

**ETHNOCULTURAL/ETHNORACIAL ADVOCACY GROUPS,
STATE FUNDING AND CHARITABLE TAX STATUS**

by:

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Introduction

This paper examines the recent history of changing relations between advocacy groups, especially those centred around ethnocultural and ethnoracial communities and issues, and the Canadian state. In that funding is an example of these changing relations, this aspect will be explored as an indicator of corresponding changes in the nature of civil society, citizenship, multiculturalism and Canadian democracy. The *Income Tax Act* with respect to charitable status registration will be reviewed in this process as a reflection of some of the contradictions that are inherent in these changing relations and how they impact the diverse constituencies that make-up Canadian society. Some key questions to be explored include: What is the role of advocacy groups in civil society? What is the role of the state in supporting advocacy groups? How and why has this role changed? and What do these changes imply about civil society and the nature of Canadian democracy? It is acknowledged from the outset that this is an extensive and complex topic and, as such, its management poses some difficulties. Consequently, this paper limits its scope to exploring only a few of the most critical aspects concerning advocacy groups and state funding.

Background

*Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation are people who want crops without plowing the ground. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.
(Frederick Douglass in O'Connell, 1999:87)*

Since the mid 1990s, advocacy groups, representing the voices and interests of ethnocultural and ethnoracial communities in Canada, have experienced considerable limitations in both state and public support, similar to those experienced by groups classified as voluntary, public interest or 'third' sector. While advocacy groups are considered to be a component of this broad and varied sector that is widely believed to exist alongside the state and the market, their position can be somewhat more contentious as some groups, to varying degrees, attempt to monitor, critique and oppose government policies and programs for their exclusionary aspects. In many respects then they can pressure governments to behave more democratically and be more accountable to the diverse makeup of their public. In light of this, they not only monitor and oppose existing policies, but also demand the establishment and enforcement of measures that can be perceived as upsetting the existing inequities that underpin much of Canadian society. In short, they call for a legitimization of their issues and for Canadians to recognize that their constituencies are also integral components of its citizenry. Taylor underscores the importance of this in saying: "Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need." (1994:26)

As monitors, critics and advocates, public interest groups occupy a precarious position within Canadian society and with the Canadian state. An example to illustrate this precarious relationship is their dependency on the state for financial support and on the general public for

their good will. Based on such dependencies, the relative autonomy of the groups is immediately recognized as being questionable and this is further exacerbated by current requirements for groups to find outside sources of funding. This requirement is part of a general trend unfolding in Canadian society where neoliberal visions dominate. In this vision the state has a reduced role in direct services delivery and in the funding of non-service related organizations and institutions i.e., advocacy groups. Instead, it favours 'tied aid' in the form of projects, contracts, partnerships, privatization and a devolution of service responsibility to the non-profit sector.

In many respects, responsibilities are also being devolved directly to individual citizens under the guise of democracy, citizen participation and self-sufficiency. An outcome of this project to 'empower' individual citizens has been to recast them as consumers and clients which corresponds with the hegemony of the market as promoted by neoliberal ideology. Undeniably, this change in language signals a much deeper impact on the very nature of citizenship and of citizens' relations with the state. On a superficial level it promotes the 'power of one' concept, that as consumers we have greater freedom, choice and influence in identifying our needs and expressing our preferences for services and programs. However, this notion of 'power of one' is also isolating and disempowering for, in reality, there is little power in one unless it is joined with others to produce power as reflected by a collective, or if 'one' commands control over very substantial resources. Therefore, this trend toward individualism and its impact on transforming relations as citizens is troubling for civil society and advocacy movements as it diminishes their capacities and opportunities for political engagement. It is also troubling for its contribution to the development of public attitudes that are more selfish, more conformist and

less tolerant of difference. This too is a legacy of neoliberalism. The construction of these attitudes is often aided by the mainstream media as they disseminate neoliberal interpretations of economic crises and rationalize the need for cuts to social programs, state services and ‘special interest groups’, as well as greater market freedom and individual autonomy from high taxes.

Within this general climate of restraint, advocacy groups and others face an awesome task as they enter into competition, often with one another, for alternative sources of funding. For ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups, this is indeed a crisis situation as the alternatives are few and far between. For instance, few provincial governments provide funding for the function of advocacy. Also, many municipal governments are themselves in crises through amalgamation and reduced revenues where functions of community development, which at times were used by groups to mobilize members, have been scaled back or lost altogether. Corporate funding is difficult to obtain for many as issues of ethnic and racial equality and social justice are often not high on their priority lists, if they appear at all. A similar problem is encountered in tapping Foundation resources and in appealing to the general public as there is a growing public perception, as evidenced by the tenor of the public debate conducted recently in the media and among the Reform and Alliance parties, that issues of multiculturalism and racial equality are frivolous, passé or already resolved.

Another compounding factor for many ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups is the restriction they face in obtaining a charitable tax status registration number, which permits the issuance of tax receipts to prospective donors, if they openly identify their goals and functions as that of advocacy. In fact, since the mid-1990s, the existing and dated criteria have

been even more strictly applied by Revenue Canada in their scrutiny of applications from different groups. (Pross and Stewart, 1993-94) In part, this increased rigidity is itself a reflection of the penetration of neoliberal ideology in all facets of Canadian life as has been asserted earlier. However, its emphasis on a more vigorous individualism must again be emphasized for it is this spirit of individual enterprise, individual responsibility, individual expression, individual rights and so on that is consistent with the individualization of the voice of dissent. In effect, group activity is being actively suppressed, in part through difficulties such as obtaining charitable status. Another compounding factor is the manipulation of language and meaning to publicly discredit and de-legitimate groups and their issues through coded labels such as: 'special interest'; 'unrepresentative' of their own constituencies or the Canadian public; financially dishonest; abusers of taxpayers money; 'self' interested; and threats to democracy and the public good. (Bryden 1994, Kobayashi 2000, Phillips 2000)

Activities surrounding the upcoming Summit of the Americas in Quebec City are an example of this process of de-legitimation. For example, groups opposing the secrecy surrounding the draft document to be discussed at the Summit, as well as the human costs of globalization, are facing the coercive and controlling arm of the state. Clayton Ruby's comments in the April 1, 2001 *Ottawa Citizen* underscore this point. He says: "We've made it so easy for governments to criminalize behaviour and speech they don't like" and that "government and police are demonizing demonstrators by building a security perimeter around Quebec City and emptying the jails to make room for arrested protesters." Still later, Ruby comments on the freedoms of democracy and civil society and says: "We have to make sure that free expression and freedom of assembly have the meaning that the constitutional drafters

wanted it to have.” What is interesting here is that the state seems to have cast the groups wishing to demonstrate as threats to public order and safety while simultaneously arguing that it is upholding their democratic rights of expression as well as the rights of safety for the citizens of Quebec City. This doublespeak is reflected in a comment attributed to an RCMP spokesperson as follows: ““One of our biggest challenges...offering the security necessary to residents, business owners, dignitaries, journalists, police officers and the protesters....and at the same try to maintain equilibrium between that security and the notion that we live in a democracy so as to ensure protesters can speak freely.”” (*The Ottawa Citizen* - April 1, 2001)

Of note in the above discussion are aspects related to the power of the state in defining what is in the best interest of the general public, and when rights of different groups of citizens are pitted against each other, in deciding whose rights and which rights are most important. In this instance, clearly the rights of property appear to be more important than the rights of dissent. This then also reveals the very fragile nature of rights for, in reality, they are treated more as privileges rather than as values that are absolute, universal or inherent. In many instances, they can be granted through legislation such as the *Citizenship Act* and human rights, and they can also be taken away or limited as in times of war for those designated as enemy aliens. Thus it is evident that historically, the state has always played a strong role in ‘managing dissent’ and in establishing the limits of toleration. In many respects then, it is not surprising that the power of the state is similarly reflected in its relations with advocacy groups generally. Finally, it is also worthy of note here that the project underway to de-legitimate group dissent is perfectly consistent with the strong current of individualism that is sweeping thorough Canadian society. For, in constructing groups as threats to public safety, their function and issues are

called into question and held in disrepute and, by default, that which they oppose is upheld as beneficial to the public good.

Advocacy/Public Interest Groups and the State

In turning to examine the changing relationship between advocacy groups and the state it is important to acknowledge that this is a relationship that is fraught with contradictions and conflicts. This is well expressed by Graham K. Wilson in his book titled Interest Groups:

One of the unique characteristics of the state is that it is both a battleground for contending interests and the structure which shapes those interests. Thus, interest groups seek to bend the power of the state to their purposes, but are also themselves shaped by the state. This shaping takes several forms. Most directly, the state can encourage the creation of interest groups....States also encourage certain types of interest group activity or discourage others. (1990:32)

The above passage from Wilson clearly identifies that public interest groups/advocacy groups do not exist in a vacuum but are participants in a social relationship with the state, albeit an unequal one, which shapes their formation and proscribes their activities as they exert some influence over the state. This then raises some provocative questions about their role and function within civil society, as well as, whether they are truly a 'third' sector or an extension of the state sector itself. What then are public interest groups? What do they do? What purpose do they serve?

In many respects, public interest groups are regarded as a vital part of what we understand to be 'civil society'. They reflect the makeup of society as being pluralistic and provide arenas where diverse citizens can participate in, contribute to and hopefully benefit from the social, political, economic and cultural organization of their society. Cardozo (1996) articulates the difficulty in putting forth clear-cut definitions for this sector as language and

meaning are recognized as being political and thus they change over time to meet different political, social and economic agendas. With this caveat, he goes on to present a definition of public interest groups that synthesizes key components from other writers:

A group whose members act together to influence public policy in order to promote their common concerns as well as to advance broad societal interests. The group is and its members are non-profit in nature and the group is not centred on providing direct financial or economic benefits to its members. Acting individually, the members would be relatively powerless. (306)

In contrast with neoliberalism which emphasizes the individual, it is important to recognize that in this definition, group voice is a critical distinguishing feature of public interest groups in that it is a vehicle for both the expression of group power and for its acquisition. It is also worthy of note that in contrast with much of the current criticism which attempts to discredit public interest groups as 'special interest' or 'self' interest, this definition identifies that their goal is not exclusively self-interest. This does not deny that there is a presence of self-interest for the constituency represented by the group but recognizes that their issues are ultimately society's issues and that for some groups, equity is believed to be in the best interest of society at large. Obviously this assumes that this vision of an equitable society is one that is shared and desired by the Canadian public or all advocacy groups. Such is not the case, however, as reflected by differing visions put forward by groups representing pharmaceutical companies, business councils, manufacturer's associations and so on.

None-the-less, this reference to equity is central to much of the advocacy performed by ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups such as the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the

National Capital Alliance on Race Relations, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, and the Chinese-Canadian National Council. Many of these groups formed as public interest or advocacy bodies to seek the opportunities and benefits that were supposedly available to all citizens but which remained elusive for many of their members. The racialized nature of Canadian society was seen by them as being unjust and not in the public interest as it opposed the principles of equality and fairness as promoted by the Canadian policy on multiculturalism. In many respects, these advocacy groups were voices for the values of fairness and justice to be extended to all citizens and not only those privileged by race or class. The label of 'special interest', first raised by the Reform party, has served to marginalize their issues and voices once again and to separate them and their interests as being outside those of ordinary citizens. This then leads us to ponder whether the implication in this is that constituencies represented by the advocacy groups are not also citizens and whether different sets of rights are being sanctioned for different groups of citizens.

Phillips (2000) identifies three primary and crucial roles performed by the voluntary sector. They are: representation, citizen engagement and service delivery. While Phillips addresses these roles in relation to the broader sector, the first two are also of particular relevance to the public interest sub-sector of this larger category. In terms of 'representation' she states:

As expressions of community, they represent the identities, interests and concerns of their communities, memberships and clients with a view to changing public policy, educating the broader public and influencing the behaviour of society at large. In so doing, they create and maintain political spaces in democratic discourse for their constituencies, often disadvantaged ones. In their representational capacity, voluntary organizations provide two kinds of knowledge: technical expertise about the population they represent or service they provide and popular knowledge about the concerns and life

experiences of their constituencies. They are thus useful sounding boards regarding what kinds of public policy would be accepted as legitimate or what kinds of services would be used. In this way, voluntary organizations play an important role in democracy that is a complement to, rather than a usurpation of the role of political parties. (4-5)

This passage succinctly identifies a number of key functions performed by these kinds of advocacy groups in relation to the state. First, they are mechanisms for expressing diverse interests that make up Canadian society, often because their interests are perceived to be absent or inadequately represented within existing structures. Second, the representation of these diverse interests has important educational and policy functions as their shared goal is to foster inclusion, equality, and good will. Third, they are vital to maintaining democracy through participation and debate as expressions of human diversity and vitality.

The second relevant function Phillips identifies is that of ‘citizen engagement’. This refers to the opportunities provided by the voluntary sector for participating and working in efforts that benefit collectivities. She explains that such engagements have “benefits for the individual, for society and for governments.” (9) She goes on to clarify the benefits as follows:

At the individual level, an important contribution of voluntarism is that it nurtures the sense that individual action is important, ‘that the actions of people working together can make a difference.’ At the broader level, voluntary organizations build social capital....social trust and mutual cooperation among citizens, bolsters performance of the polity and contributes to more efficient government and a stronger economy.” (9)

Presently, in Canada and in most liberal democracies, the voluntary sector, and in particular the advocacy sector, is experiencing drastic changes in its relations with the state that have resulted in a withdrawal of state funding or a restructuring of state support which severely curtails or limits their capacities to provide opportunities to citizens for engagement or representation. This trend, which began in the early 1990s and has intensified further since 1995, requires some brief interrogation as it is in marked contrast with the earlier two decades

when at times, the state actively encouraged the formation of national ethocultural organizations to provide a single point of access to particular ethnocultural constituencies when seeking advice or input. (Personal interview with staff member of Canadian Heritage, March 2001)

State Funding of Advocacy Groups

With the establishment of the post World War II Citizenship Branch and the passage of the *Citizenship Act* in 1946 which established the legal concept of Canadian citizenship (Jensen and Phillips, 1996), Canada entered a period of development and growth, aided by immigration. The stated desire was for increasing Canada's population to help "develop our resources" and to provide "a larger number of consumers..." (King in Day, 2000:166) (Note the explicit reference to the need for 'consumers' in light of our earlier discussion about citizens!) This reference to immigration and the Citizenship Branch is relevant to our discussion about funding as this Branch was active in its role of developing 'good citizens' through support for "adult education and training for new citizens to advance goals that the government shared." (Cardozo, 1996:310) This statement identifies an important aspect related to this discussion in that it confirms the active role played by the state, from the outset, in directing resources based on its perceived needs. In addition, it also confirms that it has played a direct role in shaping the nature of citizenship through its selective support of programs deemed appropriate in the development and training of good citizens. This support was in the form of funding which Jensen and Phillips (1996) have also termed 'contracting out'. In using this term, Jensen and Phillips draw our attention to the fact that while this practice of contracting out is gaining momentum today, it has existed as an established tradition in relations between the state and interest groups.

Another important role for the *Citizenship Act* and the Citizenship Branch was envisioned as that of fostering a sense of a unified identity. (This link between citizenship and a unified identity is critical to note for it reappears later with respect to multiculturalism) In this effort, it was hoped that by conferring the status of citizenship and by funding selective programs, this would “help groups weld together individuals in a common community cognizant of its duty to support responsible, democratic government.” (Pal in Jensen and Phillips, 1996:116) It is interesting that, in this period, while the state retained considerable discretionary power in determining who could be granted the status of citizenship and which program would be funded in support of citizen development, it also expressed its and society’s responsibility toward this development process. In return, the above statement also clearly indicates that good citizens were expected to support the state (and the party in power) and its provision of good government. In fact it was their “duty” to do so. This aspect of duty is emphasized here to underscore the mutual relationship between citizens and the state, as well as to flag the shift to come, as noted by Marshall, “from duties to rights.” (1964:71)

Over the 1960s and 70s, issues of identity intensified within the Canadian milieu reflected by French-English tensions and bilingualism, multiculturalism, nationalism, women’s rights, labour rights, sexuality rights, and so on. (Jensen and Phillips, 1996) In relative terms, the political climate during this period has been termed as ‘radical’ and thus more conducive to the development of a more participatory flavour to the reflection of democracy at that time. Within this more welcoming historical moment, grassroots movements gained political voice as expressed through formal national, provincial and local advocacy groups. State support i.e., funding for these groups and issues evolved over time, thereby granting them legitimacy and

access to decision-makers and decision-making processes. Phillips in Cardozo (1996:310)

identifies this as an issue of “fairness”:

government funding to these disadvantaged constituencies adds an element of fairness in the representation of the spectrum of interests in Canadian society. It allows organizations of women, Natives, disabled, official language minorities and poor people to be heard among the voice of the economically powerful like the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers’ Association or Macmillan Bloedel.

With respect to cultural communities, the Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Multiculturalism Secretariat within the Department of the Secretary of State came to be their primary funder and elected representatives and the state bureaucracy actively sought their input in the deliberation of various issues. Core funding as well as project funding was provided to enable groups to establish and develop a capacity to provide informed and sophisticated advice, initiate dialogue and debate and propose thoughtful alternatives. (Cardozo, 1996) With government support, there was little need for groups to diversify their funding base. In fact, the reality was that there were even fewer alternatives present at that time. This reality was not lost on the groups and some of their advocacy efforts at that time were to try to increase the level of responsibility for issues of race and culture among different governmental and institutional sectors including their financial support for activities and programs in their jurisdictions. Consequently, many advocacy groups were dependent on federal funding and were caught off guard by attacks on their credibility, precipitated by the fiscal crisis of the 1990s. For many, the decades of the 1970s and 80s are recalled as the golden age for ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups, among others, and for the flourishing of a more vibrant and participatory civil society.

The Meaning of Citizenship

It is generally acknowledged that public interest organizations are a vital expression of democracy and that an engaged citizenry is in turn a reflection of a healthy and vibrant civil society. Therefore, the concept of ‘citizenship’ is central to exploring some of these relations with respect to cultural communities and their advocacy groups. (While the concepts of democracy and civil society are also recognized for their equal significance to this topic, the focus of this paper will remain largely on citizenship in an effort to contain its scope and length.) To begin, it is important to acknowledge the extensive literature that is available on this topic, such as Barbalet 1988, Clarke 1994, Espada 1996, Janoski 1998, Jensen and Phillips 1996, Marshall, 1964 and Van Gunsteren 1998 to name a few. As T.H. Marshall’s article “Citizenship and Social Class” is widely regarded as the seminal piece on the modern notion of citizenship, it is helpful to use it as the starting point for our discussion.

What is useful in Marshall’s writings is the identification of three vital elements with respect to citizenship. The first is ‘civil’ and pertains to rights guaranteed by law in democratic states. Such rights include “liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, and the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice....on terms of equality with others and by due process of law.” (1964:71) It is worth noting that with respect to some ethnocultural and ethnoracial communities, these rights have often been denied. As a result, many advocacy efforts have used the legal process to seek justice and equality. The second element of citizenship that Marshall identifies is ‘political’. This pertains to the right to “participate in the exercise of political power” (72) as an elector or an electee. In this respect, cultural and racial communities are ‘minorities’ both in terms of numbers (although this is changing) and power. Therefore, advocacy groups have been vital in developing ‘collective’

power and expressing needs and concerns in a cohesive manner. Individual voices would not have commanded the same attention and response. The third element noted by Marshall is 'social'. This includes "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." (72) It is interesting to note that in his essay, Marshall traces how these rights have been gradually lost by many as society has evolved institutions and laws, especially in relation to class. Therefore, we come to recognize that citizenship is not only a recognition of status but it also confer benefits and privileges which we call rights. In all stratified societies, such rights, status or privileges are mitigated not only by class, but also race and gender among others. Also, as this status can be bestowed, it can also be taken away or denied.

In light of the above discussion, we are better able to comprehend that citizenship is as some authors have recognized, a social construction. Jensen and Phillips (1996) provide further support for this as they trace changes in the application and interpretation of citizenship through recent Canadian history. In so doing they state that "citizenship establishes a system of inclusion and exclusion. It defines boundaries, recognizing the citizenship status of the included and denying the same to the excluded." (114) This statement clearly raises concerns about the practice pertaining to the politics of recognition whereby the state, in its or the market's best interest is a key actor in the construction of outsiders and insiders and the rights and opportunities that are afforded to them. It does not, however, adequately recognize that such politics are also central in the construction of insiders and outsiders even among those who are identified as citizens.

An informed reading of Canadian history can provide much evidence of the state's role in the selective recognition of citizens and rights of citizenship. Such decisions have often been rooted in the politics of class, gender and race that were prevalent at different historical moments in the Canadian society. Van Gunsteren (1998:151) identifies some of these factors when he writes: "There cannot be citizenship if there is no *access* to it. Citizenship is not a natural attribute of people but a public status with specific conditions of access through education, immigration, and earning capacity or ownership. Ideally, in democracies, the status is accessible to all; but in fact, this is never the case." In this statement, Van Gunsteren carefully exposes two key aspects that are central to our discussion. They are: limitations on access; and factors that constrain access.

The former, pertaining to access to citizenship, has been raised earlier and can be summarized as the power of the state to confer or revoke the privileged status of citizenship. Some examples of this can be found earlier in Canadian history when class and gender issues were prominent in the recognition of citizenship and its accompanying benefits such as the right to participate in electoral democracy. For instance, this right was extended only to those who were holders of property and this excluded the poor and women, as well as some ethnic groups. With respect to some racialized groups such as the Chinese, Japanese and South Asian, exclusions were applied, not only in relation to property issues but because they were seen as outsiders and therefore not Canadian. This race-based categorization of citizenship and its rights was also evident during the WWII when some groups such as Japanese-Canadians and German-Canadians were racialized as enemy aliens and lost their citizenship rights along with their property. In addition, they were removed from their communities and interned in camps

and/or offered the option of working as farm labourers. (Bolaria and Li 1988, Day 2000, Henry et al. 2000, Institute on Governance 2000)

The second aspect raised by Van Gunsteren pertains directly to structural factors, inherent in all societies, that consciously or unconsciously become determinants in granting the status of citizenship and, more importantly, in expanding or contracting the benefits that one has access to or can gain from this status. This is a more difficult component to articulate for it challenges basic assumptions held by citizens about themselves and their society. For many, there is no apparent dissonance between a belief in values that promote equality and justice and those that support inequality as an inevitable outcome of individualism and competition. This conflict of principles according to Marshall “springs from the very roots of our social order in the present development of democratic citizenship.” (Espada, 1996:6) And, if the roots of our social order are based in an acceptance of inequality, then this can also be extended to the concept of citizenship where it too has become “in certain respects, the architect of legitimate inequalities.” (Marshall in Espada, 1996:6) Therefore, if inequality is normalized in such a manner, then can it be that to advocate for equality is abnormal?

On the one hand the above question may appear as rather outrageous but, on the other hand, it does emanate from a certain logic which, in reference to public interest groups and ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups and their issues, is not so absurd. For instance, many ethnocultural and ethnoracial groups have based their demands around the central issue of ‘access’. They have not, for the most part, called for an overthrow of the existing social order, only greater access to it in order to derive its full benefits as citizens. In short, as citizens, they

have struggled as constituencies within civil society not for the status of citizenship, but for its accompanying rights and benefits. Some key issues that have been the focus of their efforts against racial and cultural discrimination include: opportunities to work and to work in the full range of occupational categories, recognition of their skills and experiences, access to educational opportunities, access to programs and services, access to housing, freedom from police harassment, balanced representation in the media and advertising, and protection from racial or cultural harassment and abuse. As these appear not to be equally available to all citizens else why advocate, and as there is a growing intolerance for the advancement of these issues, both within the general public and within the state through actions such as diminished financial support for equity programs, advocacy efforts and multiculturalism, then does it not follow that we are witnessing the construction of these groups and their calls for equality as abnormal? Some evidence of this construction can also be found in recent actions of the state that retreat from earlier roles and responsibilities in the integration of excluded groups in society. In that such groups and their issues are now being constructed as marginal to the interests of the broader society, it is not surprising that their demands for equality are also being labelled as selfish, narrow, excessive and ultimately against the interest of the majority. If we extend this line of thinking then it would follow that if these groups and their interests are deemed to be too demanding and outside the realm of the broader public interest then this perception itself becomes a compelling rationalization for reducing state support and for returning the issues back to the groups as ‘their problems’. This practice has been noted by Wilson (1990) as a general trend in North America and Northern Europe where governments “not only refused additional demands on the state...but even refused to meet long-established

expectations....Governments in many western countries rediscovered the fact that in the words of anti-drug abuse commercials of the 1980s they could ‘Just Say No’ to interest group demands.” (145) Van Gunsteren (1998:134) echoes this reality and notes: “Instead of citizenship and democracy working in tandem, we now hear political elites complaining that democracy is overburdened by overly active and demanding citizens.”

This practice of saying ‘No’ and of individualizing group problems and issues is a clear indication that the concept of citizens is being reconstructed into one of consumer which is less political, therefore, less threatening. This transformation, coupled with removal of financial and moral support has a profoundly devastating impact on groups advancing issues of racial and cultural equality. As was discussed previously, many of these groups have few other options for financial support. Support from their own constituencies is also not an option as often they lack the economic means and/or face internal divisions based on class, language, religion, gender and so on. Lacking the means of self-sufficiency and with few other alternative, these groups are heavily dependent on the federal government for their survival. Without the groups, their issues also become muted. In exploring the impact of this silencing it is important to place it within the context of Canada’s multiculturalism policy and first examine how it contributed to their development.

Multiculturalism

As a state policy, multiculturalism was adopted in 1971. While contained within a bilingual framework that privileged English and French as languages, the multiculturalism policy did give official recognition and a sense of identity to the ‘other’ groups. On the one hand this sense of recognition can be seen as a positive measure. However, it has also been

critiqued for having produced a perpetual marginalization of these groups which gives recognition to their existence but not that they are equals. (Day 2000, Henry et al. 2000) In some respects, the multiculturalism policy was presented to Canadians as a unifying force, as providing ‘unity within diversity’ that could somehow overcome sins of the past and build a national identity that was encompassing of all. As is often the case though, theory and reality can be poles apart. Bennett (1998:4) addresses this point in stating: “state-managed multiculturalisms reify and exoticise alterity; addressing ethnic and racial differences as a question of ‘identity’ rather than of history and politics...”

While we may wish to acknowledge that the possibilities and accomplishments of official multiculturalism are themselves a contested terrain, it is important to recognize that during the 1970s and 80s, it did play an important legitimization function that enabled the proliferation of many advocacy groups pertaining to cultural and racialized communities. Kobayashi (2000:229) acknowledges this in her critique of multiculturalism: “Although such organizations have been in place as long as the communities they represent, that is, since the communities were first established through immigration, present-day associations are direct products of the rise of federal multiculturalism policy as official recognition of the role played by non-Charter groups in Canadian society.” This acceptance of multiculturalism as state policy and the proliferation of these groups is not accidental. Instead, it reflects the politics of this period in history when Canadian social policy responded to and was shaped by movements for social justice and equality such as: women’s rights, civil rights, Aboriginal rights, sexuality rights, and disability rights. Within this mix that was dominated by a discourse based on ‘rights’, ethnoracial and ethnocultural groups also contributed their voices and stories of

exclusion and demands for equality. They participated in public debates which were flourishing during the civil society of the 1980s when issues such as constitutional amendments, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, human rights and employment equity were all hotly contested in public arenas and in Parliament. As these issues are situated within a legal framework of rights, it exposes the preferred strategy of many of the groups which was to seek collective solutions to collective problems. The relative success of these strategies is partly based on the more ‘radical’ politics of that historical moment but also on the economic fact that “[g]overnments were not financially constrained at the time, so there was a greater willingness to be flexible in policy directions, and ideals of participatory democracy were high on the federal agenda.” (Cardozo, 1996:310)

The Changing Landscape

While some view these rights-based struggles as victories won by advocacy groups, others view these very successes as contributing to the subsequent decline in public and state support for issues of equality and for public interest groups. Michael Atkinson addresses this point in his 1997 article titled “*What Kind of Democracy do Canadians Want?*” and explains that group politics did emerge as a major force in the constitutional debates such as Meech and the Charlottetown Accord as participants made direct representations to Parliament or its Committees. However, he goes on to say that this direct access was perceived by some elected members of Parliament as challenging the “monopoly of the elites”. (90) In many respects, John Bryden’s (1994) now famous tirade against ‘special interest’ groups can be seen as a reaction to the perceived lack of power among some political elites i.e., elected members of Parliament, and a misplaced belief that excessive power resided among the non-elected forces.

His preferred solution to redressing this ‘imbalance’ was/is to strip public interest groups of their state funding and to discredit them in the eyes of the public, thereby rendering them impotent and lacking legitimacy.

There are both political and economic reasons behind these hardening attitudes towards public interest groups and multiculturalism. One has been identified earlier as the ascendancy of neoliberal ideology with its central philosophy of the free market. Its tentacles have been felt in all aspects of society including relations between the state and citizens groups. The language of debt reduction, restructuring, downsizing, downloading, privatization, competition and more with less has come to dominate social as well as political and economic discourse. As the state restructures itself and its relations in a global market economy, ‘New Public Management’ practices and ‘public choice theory’ are reshaping its own functions to ‘core’ areas and opening up potentially greater roles for the non-profit/voluntary and private sectors to fill in the gaps. (Banting, 2000) As the primary and legitimate role for the voluntary sector is envisioned largely as a provider of services, the role of advocacy comes to be even further marginalized as ‘non-essential’ as it lacks the critical function of aiding capital accumulation. Lobbying is regarded more favourably however as it pertains to interests primarily of the business or corporate sector which is engaged in capitalist pursuits. Therefore, as we are witnessing the construction of a new or at least dramatically changed social order, there is an understandable logic to attempts by the state to eliminate or curtail mechanisms for the expression of opposing demands and ideologies.

A second related reason for the hardening attitudes is the changed political landscape where traditional political parties, whether governing or in opposition, have all shifted further to

the right with the rise of the Reform and the Alliance. In effect, this has dramatically altered the political terrain in Canada and elsewhere and reduced the scope for the expression of collectivist voices and collectivist ideologies. Within this environment of rigid individualism, attacks on social welfare, and cries of ‘reverse discrimination’, groups have little clout and are unable, in most instances, to find allies within the opposition to raise issues on their behalf. Cardozo (1996:313) explains:

When the Liberals took office in Ottawa in late 1993, there was a new climate for public interest groups. In the past, while the relationship with the governing party was always a bit tense, there would be a symbiotic relationship with the two opposition parties. Now, for the first time, if they could not develop a working relationship with the governing party they would be completely outside the parliamentary orbit. Most national groups declined to develop a close working relationship with the Bloc Quebecois, because the party is committed to separation from Canada. The Reform Party made it clear it did not want to work with any ‘special interests.’ It was a matter of pride for them to refuse to meet with a group.

Another related factor is the rise of populism and direct democracy as exemplified by the Reform and Alliance parties. These political ideologies purport to emancipate the individual citizen by removing public interest groups as intermediary forces between them and the state and between them and markets. In so doing, they promote values of grassroots participation and consultation mechanisms that appeal directly to individuals in the form of focus groups, phone ins and surveys. (Jensen and Phillips, 1996) In addition, the popular appeal of this rhetoric has been adopted by other political parties and the primary losers in this charade have been the public interest groups, as Jensen and Phillips point out: “While consultations with individuals might provide useful additional points of access for citizens, the government’s motive is less one of civic education or participatory democracy than an attempt to countervail the groups, especially those most likely to oppose the retrenchment of the welfare state.” (1996:127)

Cardozo lends support to this being the real motive when he writes: “Backbench MPs were astonished to discover that among the most vociferous critics of their proposed cuts to social programs were groups funded by the government. Reducing these groups’ resources was more than a matter of saving a few million dollars. If the voices of these critics could be muted, making cuts to the big ticket transfer programs would become easier.” (1996:312)

The experiment to mute the power of interest groups was first tested in the late 1980s by the Conservatives by reducing direct funding to the groups. (Jensen and Phillips, 1996) In subsequent years and a change in government, still more reductions followed, accompanied by announcements in the February 1994 and 1995 budgets to review interest group funding to promote “greater reliance on funding from other sources” (Cardozo, 1996:315) and to change the funding approach altogether. The Program Review process initiated within government departments as part of its own shrinking the state exercise, also utilized four principles as criteria that doomed the continued funding of public interest groups. These principles were: larger public benefit (as is also used in determining charitable status); ability to access alternate funds; service provision as a priority over advocacy (as is also the case for charitable status); and a match between group activities and government priorities (which is difficult to achieve as priorities change). (Cardozo, 1996:317) Not surprisingly, the application of these principles have not been kind to advocacy groups. And, combined with other attacks on their credibility and legitimacy, their survival looks bleak.

The Income Tax Act and Registered Charities

As is now evident, advocacy groups, by their nature, have had a difficult relationship with the state. As these groups monitor, demand and oppose state policies and actions, they

remain vital for the expression of a healthy civil society. However, they also run the risk of being perceived as threats to peace, order and good government. Again, the issues of competing ideologies and their corresponding notions of democracy and citizen participation appear to be at the heart of these changing relations. Therefore, as we saw, during the 1970s and 80s, governments assumed their shared responsibility for supporting civil society by providing vital core and project funding to many advocacy groups to advance their issues. However, over the 1990s, and especially since 1995, this form of support has eroded and has shifted toward short term projects and partnership activities, if supported at all. This corresponds with a shift in the dominance of political ideologies from participatory democracy to a more rigid form of liberal democracy. As a result, groups are forced to rely more on the charity of the general public through donations, or on organized charities such as Foundations for their survival. Often, recognition as a registered charity is an asset in the ability to tap these alternate sources of funds. For the general public or for corporations, a portion of their contributions can be claimed as a tax deduction. And, for Foundations, as they themselves are registered as charities, they are restricted to supporting other charities.

The legislation that governs the registration of charities is the *Income Tax Act*. This *Act* is administered by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency which reviews applications for charitable status and interprets the *Act* accordingly. While the *Act* does not provide a definition of ‘charity’ it does identify ‘charitable activities’ and those organizations who are recognized to fall within these activity areas are granted the sought after registration number which can be used to issue tax receipts to donors. This number then becomes a vital tool for fundraising purposes as groups seek to diversify their sources of funding.

Groups which openly state their function as advocacy will not be recognized as charities under this *Act* as it is regarded as a ‘political’ activity. In fact groups can be denied registration even if this is a small component of their larger purpose. It is carefully specified within the *Act*, that only 10% of a group’s resources can be used for ‘political’ purposes and any such activities must be ‘incidental’ to their other functions. (Pross & Stewart, 1993-94:124) In addition, multicultural activities are not recognized as charitable activities at present. This is because the *Act’s* interpretation is based on precedence and, to date, there have been no court decisions rendered on this aspect. In its absence, “organizations promoting multiculturalism **as a purpose** will usually not be registered as charities.” (Emphasis in original) (Canada Customs and Revenue Agency letter) These restrictions then pose severe limitations on ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups in their abilities to diversify their sources for revenues such as direct appeal to donors or applications to charitable foundations.

Currently, the *Income Tax Act* with respect to charities is based on a 1601 British statute (Statute of Charitable Uses) and an 1891 judgement by Lord Macnaghten (Pemsel’s case) to identify charitable purposes. (Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR):G-1)) These then continue to guide the interpretation of charitable activity four hundred years later. The four categories recognized as legitimate charitable activity areas are: relief of poverty; advancement of education; advancement of religion; and other purposes beneficial to the community. Therefore, groups making application under this Act must demonstrate that they remain within the confines of these specific areas and how they have been interpreted under common law, and that their objectives and activities are also charitable. Advocacy groups have attempted to use the category of ‘advancement of education’ as a way of situating their objectives and activities and

avoiding the label of ‘political’. At times this has meant compromising their political ideals thereby causing internal conflict among the membership and weakening the groups. For others who have pursued this as a category for recognition, some have found that within the *Act*, ‘advancement of education’ is interpreted rather specifically. These specifications include “‘training the mind’ in a improvement of a useful field of human knowledge as opposed to promotion of particular political ideology or presentation of biased information” (VSR Report:G-3)

This forced suppression of ‘political’ intents and fitting within the narrow interpretations of ‘education’ can be regarded as a blatant attempt by the state to stifle and discourage debate and participatory democracy. Also, in the name of requiring ‘balance’ i.e., the presentation of all sides of an issue in order for it to be considered a genuine educational activity, a range of absurd situations could occur as noted in the VSR Report:

...a Jewish organization being required to give space to the Palestine Liberation Organization or an anti-poverty group to a wealthy person’s forum [Drache 1994/95]. To push the argument further, a group educating school children about the history of Holocaust survivors might be required to give equal time to those denying the existence of the Holocaust. Many organizations would also want to have taken into account that the viewpoints contradictory to their own are frequently widely disseminated in the mainstream, including in the media and educational forums. (G-4)

This last point regarding contradictory viewpoints in the mainstream is interesting to note. It underscores the fact that this requirement for balance is selectively imposed on the groups seeking application for charitable status. However, there is no corresponding requirement of the larger society to provide a similar balance that incorporates the perspectives of the excluded groups. Therefore, it has been argued that advocacy groups are providing the needed balance because their perspectives are missing or misrepresented within the broader public. (VSR

Report, G-4) The absence of diverse viewpoints and criteria that force silence, compliance and conformity contribute to the perception that the policy of multiculturalism is in effect an attempt to “manage” diversity. (Henry et al., 2000)

This muzzling and containing function is also evidenced in the legislation’s requirement that the goals, objectives and activities of an organization/group must have demonstrable benefits to the larger community. For instance, if the beneficiaries are perceived to be a small segment of the population i.e., a specific ethnic group or the group’s membership then there is a strong likelihood that the application will be denied. A July 6, 2000 letter from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) to the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) clearly states this possibility: “If it appears that an organization is operating not for the benefit of the public at large, but instead is seeking to promote the interests of its membership, it will fail to qualify for registration. It is inappropriate for charities to be vehicles to articulate or advance the interests of a particular group, although this may be an acceptable incidental result.”

In pausing here for a moment, it is clear that whether intended or not, one function of this legislation is to manage public support (donations) and to channel it into areas that are accepted as non-threatening and which conform to the make up of society as existed in the Elizabethan period. Quite obviously, this conception is not relevant to the culturally and racially diverse Canada of today. Another function is to reinforce existing structural inequalities such as class and race. This reinforcement occurs through the requirement that there be a broad public benefit which prevents groups from addressing the conditions that create inequalities and trying to rectify the existing imbalances. As such, social issues are de-politicized as are the groups wishing to address these social issues. Projects that are safe, which encourage coping and

acceptance, are preferred. Also, as assessing public benefit is largely a matter of interpretation, it is possible that what a group identifies as a public benefit i.e., advancing racial equality could be regarded by the *Act's* interpreters as 'self interest'. In addition, with restrictions on 'political' activities, groups face considerable difficulties in undertaking strategies that openly challenge state policies and parties or those that could be perceived as such. This danger is drawn out in the CCRA letter: "However, having a political **purpose** is not charitable and an applicant can be refused registration on these grounds. Political purposes are those intended to influence legislation and or public opinion, and those that promote a particular socio-economic ideology, for example the promotion of Canadian unity, where there can be opposing sides to an issue." (Emphasis in original)

This restriction on the "promotion of Canadian unity" is interesting indeed for, in light of the multiculturalism policy, a number of contradictions emerge. If we recall, it was originally envisioned by the Trudeau government as a mechanism for recognizing diversity and promoting unity among Canadians i.e., 'unity within diversity'. However, the *Income Tax Act* appears to be at odds with the policy for it does not recognize this as a legitimate objective. The reason given for this is that it is restricted by law, i.e., precedence. In its letter to the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the CCRA expresses this as follows: "The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) wishes to support government policies on multiculturalism to the extent allowed by the law." This means that groups denied charitable status must individually appeal such decisions to the courts for judgement and the establishment of precedence. Such a legal challenge is expensive and requires extensive resources. For ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups who are already financially limited, this becomes a near impossibility. Thus,

while in theory there are avenues available to question the strict and narrow interpretations of charitable purposes based in antiquity, financial constraints act as real and formidable disincentives to their access. Therefore, since the 1970s, 13 cases have been heard by the Federal Court of Appeal and eight have been deemed not charitable. The majority of the cases were rejected on the basis of 'political' activity. (VSR Report:G-3-6)

This apparent disjuncture between the multiculturalism policy and charitable recognition under the *Income Tax Act* begins to alert us to the fragile nature of Canadian multiculturalism. It also lends support to critiques which have called the policy "nearly empty as a public policy." (Kobayashi, 2000:235) Also, if multiculturalism and the promotion of Canadian unity are not seen as legitimate activities worthy of public support (donations) yet lauded as a distinctive feature of Canadian society, then there is an inconsistent and dangerous message being conveyed to the public. The message, while not overtly stated but covertly implied, is that multiculturalism is in the public interest only as rhetoric and not as an enactment of that rhetoric. Consequently, as there is no public benefit, no rewards (tax incentives) are warranted. This lack of reward then can act as a disincentive for potential donors and as a further justification for reduced public and state support.

This raises another interesting contradiction with respect to the notion of charity and public vs. personal benefit. On the one hand the term carries baggage that is paternalistic. In this respect, individuals carry out philanthropic good deeds by giving money or time out of compassion for other human beings. In so doing, individuals not only express their concerns but also their responsibilities for one another in ways that are 'altruistic'. While such human expressions are commendable, they can also be 'managed' by the state through incentives or

disincentives. This then raises another aspect of the notion of charity, that which pertains to tax incentives. Clearly an incentive or a 'carrot' is offered to those who give to charities recognized as legitimate in the form of a tax deduction. For instance, donors in all provinces except Quebec can claim a combined federal and provincial tax rate of 27% for donations under \$200 to recognized charities. The tax rate increases to 47% for donations of \$200 or more. (Canada, 1996:7) Through such enticements, a component of 'self interest' is introduced whereby those who give are materially rewarded and thus gain individual or corporate tax breaks. In some respects, this practice illuminates the individualized nature of modern Canadian society where values of altruism and collectivity conflict with those of individualism and personal gain.

In discussing 'self interest' and personal gain, yet another contradiction emerges with respect to the *Income Tax Act* and registered charities. Earlier, it was pointed out that multiculturalism was not a recognized goal or area for charitable purposes. Another reason given for this is because "the promotion of a particular culture can be considered to be the promotion of a 'self-interest' which...lacks the necessary elements of altruism to enable it to qualify as a charity." (CCRA, 2000) Here, for multicultural groups, goals and activities promoting particular cultures are clearly inadmissible for charitable registration. This prevents them not only from engaging in political activities but also from elevating their own profiles, building solidarity, self-pride and group empowerment. What is permissible are activities that educate "Canadians about a particular culture" but not those which are seen to be "promoting a particular culture." (CCRA, 2000) The not so subtle message contained here exposes a selective and biased understanding of 'self interest'. Self interest is acceptable for donors as long as it conforms to sanctioned charities. Self interest is not acceptable, however, if it contains the

threat for group empowerment, group mobilization, group protest, and political action that could alter society's inequitable yet acceptable social order. In other words, activities that are reactive and service oriented are fine, but activities that are preventative and challenging of inequities are not.

For all intents and purposes then, advocacy groups, whose very function is political, seem to be doomed within the current reality. Ethnocultural and ethnoracial groups, by the nature of their issues, coupled with their political activities, are also doubly doomed. "The promotion of racial harmony, as an example, can be frequently seen as a political purpose, as activities in furtherance of it often involves lobbying government for stricter laws or changes to social policies. Thus, an applicant whose governing document stipulates that its purpose is 'the promotion of racial harmony' could not obtain registration - its objects not being *exclusively charitable*." (CCRA letter) Such restrictions placed on ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups are in stark contrast to the leeway that is granted to those registered as lobbyists. This category of lobbyist is largely applied to those representing the business and corporate sectors in their efforts to influence state policies and decision-makers. An example would be the tobacco industry and pharmaceuticals who are able to tap vast financial resources in representing their issues and to claim these expenditures as tax deductions.

Lobbyists are covered by Bill C-82, *An Act to Register Lobbyists*. Essentially, this *Act* requires lobbyists to register and file some basic information such as their name and address, the names and addresses of their firm and clients and activities undertaken. No financial information is required to be filed and there is no monitoring to verify the information provided.

(Pross and Stewart, 1993) Unlike advocacy groups who experience a process of de-legitimation through the *Income Tax Act*, lobbyists have experienced the opposite result through the formal registration process. It has been credited with bringing “some objective, indeed official, acknowledgement of lobbying as a credible and legitimate function in national public affairs.”

(115) It is interesting to note that while some Members of Parliament have expressed discontent, similar to that of Bryden and public interest groups, about the undue influence of lobbyists and the undermining of democracy and the role of Parliament (116), there have been virtually no public outcry or attempts by the state to curtail their influence. This virtual silence also presents an additional contradiction - that of the differential treatment of advocacy groups as compared with lobbyists. In this respect it is apparent that within neoliberalism, advancing of business or private interests is regarded as a legitimate enterprise but advancing the interests of the marginalized groups and communities is not. In fact, in reference to advocacy groups and charitable status, it appears that this situation is not likely to change in the foreseeable future.

Commenting on Democracy

This brief juxtaposition of advocacy groups and lobbyists, public and private interests, multiculturalism and public benefit is illustrative of the ongoing conflict between the ideals of social democracy and liberal democracy. Thus far in our discussion, we have confined our discussion of democracy to the broader umbrella term. However, it is also important to acknowledge that, indeed, it has many variations and forms as expressed along a continuum. Of particular relevance to our discussion are the two variants referred to as liberal democracy and social or participatory democracy since Canadians often vacillate between these two perceptions of themselves politically and socially. Canada is generally understood as being a liberal

democratic state based on the Westminster Model of government. In this form, the political conception of democracy dominates where citizens exercise their rights through the electoral process and empower their representatives to make decisions. Popular or citizen participation in other respects is low and opportunities for it are limited. (Weale, 1999) In contrast, participatory democracy, as the term symbolizes, provides for greater citizen involvement in matters of public policy and their implementation. In other words, citizens are involved not only in casting their votes during elections but also in “exercising control over which issues emerge on the political agenda in the first place.” (Weale, 1999:85) In light of these two variations, we can begin to situate our discussion of advocacy groups as reflections of the tensions between these two forms. While the 1960s through to the end of the 1980s have been recognized as the period that was more favourable to participatory democracy, the 1990s can also be seen in this light. However, the fundamental distinction between the two is that the earlier period encouraged participation through groups and associations, while the latter discouraged this in preference for individual expression. The drawbacks in terms of power and influence with respect to individualism have been expressed earlier.

Conclusion

The expression of social democracy in the 1970s and its remnants in the 80s offered opportunities for ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups to be represented as constituencies in the vibrant and active civil society at that time. Not only were they represented, but they were actively supported through state funds. In this way, the state affirmed a vital role for these groups in strengthening the Canadian mosaic. In addition, by supporting their advocacy role vis a vis public policy, the state also confirmed that “[a]chieving social

justice and equity were legitimate goals, and therefore groups which made claims, and programs which responded to such claims, were in the political mainstream.” (Jensen and Phillips, 1996:118-9) Ironically, it has been noted that the very successes of these groups in the constitutional debates and the Charter of Rights can also be marked as the beginning of their decline. (Jensen and Phillips 1996)

As the 1960s and 70s are recalled as a period of convergence of different factors that produced a more radical flavour, the 1990s are also marked by a convergence of factors, although the resulting flavour is much more conservative. Whereas during the 60s and 70s the converging factors were the rights based movements around identity and equality, economic affluence, anti-war activism, the cold war and youth power to name a few, the late 80s and 90s have witnessed the convergence of quite a different set of factors. Some of these include: the decline of Keynesian economics; growing federal and provincial deficits; the fall of the Soviet Union; global economic restructuring; NAFTA; shrinking of the state; and Reform. While the 60s and 70s favoured the expansion of the state and its responsibilities, the 90s have evidenced a reversal of this trend. Correspondingly, its relations with its citizenry are also being restructured and a more individualized society is emerging with a potentially enlarged role for the voluntary sector in the provision of services but a reduced presence of advocacy groups to check and monitor the state and market sectors. This is a cause for serious concern not only for ethnocultural and ethnoracial advocacy groups, but for civil society in general. As civil society is being recast, so too is the nature of democracy itself. Consultation and participation now pertain largely to individuals and others, such as intermediary groups, are no longer regarded as necessary within this direct participation model. How successful this will be still remains to be

seen but there are many troubling shadows and uncertainties already emerging as voiced by

Phillips:

In the process of redefining governance and the federation, we are making some fundamental, and possibly irreversible, choices about the future of the country. Indeed, the very notion of citizenship that we had evolved over the past century is being cast aside in the space of a decade. Historically, ours was a concept of citizenship that recognized both individual and collective rights and responsibilities, and that supported the development of secondary associations as vehicles for enhancing participation in society. It valued social justice and equity by creating the social safety net and encouraging the participation by the less advantaged categories of citizens. But, the response of Canadian governments to a new brand of populism and the need for economic restraint has precipitated a fundamental shift from the value of community to an emphasis on individual responsibility for one's own well-being. We are moving from a high regard for the principles of social justice to a willingness to tolerate considerable interpersonal inequality and from support for collaboration to protection of self-interest. (2000:13-14)

Without the aid of magic crystals, it is difficult to foresee what the future holds for advocacy groups generally and especially those relegated to the outer extremes of the margins such as ethnocultural and ethnoracial groups. Clearly, the state is in the process of severing its ties with these communities and as others, leaving them to struggle in the competition of survival of the fittest. One opportunity that is afforded within the present is to think more globally about issues of race and cultural equity. As we enter into an era of expanding global markets and as states reduce their roles and capacities in relation to civil society and citizens, the importance of national boundaries and loyalties is correspondingly called into question. Therefore, the possibilities present for building global solidarity are hopeful as is its potential.

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