pauline Marois made her stance clear, which later, once in office, she tried to politically define: there would be no need to settle with only talking about culture, language and laicity, as the report did —she replied to the Premier—, but to write in the law the principles of prevalence of the French language (reinforcing Bill 101), the promotion of Quebec’s culture and the laicity of institutions.

Days later, Jean Charest shelved one of the central recommendations of Commission Bouchard-Taylor: that of officially formalizing interculturalism. The argument was that such concept had been already included in the 1990 governmental policy and declared that it was not clear for him where “interculturalism came into conflict with Canadian multiculturalism” (Assemblée Nationale du Québec, May 27th, 2008).

In September 2012, the Parti Québécois won the elections again and after a year of having reached power, Maurois’ administration launched the initiative of *Charte des valeurs québécoises et de la laïcité*, Loi 60 (Quebec Charter of Values, Bill 60), which among its objectives intended to restrict the public use of religious symbols and badges; it was justified among other reasons, by a criticism to Parti Libéral du Québec, pointing out that it had neither answered the concerns of the citizens in relation to the demands for reasonable accommodation nor addressed Commission Bouchard-Taylor’s recommendations.

The proposal is inspired in the model of French laicism that calls for the neutrality of the State in the presence of religious symbols and distances from the aspirations of integrating migrants by means of their cultural and religious identity. Its measures imply a return to the road of interculturalism. The harsh criticism received made it to headlines in the media.

Strong responses to this initiative came from several directions. Demonstrations against were performed by minorities and majorities, the most progressive and laical sectors of Quebec society. University researchers also reacted strongly, among them Jocelyn Maclure (2013), who states that Quebec does not need a Charter on laicity, since the State is already laical and neutral regarding religions; she points out that an initiative as this feeds the false perception about the alleged insufficient aptness of the principles of common public culture to correctly manage Quebec's moral and religious diversity; and she considers that the ban on the State workers to carry visible religious symbols is inequitable and inappropriate, for what is relevant is the actions not the appearance.

Voices against also came from recognized French-speaking intellectuals, identified with the independentist cause, as well as distinguished PQ politicians, such as Jacques Parizeau, fervent defender of independentism who hoisted the flag of the 1995 referendum. The co-chair of the Commission on the accommodation practices related to cultural differences and defender of interculturalism, Gérard Bouchard, sent a severe letter to *La Presse* criticizing Bernard Drainville, by-then minister and in charge of *Charte des valeurs*, and urging him to resign from his seat as he "multiplied incendiary and false declarations to stir riot between Quebec's majority and the minorities and immigrants".

In an interview in Radio Canada, both Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor stated that *Charte des valeurs* restricted the fundamental rights, deepens discrimination and socially and juridically fragments Quebec's inhabitants. The former pointed out, additionally, that its implementation gravely breaks society, widening the gap between the majority and the minorities. The latter argued that the supposed neutrality of the State the promoters of *Charte des valeurs* claim to champion hides, deep inside, a policy that favors some religions over the others; he declared feeling deeply dismayed by the division and hatred this policy may generate between the migrants and the recipient society and said that the governmental proposal was a narrow and excluding society.

Eighteen months after reaching power, the leader of PQ, Pauline Marois, called to general elections and not only was she defeated in her own circumscription, but also her party suffered a drop of 7% of the vote turnout in 2012. The liberals obtained about 41% of the votes. Philippe Couillard appointed premier of Quebec, declared in his victory speech: "we shall concentrate on what unites us, what unites us makes us stronger. And let us say together with passion: we all are proud to be Quebecers". One of the

first measures was that the *Ministère de l'Immigration et des communautés culturelles* changed name in April 2014 to *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion*.

Among this ministry's functions, which came into force on June 1st, 2014, was the one of favoring linguistic, social and economic integration of immigrants in Quebec's society; favoring full participation of cultural communities in society; fomenting pluralism; and, facilitate intercultural approach.

In December 2014, Quebec's government called for a public consultation to produce, together with citizenship, the policy of cultural diversity, immigration, inclusion and participation. After the consultation, in which participated, among others, recognized authors of the so called Canadian School of Diversity, on March 7th, 2016, the Ministry of *Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion* disclosed the report *Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec* (Together, we are Quebec).

Such document, which envisages measures to be implemented over five years, expressly refers to "the need to provide Quebec with a new policy and affirm Quebec's interculturalism as the pluralist model that guides the project of living together" (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2016: X).

For the first time, interculturalism is expressly defined as an official policy and emphasizes the recognition and valuing of:

A plural conception of Quebec identity, a common public language, French, respect for rights and liberties of the people, the ethics of dialogue and mediation, and stressing integration based on shared commitment between society and immigrant people (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2016: 35).

In like manner, it has as an end "the struggle against discrimination" and recognizes "the importance of intercultural approaches and the need for the full participation of Quebecers from all backgrounds" (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2016: 35).

Conclusions

The first issue worth underscoring is that both interculturalism and multiculturalism are polysemic notions that require different analysis levels. On the one side, they configure political theories that search an answer for the postulates derived from the widespread vision of the unifying and assimilationist nation State, which considers that the public space shall be culturally homogenous. On the other, they encompass a set of institutional measures and public policies aimed at managing the ethno-cultural diversity.

Finally, they can be configured as a model for a State; and this would imply their constitutional regulation.

In the Canadian scenario, interculturalism and multiculturalism are deeply rooted in cultural pluralism; but they are two different models, both normatively and politically; this distance is also explained by the particular history of Quebec and Canada, and also by the historic relation between these nations (Taylor, 2012). Well now, about the differences between the two there are diverse perceptions that vary in intensity, ranging from those who contend that the discrepancies are in the nuances to those who consider that their ultimate goal produces disparate principles.

In Quebec's scenario, interculturalism as a policy had to wait for March 2016 to be officially incorporated into a governmental document. However, the background exposed in this work allows stating that there had been an accumulation of elements for some time, these observed individually or as a whole gradually substantiated it: intercultural dialogue; intercultural coexistence; aperture to cultural interchange; Quebec culture with French-speaking tradition; approach between the recipient society and minorities; intercultural education; tolerance, respect, reciprocity and recognition between groups; integration policy, moral contract, common public culture, common civic culture.

According to these descriptions, present in the laws and policies referred in this work (see table 1¹), it is possible to state that Quebec has configured "an informal constitution" determinant for the relations between the majority and minority. It is true that Quebec did not recognize the 1982 constitutional reform, but this has not prevented it from decreeing laws and public policies that enable the this nation's citizens to give "their collective experience a meaning in the bosom of the Canadian political context" (Gagnon, 2010: 248).

In recent years, Quebec has adopted a series of institutional measures and responsibilities associated to policies for tolerance and respect to the difference within a French-speaking social context, in spite of the ups and downs of defenders of multiculturalism and interculturalism and those who stress models with assimilationist tendencies.

The initiatives, commissions, programs and agreements mentioned in this work give an account—in spite of the oscillations of the ones holding power and their relationship with the federal government— of the gradual configuration of a model of interculturalism proper to Quebec (Bouchard, 2013), which is clearly displayed in the recent political commitment *Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec*.

1 The annex is found at the end of the present article (Editors' note).

This model to manage cultural diversity has been configured with a series of values, principles and policies, among which noticeable are: the promotion of French language; emphasis on rights; respect for diversity; struggle against discrimination; the place granted to the majority French-speaking culture; the recognition of ethno-cultural minorities in a pluralist environment; the protection of fundamental values such as democracy; equality of man and woman, nondiscrimination and laicity based on the respect for the moral equality of individuals and on the protection to the freedom of conscience and religious belief; the imperative of integration; the search for a voice to mediate between assimilation and fragmentation; the need for a dynamic of inter-communitarian interactions and interchanges; the development of common public culture and belonging to Quebec; the participation of all inhabitants in civil and political life; the principle of reciprocity in the immigrants' integration process, especially in relation to accommodation; and harmonization practices by means of educating the citizenry so that it acts responsibly.

That said, according to a number of academicians such as Gagnon, Milot, Seidle and Boucher (2014), these advances are incomplete if they are not accompanied by public policies conveniently articulated with interculturalism, and inter-communitarian bonds of trust that can provide interculturalism with force, which will only be possible by means of fostering "a common culture that integrates diversity" (González Ulloa, 2014: 198); this is to say, active citizenry that can lead to "a legal statute, access to the exercise of rights, everyone's participation in the bosom of the political community and the sentiment of belonging to a territory, that of Quebec (Rocher and Labelle, 2010: 202).

Some specialists such as Gagnon (2013) underline the importance of habilitation as a way to favor dialogue and lay the foundations for political concurrence. That said, there is still some way to go in order to see the results of the political and juridical configuration of interculturalism, as well as the scopes of its social acceptance.

Finally, it is pertinent to keep insisting that in democratic and plural contexts the normative and political debate on the recognition of the difference as well as the pluralist models and policies to manage diversity is extremely complex and it is convenient not to simplify it with reductionist tags, which frequently misrepresent the contents, extend prejudices, hamper the efforts for coexistence and social cohesion and can foment fragmentation. As stated by Laforest (2010: 136), we would advance a lot if it was recognized that coexisting in the difference "can be done combining elements of concurrence and disagreement".

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Annex

Table 1

Actions plans, measures and reports related to the management of cultural ethno-diversity and the construction of an interculturalism model

Plans, reports and policies	Year
Autant de façons d'être Québécois	1981
Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble	1990
Forum national sur la citoyenneté et l'intégration	2000
La diversité : une valeur ajoutée	2008
Fonder l'avenir. Le temps de la conciliation	2008
Ensemble, nous sommes le Québec	2016

Source: own elaboration.

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