MODERNIZING GOVERNANCE:
A Preliminary Exploration

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Preface

This book is the outcome of the initial work carried out by the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) under its long-term exploratory research program. This three-year program was established in June 1999 with a view to helping Canadian government managers identify, anticipate and act on the main change factors that are destined to transform governance and the Canadian public service in the future.

There are many good reasons for setting up such a program. For several years now, governments have been evolving in a context that is undergoing wholesale change and becoming increasingly globalized. However, the rapidly accelerating pace of change underscores the need for a closer study of the forces for change that are driving the modernization of governance. Prominent among these forces for change are information technology, globalization (especially the emergence of the global knowledge economy), and people's changing expectations vis-à-vis Government. As these factors continue to play an increasingly dominant role, we believe that they impact four key dimensions of governance: citizens and citizenship; democracy; the role of government; and the role of the public service. These four dimensions constitute the four subsidiary themes of CCMD's research program on modernizing governance.

All the articles published in this volume deal with aspects of these four sub-themes and were presented by their authors at CCMD's International Conference on Modernizing Governance which was held in Ottawa in May 2000. The main objectives of the conference were to bring senior Canadian public servants together with Canadian and international theoreticians in a thorough discussion of the main research areas that need to be explored in order to develop our knowledge and understanding of the changes taking place within governance, and then help governments prepare for future challenges. For further information on conference content, the Centre's Web site can be consulted for a summary of conference discussions, as well as the texts of the presentations given by the guest speakers from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Singapore and Canada.

We are sure that this publication will make a major contribution to our thinking on governance, and we hope to be able to continue sharing the results of our research in the years to come.

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Acknowledgments

Preparation of these articles was made possible by the collaborative efforts of four eminent Canadian researchers who carried out a preliminary exploration of CCMD's four research sub-themes. They conducted a bibliographic analysis and a review of the issues involved in each of the four sub-themes in order to identify the most relevant research areas. In a further expression of our commitment to research *with* (and not only *for*) government practitioners, we linked the authors with senior federal public servants in an arrangement whereby the authors were able to obtain different perspectives based on the practitioners' understanding, analyses and suggestions.

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The conference itself received support from several of our partners, and to them once again, we would like to express our sincere appreciation.

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INTRODUCTION: A Concept Again à la mode

For centuries, struggles over the boundaries of citizenship have been at the centre of political debates. Citizenship, broadly defined, is not simply a way to identify subjects with political rights in any abstract way. It is also an important political tool for the state, which, in defining citizenship, sets the conditions for full membership in the political community. In addition, it is a way for political actors who may use citizenship vocabulary to seek inclusion in the polity.

Concerns about Canadian "citizenship" were present throughout the last century and remain on the agenda today. In the past, as today, they focused on a range of issues. Efforts to clarify regulations about nationality and immigration prompted Canada to become the first Commonwealth country to establish an autonomous citizenship (even though Canadians remained British subjects for another decade). But the *Citizenship Act*, as many pointed out at the time, was also about recognizing Canadian identity and diversity. Writing in celebration of the *Act*, J.W. Lindal (1947: 78-79) said the following:

> Canada is a miniature world. It has problems of geography, climate, resources, language and religion. Yet out of a diversity of racial groups scattered over half a continent, the builders of Canada have moulded a nation with a spirit strong and distinctly its own. But Canadianism is a blend – the very diversity has softened, and at the same time broadened it, but not detracted from its inherent worth.

Alternatively, the notion was used sometimes when discussing the education of the young and their preparation for citizenship. Indeed, civic education has always been an important dimension of public education programs. As early as 1899 John Millar, the Deputy Minister of Education for Ontario, wrote a book addressed to young people called *Canadian Citizenship*. This small volume started with the assertion: "The end of all government is the cultivation of good citizenship" (1899: 9).

In the last decades, we have seen a resurgence of attention to citizenship in a more fundamental way. A number of states have established new ministries and put aside time to celebrate citizenship.[1] At the same time, we have seen a proliferation of claims explicitly framed in these terms. As Ronald Beiner (1995: 1) of the University of Toronto puts it:

> Nationalism, ethnic strife, the fragmentation of previously united multinational political communities... place the problem of citizenship – of what draws a body of citizens together into a coherent and stably organized political community, and keeps that allegiance durable – at the center of theoretical concern.

While we will retain Beiner's notion that there is a "problem of citizenship," we will

locate the roots of that problem beyond the issues he raises, that is those of ethnicity and multinational cohabitation. Questions about the ties that bind obviously arise because of such ethnic and national differences, but they also arise around whether and how to recognize social, economic, gender and other differences. Thus current debates about citizenship should be understood in broad terms, touching on the definition of the political community and the conditions of inclusion – and exclusion – in the community (who belongs and under what conditions).

This proliferation of claims framed as ones of citizenship is widespread. For example, Latin American movements for democracy and civil rights as well as mobilizations of the poor frame their claims in terms of citizenship, such that "l'accès à la citoyenneté commence à être vue comme l'accession aux conditions économiques, sociales et culturelles de l'exercice des droits politiques" (Marques-Pereira and Bizberg 1995: 7). Women's movements, especially ones in which mothers bear witness to their "disappeared children," frame their opposition in terms of citizenship (Blacklock and Jenson 1998). In France, *le mouvement social*, which is a broad-based aggregation of associations and actors seeking to address social inequalities and exclusion, agitates for improved citizenship (Helly 1999). In Belgium, *le mouvement blanc,* which arose out of the governmental scandals and accusations of police complicity with the paedophile Marc Dutroux, names itself a movement for citizenship (Vogel 1999). Citizenship has also become a central concept in debates about Aboriginal rights in several countries (Yashar 1998).

These varied movements, speaking in the name of "citizens" or making claims in the name of "citizenship,", have one thing in common. They are all addressing the relationship between the state and the individuals who find themselves living within its borders. They are all claims for greater voice and better recognition within the polity. They are thereby challenging the boundaries of the political community.

This tendency to frame political struggles in terms of "citizenship claims" turns our attention to the other side of the relationship. Citizenship does not exist without states. Growing preoccupation with the condition of social cohesion and democratic politics has led many in government and policy circles to express concern about citizenship. In diverse and fragmented societies, marked by profound restructuring of the economic and social order, there are challenges to the capacity of state institutions to ensure inclusion and participation for all who are formally members of the political community. Moreover, the immigration and refugee flows associated with globalization, as well as movement of persons within areas of economic free trade, all raise fundamental issues about who is in and who is out, that is, precisely where the boundaries of citizenship are. The popularity of the concept of social cohesion (Jenson 1998) as well as efforts to remake democratic practices, re-knit social solidarity, and rethink the rights and responsibilities of citizens and denizens, all suggest that states are engaged in surveying their borders of citizenship.

This "return of the citizen" (Kymlicka and Norman 1995) in political as well as academic

debates is, therefore, not the result of chance. Rather, it is the fruit of major transformations in modern polities and political economies. It is a signal as well as a symptom of profound changes and questioning.

Citizenship as a Double Relationship

Despite a tendency in popular parlance to "stretch" the concept in all sorts of directions, by speaking of "citizens of the world" and so on, citizenship has always been intimately – indeed, exclusively – associated with membership in a specifically defined political community. From ancient Greece through the end of feudalism, the building of the modern European state, to the dawn of the 21st century, citizenship has been **about** two relationships:

- the status of members of a political community in the face of political authority
- the relationships of mutual support and solidarity that exist among such members **because** they are members of that community.

In the broadest sense, "good citizenship" involves a relation of civility and good behaviour among individuals, but to be truly citizenship it must also involve a state as a political community. It is the historically determined shape of these two relationships – among individuals that share a relationship with a state and between the individual and the state – that we define as the *boundaries of citizenship*.

In this paper we will not be tempted into metaphorical extensions which utilize it to consider private relations and non-political forms of social life, or those unrelated to national states. Hewing to this strict definition does not mean, however, and as will become clear below, that we fail to recognize that the current moment in time is one of change. Because of the rethinking of the political and the state that is currently occurring, the boundaries of citizenship are being refashioned if not transformed.

Starting from this position, our objective in this paper is to identify the various issues and debates currently taking place around the notion of citizenship and to suggest an approach to make sense of the current restructuring of citizenship regimes in Canada and elsewhere.[2] We will first suggest a definition of citizenship as a dynamic relation between three complementary dimensions: rights and responsibilities, access and belonging.[3] We will then explore four areas in which challenges to the current understanding of citizenship are taking place. Finally we will consider some areas where further research might be undertaken in the perspective of improving our understanding of these changes and their impact on governance, state-citizen relations, well-being, and democratic practices.

DIMENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship, understood as a relationship between the individual and the state as well as among individuals, is the concrete expression of the fundamental principle of equality among members of the political community. This principle is at the heart of modern politics. For Jean Bodin writing about the republic in the sixteenth century, as later for J.-J. Rousseau and the English liberals, "citizens are equal in all rights and prerogatives."[4] Citizenship could not exist where feudal or patrimonial social relations were still in place (Marshall, 1964: 79).

A fundamental change which announced the modern polity, as symbolized by the French Revolution, involved defining the individual not simply as subject but also as bearer of rights. As Reinhard Bendix (1964: 66-67) put it in his classic text:

> … medieval political life depends on the link between hereditary or spiritual rank in society, control over land as the principal economic resource, and the exercise of public authority... Rights and liberties are extended to groups, corporations, estates rather than to individual subjects; representation in judicial and legislative bodies is channeled through traditionally privileged estates. Within this framework, no immediate rights are accorded to subjects in positions of economic dependence, such as tenants, journeymen, workers and servants: at best they are classified under the household of their master and represented through him and his estate. This system is broken by the twin revolutions of the West – the political and the industrial – which lead to the eventual recognition of the rights of citizenship for all adults...

With these major social transformations, the individual became a citizen, recognized in his humanity, the bearer of rights and who, through his participation in society, expressed his obligations. Thus, citizenship entailed recognizing individuals, achieved via a guarantee of protections against state interference, and in particular the free individual.

Such a notion also invokes the state as guarantor of equality. But what state? The notion of the individual as bearer of rights was accompanied by the idea of citizens obligated to participate in societal – that is, collective – choices. How to ensure this would happen and not interfere with the liberty so dear to political philosophers was the problem of citizenship through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This was the time the modern state came into existence. Built on a concept of popular sovereignty as well as national sovereignty, the modern state emerged from two different political forms. One was the city-state of the Renaissance (Held 1993: 16-18). Notions of public, distinguished from private, space and public action underpinned these city-states. They recognized a citizen, the *bourgeois*, who gained that status simply as an individual. The break with feudal ties was evident, in that the bourgeois was politically and legally autonomous, defined simply by his allegiance to the city (*bourg*).[5]

A sub-group of these city-states were republics. Jean Bodin, J.-J. Rousseau and

Condorcet all wrote of republican government, while the American revolutionaries, just as the French, established a republic as the expression of their principles. These republics included a widened (albeit limited and never clearly delimited, at least in the French case) suffrage, as well as establishing the citizen's responsibility to bear arms in defence of the republic. It was, however, only in the nineteenth century that universal male suffrage was firmly installed in these two countries.

The second model for the modern state, the constitutionally limited monarchy, emerged over an even longer time period. Gradually the sovereign's power was constrained by the obligation to seek approval for the fundamental actions of governing, that is, raising an army and collecting taxes. In exchange for being taxed, subjects of the Crown would be protected from threats coming from within and without. But they were not only obligated to pay taxes; they also had the right to approve them. Thus, the *Magna Carta* and the *Bill of Rights* of 1689 are also foundational texts for modern citizenship, providing the basic protections of civil rights, in a relationship of exchange. The trade-off was safety and protection for those included in the polity against the responsibilities of participation. The complicated decision-making involved required new institutions; ultimately the representative institutions of feudalism became those of parliamentary democracy, within which the power to tax and the matter of who had the right to take decisions about taxation were central (Tilly 1990; Elias 1991).

Republican histories and those of constitutional monarchies converged over time, to generate common institutional forms of self-government and to instil the notion that democratic participation transformed subjects into citizens. In light of this converging history, Diane Lamoureux (1991: 55) writes:

> Ce qui caractérise fondamentalement la notion moderne de citoyenneté – et l'associe étroitement à celle de la démocratie - c'est *la capacité de participer à la vie du corps politique*. Le citoyen, non seulement est soumis à une autorité politique dans la mesure justement où il ne fait plus totalement corps avec la cité, mais également participe à la formation de cette autorité.

We see, then, that from the beginning citizenship was a complex bundle of rights and obligations, equally available to those identified as citizens. The institutions of liberal democracy ultimately became the key to the successful matching of rights and responsibilities, as well as becoming the institutions through which collective choice could be exercised. It is this story, played out differently in Britain and on the Continent as well as in the American republic, which so fascinated Alexis de Tocqueville in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century.

This history also led the sociologist T.H. Marshall to recount a historical trajectory of modern citizenship.[6] To simplify his rich historical argument, Marshall described the expansion of citizenship rights over the recent centuries as a constant search for stability and equilibrium between democratic equality and guarantees of individual freedom. According to Marshall, three

categories of rights emerged in a historical sequence to create this equilibrium: civil rights in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth and social rights in the twentieth.[7]

Civil rights guarantee fundamental freedoms (such as freedom of expression, religion, and so on), and particularly the right to follow the occupation of one's choice. Marshall associated civil rights with the end of the guild system and city-based restrictions on trade and commerce; he focused on the emergence of a market in labour and free trade within national boundaries (1964: 82). *Political rights*, gradually extended to the whole adult population, included the right to vote and to stand as a candidate. If such rights had long existed for some social groups, the status of a citizenship right required that they be extended to all (Marshall 1964: 85). Finally, he described *social rights*, such as the right to education, access to housing and health services or income security. This third category is associated with a fundamental transformation of our thinking on equality. It became more than a formal principle (equality in status), involving some measure of socio-economic reality (equality in practice).

Therefore, **one dimension** of citizenship that has emerged from its history is that of **rights and responsibilities**, what the state owes to citizens, citizens owe to the state and citizens owe to each other. Civil, political and then social rights were obtained, from the beginning, in exchange for two important citizenship acts – informed participation in the life of the polity and support, through taxes as well as the bearing of arms, of its works and for its protection.

Thus, for example, in a 1927 textbook written for the public schools of Alberta, James McCaig (1927: Chapter XXI) provided a list of the rights and duties of Canadians, which included many of those, as well as social rights, mentioned twenty years later by T.H. Marshall:

The right to protection of life and property
The right to protection against disease
The right to free speech
The right to freedom of worship
The right to freedom from false imprisonment
The right to trial by jury
The right to healthful surroundings
The right to a good education

The duty of obedience to law
The duty of paying taxes
The duty of military service
The duty of voting
The duty of office-holding
The duty of jury service
The duty of keeping healthy

Nonetheless, the specific rights and their extension varied in time and place. Demography, power relations (including the capacity of certain classes or groups to assert their claims), particular historical trajectories all influenced the conception of rights and duties in each specific political community. It is for concrete historical reasons that freedom of expression is so important in the definition of citizenship rights in the United States, and less important in France, for example.[8]

The recognition of rights may well remain little more than symbolic if there are no mechanisms to guarantee their full realization, moreover. The full exercise of citizenship rights has always depended upon the creation or reform of public institutions which guarantee their continuity. For Marshall (1964: 78-79), for example, civil rights required access to a judicial system. Parliaments, electoral regimes, and later political parties, became the guarantors of political rights. Public services for education, health, and income security became the institutionalized expression of social solidarity and social rights. Thus, our **second dimension,** that is, **access,** is closely linked, although not reduced to, the first.

From the beginning, democratic theorists also understood that citizens had to be prepared to assume the democratic duties associated with universal citizenship. The difference between a subject and a citizen was not just the right to participate but also the capacity to do so. This idea had two important consequences. First, full citizenship depended on access to political power. It is this understanding which had led, by early modernity, to replacement of divine authority (expressed by a sovereign or other institutions combining religious and political authority) with the institutions of self-government, justified in secular terms. Over time this access was broadened, each time that social and economic mobilization and change forced recognition that additional categories of the population merited full inclusion in the polity. Thus, from free men to all men, from property owners to all men, from men to women, from native born to naturalized, full political rights were gradually extended. In the process, the idea that democracy was the only legitimate form of political power became hegemonic.

This understanding had a second consequence. Democratic theorists understood that decreeing rights did not mean that meaningful access automatically followed. As Dominique Schnapper (1994: 95) describes it, "...les citoyens doivent disposer des moyens nécessaires pour exercer *concrètement* leurs droits."

Institutional guarantees again became important. By the nineteenth century, public schools had become the major institution to ensure that young people could become full citizens. This involved more than teaching "civics"; it required the development of intellectual skills defined as necessary to the reasoning and other capacities that citizens needed. Then in the twentieth century, basic levels of material well-being were identified as sustaining meaningful access to the practices of citizenship and to fostering engagement. Thus, the degree of access may vary within and across political communities, depending on institutional design, and according to the support given by the state and the community to groups disadvantaged because

of their social, economic or cultural situation.

Access is not automatically achieved; it too may require efforts to foster equality. Strategies to improve access may involve mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation in the democratic process and the full exercise of citizenship rights, all of which vary over time and place. Moreover, struggles to gain better access for certain categories of citizen also contribute to the transformation of institutional practices, changing boundaries of access as well as its mechanisms.

The **third dimension,** which has always been an element of the definition of citizenship, is that of **belonging**.[9] To be a citizen means to be part of a specific political community, to participate in its economic and social life and to enjoy its support in case of need. Citizenship defines the boundaries of belonging, giving specific recognition and status to the ones entitled to participate in and benefit from the political community. From the time of ancient Greece, the status of citizen identified those who were part of the community, distinguishing them from those excluded from it, whether because they were strangers or because they were not deemed deserving.

Again, the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion vary from one state to another, as well as over time within a single state. For example, for centuries only free men belonged to the community of citizens; their female relatives and children, as well servants and other dependants, had claims to protection but not to citizenship. Women had – albeit limited – civil rights long before they had political rights. Indeed, because their rights were so limited they could not be full citizens. They were nationals without citizenship. Because of this non-citizen status, well into the twentieth century they lost their nationality upon marriage to a foreigner. Nor could they pass on their nationality to their children.

The state plays an essential role in delimiting the boundaries of belonging. The he result of such a process is to create a political identity, based on the distinction between members and non-members. This common identity plays a role in maintaining social solidarity despite important cultural, economic and social differences among people with often competing interests. Again, according to Marshall:

> ... feudal societies were bound together by a fiction: the fiction of kinship, or the fiction of common descent. Citizenship requires a different kind of bond, a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession of all. (1964: 77).

Each of the three elements of citizenship (rights, access, belonging) can be defined separately. They cannot be understood independently from each other, however. Rights and responsibilities mean little without proper access and without proper recognition of membership. A real attachment to the community, essential for the exercise of democratic participation, is

difficult without proper recognition of rights and access to political power. Citizenship thus involves a triangular relationship among rights, access and belonging.

In this introductory section we have insisted on the fact that these dimensions emerged through historical processes that varied considerably from one state to another. We have also insisted on the fact that all these dimensions are shaped by government practices and political struggles. Citizenship regimes are thus in constant redefinition and transformation. In fact, for the last four centuries claims to alter, expand, and restrain the three dimensions of citizenship have provoked political mobilization and action. From the *Magna Carta* to Meech Lake, from the *Bill of Rights* of 1689 to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, citizens have contested, debated and redesigned the boundaries of their relationship to political authority.

It is not surprising, then, that challenges to the boundaries of citizenship occupy such an important place today. The rest of the paper will explore four challenges to the borders of citizenship: the challenge of social and cultural diversity, the challenge to the state as the "natural location" of citizenship, the challenge to social citizenship rights in the current restructuring of global economy and the challenge of democratic participation. As we will see, the boundaries of citizenship are being questioned, redefined and transformed in those debates.

THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY

The first challenge to identifying the borders of modern citizenship is perhaps the best documented and most discussed. Often those in quest of recognition of cultural diversity are seeking to redesign the content of rights, the way access works, and most often the definition of belonging within citizen regimes. Not surprisingly, then, the debate is lively and many issues are still on the table. Indeed, this challenge leads to some of the most difficult political disputes of the last decades.

As we have seen, the foundation stone of the project of liberal citizenship was the notion of equality among all individuals within the political community. In the classic liberal definition, citizenship is based on a "neutral" definition. *Homo publicus* is assumed to be an individual free of, or capable of rising above, cultural or particularistic attributes.[10] Inclusion in the political community assumed the capacity to exercise fully the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the borders of belonging are defined through common attachment to them. When cultural attributes and related values are recognized as existing, they are treated *either* as beyond the reach of citizenship *or* as something to be smoothed over by good citizenship practices.

In the last five decades, thinking about these matters has changed significantly. With respect to the first way of thinking about culture, it was possible to imagine a putting aside of diversity because the borders of cultural communities and national communities were considered to correspond. For example, T.H. Marshall took for granted the cultural uniformity of "the

nation" when he described the progressive expansion of citizenship rights in his native England. National consciousness, an essential component of citizenship according to Marshall, is based on "a common loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession of all" (1964: 101). Like many of his contemporaries, Marshall's preoccupations were much more with socio-economic disparities than cultural ones. Thus, when post-war international accords recognized the right to self-determination, the notion was that each national cultural community would have its own space of citizenship. As for recognition of cultural differences within national states, they were relegated to the private sphere, a sphere that was always of lesser political importance, less worthy of attention and isolated from it. And private institutions, especially political parties, were delegated the task of recognizing difference, through their representational practices.[11]

Canada provides an example of the second way of addressing cultural diversity. Fully aware of the wide variety of backgrounds from which citizens came, and the persisting local loyalties which limited adhesion to a single definition of "Canadian," political discourse in the first half of the twentieth century stressed the need to create a sense of Canadianism (as we saw in the quote from Lindal above). Numerous were the commentators, including Paul Martin when he introduced the *Citizenship Act*, who were well aware of Canadian diversity, both within the country and, because of immigration, throughout the twentieth century. He wrote of his visit to Europe in 1944:

> On a dull and chilly February day, I was driven from Paris to pay respects to the Essex Scottish and other Canadians in the military cemetery at Dieppe. There were wooden crosses marking some of the graves. The final tombstones had not been erected. The racial origins of the dead were so varied: Anglo-Saxon, French, and many other backgrounds. It struck me that herein lay the character of Canada, a land of people of diverse national origins. ... Nothing has since epitomized the concept of our nation more poignantly for me than that cemetery. Of whatever origin, these men were all Canadians." (1993: 66).

Therefore, the goal of policy in the years after 1945 was to accept diversity,[12] and to give to everyone a similar set of rights and foster a sense of belonging. As Bourque and Duchastel say of the 1940s, diversity was managed in the political discourse – where "la notion de *citoyen* occupe la place centrale" – by installing another understanding of universality, one that stressed socio-economic equality:

> Ce pancanadianisme, auquel participent aussi les notions du *peuple* et de *national*, cherche à trouver dans la notion de citoyen un principe d'universalité (égalité d'accès aux services) qui, empiriquement, réunirait tous les Canadiens en une seule et même communauté (1993: 65).

In later years, however, both the culturally neutral and homogeneous definition of the political community and one based on socio-economic equality became increasingly hard to

sustain. First, by the 1960s national minorities[13] had begun again to make claims for recognition. In addition to the Québécois and Aboriginal nationalist movements familiar to Canadians, by the 1970s the Basques, the Bretons, the Scots, and a host of other minorities around the world were framing demands for recognition of their specificity and for institutional arrangements to guarantee this cultural difference. Thus, nationalist movements have put the issue of diversity and recognition of difference on the agenda.

In the same years, there was mobilization of claims for equality from other "minorities" that were also expressed in terms of diversity. A range of social movements (women, gays and lesbians, religious minorities) made claims for inclusion by articulating their struggle in cultural terms. Parts of the women's movement, for example, focused on the gap between formal recognition of citizenship rights, the reality of unequal access in institutions that devalued their values and imposed male standards of behaviour, traditional masculine routes to representation and so on. Gays and lesbians, on the other hand, argued that the failure to recognize the legitimacy of their sexual preference resulted in their being denied formal and equal rights. Sometimes claims were framed in terms of civil rights. But often, too, both the women's movement and gays and lesbians criticized the supposed equal treatment of social rights, claiming that they suffered from discrimination because they did not have the same social rights as men or heterosexual families.

In all of this, these movements came to share a perspective similar to that of political theorist Iris Marion Young. She describes universal conceptions of citizenship, based on the abstract individual, as being fundamentally unjust. They oppress historically disadvantaged groups such as women and cultural minorities by imposing the norms and values of the majority as the universal ones (1989: 257).

Finally, in practical terms, it became difficult to ignore cultural diversity in political practice as the socio-demographic reality of liberal democracies shifted, both in traditional countries of immigration (such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia) and in Western Europe. Immigration itself became increasingly diverse in origin, and issues of how to include immigrant populations again appeared on the political agenda. Immigration came to be seen as posing a direct challenge to citizenship not only in terms of guarantees of access and definition of rights, but also in terms of plurality of values and definition of belonging. There was concern about the extent to which immigrants would "join" their new community, and give up previous allegiances.

As a response to the challenge of these claimants for better or different recognition of cultural diversity and the increasing feeling of alienation expressed by minorities, a range of solutions are proposed. These have followed the lines of the well-known liberal-communitarian-republican debate. Given that this debate is well documented (Helly 1998; Weinstock 1999; Shafir 1998; Kymlicka and Norman 1994), it will only be briefly outlined here. The emphasis will be on the challenges to the three dimensions of citizenship identified above.

The central question asks how can the cohesion and the unity of the political community be maintained in a pluralist and diversified social context. Questions of inclusion, recognition of differential rights as well as conditions for the emergence of a sense of solidarity and belonging are thus central to this debate, in which diversity is often associated with fragmentation and potential social unrest (Van Gunsteren 1998).

The Liberal Response to Diversity

One proposal to strengthen cohesion, often adopted by left-leaning liberals, is to ensure better inclusion and better opportunities for participation through redistributive justice. The strengthening of the welfare state and social programs is supposed to have a positive effect on minorities who feel excluded.[14] Although this approach rightly recognizes the link between socio-economic exclusion, access and belonging, it does not directly address all the questions of cultural diversity and their political dimensions. For example, this approach informed – the now infamous – stance of the 1969 *White Paper on Indian Affairs*. It was also a response to many issues raised by the women's movement and second-wave feminism. In the first case, the proposal was to include Aboriginal people in Canadian society by repealing "special treatment," based on their cultural heritage and treaty rights, and to institute "equal treatment" in terms of access to resources. In the case of women, there was, and still is, a lively debate within feminism about whether women form a group with different cultural values, or one which was discriminated against economically and socially and which could be integrated fully into the "mainstream" and thereby to full citizenship.

Such proposals, which focus almost exclusively on reforming access mechanisms without questioning the content of the rights regime or the complexities of cultural identities, were often rejected by minorities because they failed to recognize and especially failed to value, their own specificity. By refusing to acknowledge the cultural dimension of exclusion, this approach generated new tensions. While cultural minorities often suffer from socio-economic disadvantage, they usually see the real root of the problem as discrimination (racism, sexism, and so on) rather than as simply a lack of economic resources. Therefore, they are dismayed by approaches that treat identity claims as only a channel to express socio-economic alienation.

Another response to the challenge of cultural diversity is inspired by French republicanism. It suggests focusing on civic virtues and attachment to the institutions and values associated with citizenship so as to create a sense of belonging that is not associated with cultural identities but with the capacity to participate in the polity. Republicans recognize the relevance of specific communities of belonging but argue that the state should not be identified with any of the communities it regulates. Instead, the state should foster a neutral "public community" where individuals from various backgrounds meet in search of common ground (Van Gunsteren 1998: 21). Dominique Schnapper (1994) represents this position very well. She hopes that an increased focus on participation by everyone and real access to political institutions and power will

mediate cultural differences. In a similar way, the ideas of civic nationalism (Yael Tamir 1993) and constitutional patriotism (Habermas 1995) have been suggested as ways of allowing a variety of cultures with differing identities to come together. The rallying point is the notion of citizenship defined in procedural terms.

Again, the main problem with such approaches identified by their critics and those promoting recognition of diversity is that they are all attempts to depoliticize cultural identities. Thus, while recognizing the existence, and even the public relevance, of cultural diversity, the goal of such thinking is to prevent diversity from destabilizing existing institutions and undermining existing values (such as the lay Republic). It cannot acknowledge that institutional practices may already encode cultural biases, because the majority has already imposed its language, its historical heritage and its values in the public sphere (Van Gunsteren 1998). As such, it offers limited insight as to the redefinition of the boundaries of belonging along cultural lines. For the same reason, it also rejects the notion of differential rights, based on cultural or other collective specificity, within a unitary citizenship regime.

The Communitarian Critique

Scholars interested in the fate of cultural minorities and disadvantaged groups have taken to task the notion of "neutral equality" in liberal visions of citizenship. Some of the strongest critiques of liberal citizenship come from authors associated with the communitarian school. Although an eclectic group,[15] communitarians all conceive of the individual as embedded in a cultural environment and in a specific historical setting. While still considering citizenship as the relationship between individuals and the state, they suggest that more attention should be given to communal identities and cultural specificity in order to promote healthy citizenship, and in particular its belonging dimension.

For example, Charles Taylor (1997) demonstrates why, for him, it is impossible to define the individual without the community and without taking into account cultural practices. The institutions associated with citizenship must allow for the expression of cultural diversity and specific identities for the individual to develop a sense of belonging to the political community:

L'identité est ce qui permet de définir l'individu face aux autres et en fonction des autres, elle permet de se distinguer mais aussi de s'associer à ceux en lequel on se reconnaît dans les diverses facettes de la vie sociale. Il est donc impossible de parler de participation pleine et entière sans une forme de reconnaissance des différences culturelles (Taylor 1998).

For him, cohesion of a political community is founded on its members' sense of solidarity and belonging to that community. Such solidarity is only possible if individuals feel fully equal (including in terms of cultural practices) within the citizenship regime. Charles Taylor uses the

cases of Aboriginal peoples and French-speaking Quebeckers as examples of communities that have long felt – and indeed still feel – excluded from the Canadian citizenship regime on cultural grounds.

The history of the "constitutional question" should also be read as an effort to secure the kind of recognition of national difference that the pan-Canadian citizenship regime has more and more difficulty understanding, let alone incorporating (Jenson 1997). The contemporary Canadian citizenship regime and the "diversity model" within it recognizes differences primarily as an attribute of individuals, thereby moving away from an earlier capacity to recognize communities (McRoberts 1997). Therefore, nationalist claims for recognition and increased political autonomy are now, in fact, claims for a redefinition of the conditions of belonging within the citizenship regime in Canada.[16]

Cultural Recognition: A New Citizenship Right?

Acknowledging the communitarian critique, a certain number of liberal scholars suggest including cultural rights in the definition of citizenship, again without rejecting its foundational focus on the individual. Prominent among them is Will Kymlicka.[17] In his view, a liberal conception of citizenship should conceive of cultural diversity as a virtue, one that enhances rather than limits the freedom and the equality of individuals. Culture is the basis from which individuals select the values and references from which they build their own individuality. As such, everyone should be allowed to choose his or her cultural references. For such a choice to be a real one, Kymlicka argues that society must include a diversity of cultures, norms and values within it; too little diversity can stifle individuality. As such, the state has a responsibility not simply to protect but to allow for the growth of cultural diversity and groups which carry it (see his *Multicultural Citizenship* 1995).

A similar response to diversity inspired by the communitarian critique, but this time rooted in the republican tradition, is offered by Herman van Gunsteren. In his view, "a core task of the Republic is to organise plurality, not only of individuals but also of communities" (1998:24). As such, the "public community" should guarantee structural conditions for the development and expansion of all cultural communities.

Supporters of this position do see the need to set limits on cultural recognition, however. For example, according to Daniel Weinstock (1999), there is a risk such recognition will lead to an increasingly fragmented political community where claims for specific treatment become the norm rather than the exception. It is quite difficult to set criteria according to which special group rights could be accorded to a minority, and even harder to determine who could be recognized as a minority. Moreover, collective identity remains a subjective reality and to impose a definition, or a categorisation, of citizens according to their supposed allegiance to a group could have dramatic consequences, especially if these cultural attributes are used to set

exclusionary regime or to limit access to citizenship rights rather than enhance it. The example of the ex-Yugoslavia is the one most people point to here, but it is certainly not alone.

Citizenship and the Recognition of Cultural Diversity: The Canadian Experience

Canada has been, for obvious reasons, at the forefront of the debates on the cultural challenge to citizenship. Not only are some of the leading scholars in the field Canadians, but Canada is also to a certain extent a laboratory in terms of policy development in response to those challenges. There are two areas in which innovation is currently occurring, and in which controversy is therefore concentrated. The first is the area of multiculturalism policy. Since 1971, the Government of Canada has officially promoted a policy of multiculturalism, which has come to be based on a view similar in many ways to Kymlicka's. It stresses the positive value of cultural diversity in a liberal society, and therefore describes Canada in terms of a "diversity model."

This is an important departure from classic liberal thought, represented by the "French model," for example. As opposed to the communitarian idea, however, Canadian multiculturalism policies do not envisage a society structured along lines of culture. Thus, to the extent that cultural rights exist, they are intended to enhance an individual's freedom to choose to live according to his or her own cultural heritage (Kallen 1982: 53). The cultural rights associated with multiculturalism are thus attributed to individuals, not the group. As such, the policy mostly focuses on sustaining cultural organizations that can help individuals in their attempt to participate in the social, economic and political life of the country. It also promotes tolerance, funding anti-racist activities as well as programs enhancing greater access to public institutions for individual members of minority groups.

This attempt to recognize the cultural dimension of participation and access to citizenship rights is not without its critics, however. Multiculturalism has been criticized for fostering ethnic separation, enclavement and folklorisation of cultural attributes (Bissoondath 1994). Other critics, inspired by communitarians, argue that limiting culture to a matter of individual choice privatizes diversity and ignores its collective dimensions. Multicultural policy affords minorities cultural legitimacy so that "in private, they can sing their ethnic song, dance their ethnic dances and eat their ethnic food, but it does not provide minorities with support for *structural* pluralism – for educational, religious, language institutions – through which a living cultural community can survive and be revitalised" (Kallen1982: 56). Thus, for these commentators, far from solving the problem of access to citizenship, multiculturalism may in fact result in the opposite.

A second area in which Canadian policy has faced the diversity challenge occurred by introducing a certain amount of recognition of national minorities into the citizenship regime. These actions are redefining the boundaries of citizenship in Canada by opening space for some autonomy and some asymmetry in the citizenship regime. The most movement has been with

respect to Aboriginal peoples, who are seeking recognition of (and were, in fact, granted in the 1982 Constitution Act and in subsequent interpretations of Section 25 by the Supreme Court) certain privileges and rights not available to other Canadian citizens, on the basis of their standing as peoples. These rights have been translated in political terms into self-government arrangements that allow Aboriginal nations to exercise a limited sovereignty over a certain territory. The objective is to create institutional arrangements that will ensure the cultural and social development of Aboriginal communities. This is a formal recognition that forced integration or assimilation, in order to achieve homogeneity, is not necessarily the way to ensure social cohesion and participation in a diverse society.

As revealed by the controversy surrounding the agreement negotiated with the Nisga'a of British Columbia, formal recognition of asymmetrical citizenship can bring its share of conflict, however. Only the members of the Nisga'a nation will benefit from the rights associated with what is explicitly called "Nisga'a citizenship," including the right to vote in the assembly and elect representatives. This means that non-Nisga'a living within the territory administered by this First Nation will not have a right to vote on issues that directly affect them.

Critics have denounced the arrangement as "racist," because it defines the borders of belonging according to group membership.[18] It is, indeed, a departure from the liberal principle of universal – and supposedly neutral – equality. However, it is an arrangement which has been developed to address a lingering and festering real problem in the previous citizenship regime. Faced with the unacceptable social, economic and other consequences of the cultural exclusion of Aboriginal peoples living in Canada, an institutional arrangement based on differentiation appeared necessary in order to achieve equality.

One can expect this debate on asymmetrical citizenship to grow in importance in the near future, given the number of negotiations of self-government arrangements currently in process between federal and provincial governments and Aboriginal nations.

Elsewhere, different types of asymmetrical citizenship are being considered and promoted as the best way to guarantee the full exercise of citizenship for national minorities. Discussions about institutional recognition of Basques and Catalans in Spain and Scots in the United Kingdom are some examples. The arguments made are not that different from those about why it is necessary to recognize formally that Quebec is a distinct society.[19] As our constitutional controversies for decades have shown, however, it is not easy to insert new ways of thinking about cultural diversity and its recognition into citizenship regimes profoundly committed to traditional liberal notions of what constitutes equality.

Therefore, while few people would reject the notion that there is an important cultural dimension to social participation and full integration in a community, there is little agreement about how to achieve it. Cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious minorities all claim in their own

way a better integration in the citizenship regime that would allow them to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of the community without having to submerge their specific identity into the common culture, which is *de facto* the culture of the majority. The challenge for liberal societies is to develop a conception of citizenship as well as institutional mechanisms that allow such recognition without opening what Daniel Weinstock calls the Pandora's box of cultural exceptionalism (1999).

It is now clear however that it is impossible to treat citizenship as "above" cultural distinctions. Not only are groups seeking recognition of their specificity, but multiple communities of belonging (and indeed multiple citizenships) are becoming the rule rather than the exception. All this has important consequences for the definition of rights and responsibilities of citizenship and our understanding of the mechanisms of access, as well as of the conditions for solidarity and belonging. Dealing with diversity not only challenges older definitions of citizenship, but it also transforms its purpose as an organizing principle of society. Perhaps the purpose of citizenship might be not only to guarantee equality among members of the community in the Marshallian sense, but also, as Herman van Gunsteren suggests, to enable people with multiple identities to organize their own plurality (1998: 15).

THE CHALLENGE OF LOCATING CITIZENSHIP

If historically the invention of citizenship in western political thought involved the invention of the autonomous individual, it also required the invention of a new space in which individuals could associate. The modern national state, heir to a multitude of earlier political forms (Tilly 1991), had by the nineteenth century become the location in which citizens exercised their rights and responsibilities, gained access to political institutions, and in exchange formed bonds of common national identity. The "international" and "subnational" were spaces that could not adequately guarantee full citizenship.

Nonetheless, this picture of a single historical trajectory requires some nuancing according to institutional variation. For example, in federations, responsibility for all three dimensions of citizenship is constitutionally shared and, therefore, may vary according to institutional arrangements – and conflicts over them.

Indeed, as Canadians experienced it, the creation of a pan-Canadian citizenship regime after World War Two asked them to weaken their regional loyalties. As Paul Martin, Senior said when he presented the new Citizenship Act to the House of Commons in 1947:

> It is not good enough to be a good "bluenose" or a good Ontarian or a good Albertan. Sectional differences and sectional interests must be overcome if we are to do our best for Canada. The only way this can be done is through encouragement of the feeling of legitimate Canadianism…

(Paul Martin quoting himself from 1946, in Martin, 1993: 73).

In exchange, Canadians would be able to participate in a set of new economic and social institutions that expressed the bonds shared from "sea to sea". Nonetheless, the actual provision of citizenship rights and access, as well as the feelings of belonging, continued to vary substantially across jurisdictions, with intergovernmental relations being a frequent site of controversy and conflict resolution.

A growing body of literature argues that the social bond of citizenship is being challenged as a consequence of globalization. Sovereignty is said to be increasingly fragmented and divided. As a result, as David Held suggests, one can wonder:

> ...to what political entity does the democratic citizen belong? Everywhere the sovereignty of the nation state itself – the entity to which the language of citizenship refers, and within which the claims of citizenship, community and participation are made – is being eroded and challenged. (1991: 24).

Not surprisingly, then, in the era of globalization as national sovereignty is handed up to supranational entities or increasingly shared with sub-national units, the location for achieving full citizenship has again become an issue. Because the idea of modern citizenship is based on a relationship between the sovereign individual and the sovereign state, changes in the role of state institutions in the global order will undoubtedly affect citizenship practices.

Three arguments are commonly made about such processes. One sees a set of threats coming from groups seeking solidarity and a voice of their own in the global arena. Actors who move beyond the traditional borders of citizenship to seek recognition and standing in international and transnational agencies and institutions are often challenging existing citizenship regimes (Jenson and Papillon 2000).[20] Such action also occurs in a context of increasingly constraining international norms and institutions, as global markets are regulated and political institutions, intergovernmental and other, gain new authority. This is a second challenge to the traditional practice of locating citizenship in the national states, and, along with the first, leads some observers to focus on the supra-national level as the location in which rights, access and belonging will be defined. These commentators are sometimes supported and sometimes criticized by those who see a third challenge (often linked to the first two, to be sure). This involves the decomposition of the national state into its component parts, as regions and even global cities gain more capacity to regulate the citizenship of their denizens.

All three arguments share an assumption that the legitimacy of the national state as the site for the exercise of popular sovereignty is being lessened. As political struggles and debates that previously took place within state institutions are increasingly played out at transnational or subnational levels, national polities may well become less relevant, or less central to democratic

practices as well as for feelings of belonging and the distribution of rights.

In the face of such uncertainty, some authors suggest the decline of the national state will result in a medieval-like order of overlapping sovereignties and jurisdictions, with all the instabilities and potential conflicts over resources associated with the pre-modern times (for example, Bull 1977: 254). Others, looking at the current process of institutionalization in international politics, see the superimposition of a transnational order on national sovereignties, with a form of global democratic citizenship emerging as a legitimating force for a world government (for example, Rosenau 1998). Given the uncertainty about the direction of change, one promising stance involves treating globalization as a multidimensional process, involving a plurality of globalizations, and as a process which is best described as the globalization of the local and the localization of the global (Santos 2000). Such a perspective has the advantage of problematizing the direction of change, rather than assuming it, as far too many authors have tended to do.

Challenges from Above: Transnational Citizenship?

A growing number of political and social issues of direct relevance for citizenship have global dimensions. The creation of new institutions, structures and norms at the international level suggest that the borders of national sovereignties cannot encapsulate such issues. However, many of the institutions remain *international* organizations, and they often lack political space for non-state actors and for democratic practices. For example, even the European Union, which is one of the most developed of such institutions and which has created routes to representation for citizens (in the European Parliament and European Court of Justice, for example) as well as for states, still suffers from an acknowledged "democratic deficit." Where space does exist, it is often for non-governmental organizations acting in a sometimes uneasy alliance and sometimes uneasy conflict with governmental actors. The experience of environmental and women's summits organized by the United Nations provides an example of this kind of "adjustable" presence.

Faced with the closed doors of traditional international organizations, solidarity networks and other organizations have proliferated, as the mobilization against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) negotiated "behind closed doors" according to some[21] and the opposition to the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations in Seattle and Washington, DC indicate. Such movements are claiming the right to have access to crucial political processes that are taking place out of reach of the democratic structures of the national state. They are seeking to democratise international politics, a realm which has always belonged to the "sovereign" and been most distant from democratic and other controls (even as the conflict between the Prime Minister and Conrad Black reminds us). They are also seeking to realize the potential of international judicial regulation, again an area long overdetermined by national sovereignty. Increasingly, as we have seen, international courts can exercise authority, but the process

remains slow. Similarly, they enforce international agreements, whether on the environment, human rights or gender equality, although they never match the hopes of their promoters.

As a result, there is an growing body of literature exploring the possibilities of transnational citizenship emerging as a response to globalization (for example, Held, 1998; Rosenau 1998; Balibar 1998). As Brian Turner notes: "we have a system of national citizenship in a social context which requires a new theory of internationalism and universalistic citizenship" (1986: 140).

Concrete analysis about this process of transcending state sovereignty can be found in the literature about the international human rights regime. The United Nations and the European systems of human rights protection are said to be the embryo of a global citizenship based not on nationhood but on personhood. One of the earliest to make this connection, Yasemen Soysal (1994) describes a post-national regime of rights that is taking precedence over the state-based citizenship model. It is not membership in the national state that ensures the exercise of human rights but rather the status of person (individual) member of the world community of human beings.[22]

While Soysal focused on the European situation, it is interesting to note how Canada has followed a similar trajectory. Many rights are guaranteed to anyone on Canadian soil; citizenship is not a condition for their exercise. Foreigners legally resident in Canada have had the right to social citizenship for a long time. As early as 1949, for example, parents resident in Canada for a year were eligible to receive the Family Allowance, one of the first universal programs of social citizenship. Then, the Supreme Court confirmed in 1989 that the Charter applies equally to citizens, permanent residents and non-Canadians temporarily on Canadian soil.[23] As a committee of the Senate studying citizenship mused, perhaps Canadian citizenship as a particular status had been reduced to the right to vote and hold a Canadian passport (Senate 1993).

The Senate Committee's remarks help us to understand the limits to the thesis of transnational citizenship. First, human rights and citizenship should not be confused with each other. Human rights are moral standards that are in the process of becoming universal norms. Citizenship rights include basic human rights (the civil rights identified by T.H. Marshall), but citizenship goes beyond such rights. It is part of a larger compact between an institution (the state) and its constituents (the citizens). As we have seen above, this compact cannot be fully realized without mechanisms of access and expressions of belonging. Indeed, given the crucial historic link and the long-standing bargains among social forces that built an exchange of support for the state in return for participation in government, the absence of democratic control over transnational politics makes discussions of "global citizenship" ring hollow indeed.

It is also worth noting that many who announce the emergence of transnational citizenship build their claim on the behaviour of social movements that are active across national borders. They see such action as evidence of an emerging global democratic order. While there

is some merit to the argument that such actions are creating novel politics, it is worth noting that studies of social movements have not all confirmed such a far-reaching conclusion. Many movements use transnational networks not to create a new global order but rather to accumulate resources to challenge their opponents (often their state) in *national spaces*. In fact, some of those claims are direct challenges to the national citizenship regime, seeking not to replace it with a transnational regime but rather to transform it and gain access to its institutions. [24] It is not the location of citizenship that is at stake, but rather the *practices* associated with citizenship claims and access strategies that are changing.

There are situations, of course, in which supranational institutions are much stronger and do exercise considerable authority. The EU is the classic example, with many describing it as a unique political form that will be able to realize the promise of the Treaty of Amsterdam and provide a European citizenship (for example, Preuss 1999; Closa 1992). The Treaty states that "every person holding nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union."[25] There are a number of rights associated with European citizenship,[26] and institutional mechanisms, such as the European Parliament and Court, are developing. The European Commission also promotes European identity to increase the sense of belonging to the institutions of the Union among its citizens (Wiener 1997: 540).

Nonetheless, the continuing democratic deficit, as well as the complementary nature of European citizenship,[27] reveals that even this bold experiment has not delivered a complete "supranational citizenship." According to Andrew Linklater, for example, the EU Treaty establishes a "thin" citizenship "which is more appropriate to the development of an international civil society than for a transnational political community" (1998: 130). European citizenship remains a creation of sovereign states, and as such has the characteristics of a "second-tier" citizenship. As Wiener argues, the most striking difference between Union and national citizenship is that the belonging dimension of EU citizenship remains weak; European identity is still far from replacing the various national identities (1997: 548).[28]

The European case is a good example, however, of the new, more complex and diffused reality of citizenship in an increasingly integrated world. If it is still too early to predict whether a form of postnational or transnational citizenship will eventually emerge, it is obvious that the boundaries of what used to be national citizenship are changing. The question remains, however, as to how this new distribution of the attributes of citizenship will play out. Will state-centred citizenship disappear or might a multi-layered citizenship model, based on the European model where the primary allegiance still lies with the national community, eventually be generalized?

Challenges from Below: Subnational Citizenship?

One consequence, some authors argue, of the weakening of the national state associated with globalization has been the resurgence of local or subnational communities as a site of struggles

for power as well as democratic expression and solidarity. A growing body of literature argues that such communities are increasingly becoming the basis for citizenship claims (Archibugi, Held and Köhler 1998; Magnusson 1996). These authors suggest that processes of globalization and localization of citizenship are occurring simultaneously.

The first and most straightforward argument made to support this thesis is that cities, states or provinces, and regions are increasingly involved in transnational politics. In a global market economy, competition for investments and new markets is global. To act in them, regional, provincial and municipal governments are developing their own capacities or expertise, and included in their toolbox are various kinds of new relationships with economic actors and other political institutions.

Local politics extends its reach, and key decisions regarding citizens' interests are made at the local level, while communities develop solidarity with other communities that often transcends national borders. European regions, as provinces and states in North America, for example, now conduct intergovernmental relations traversing the borders of their country. Regional economies develop synergies which do not respect the borders of national sovereignty, and have consequences in the kinds of rights of mobility and social programs that are developed.

For example, the mobility rights guaranteed by European Union treaties are meant to serve the needs of contiguous transnational regions for exchanging expertise as much, if not more, than they are meant to serve the needs of national units. Similarly, the impetus for many terms of the Free Trade Agreement and then NAFTA arose from the interests of geographically contiguous regions, states and provinces in fostering, controlling, and shaping the rights to employment, contracts and so on (the basic civil rights of citizenship identified by Marshall).

These processes are even more complicated in a federation, in which state sovereignty is shared. In Canada, for example, given the constitutional division of powers, many of the social rights of citizenship, as well as civil rights, are the responsibility of provincial governments. The result is that rights as well as access can vary, at times significantly, from one jurisdiction to another. Moreover, activity at one level of government may promote rights and access in ways that are not accepted by the other level. In addition, as we noted in the introduction to this section, regional (frequently provincial) identities may compete with national feelings of belonging. Indeed, whether they compete with or reinforce each other has been a major political issue for decades.

Therefore, changes in political economy as well as constitutional politics mean that the borders of belonging to the political community may already be shifting from the national state to local or regional entities. They may be becoming more relevant to the daily life of individuals and to the expression of collective identities. As we have argued, the three dimensions of citizenship are mutually constitutive. If some access and some rights are shifting to more local communities – as for example, national standards shape provincial social program provision less

– chances are the solidarity and sense of belonging associated with citizenship and essential to the legitimacy of democratic institutions will follow.[29] Indeed, the resurgence of regional or provincial identities, often associated with downloading of responsibilities as well as disenchantment with the central government, is a reality in many countries, including the Canadian federation. News about movements for autonomy or separation in one province or region is increasingly frequent.[30]

Sites of Citizenship?

The final issue for the "location debate" involves the question of the "site of citizenship" as a horizontal, rather than vertical, matter. Further weakening of the state "from within" is associated with decentralisation and delegation of programs and service delivery. Although the consequences of economic restructuring on the social dimension of citizenship will be detailed in the next section, it is worth noting its impact on the "sites" of citizenship practices.

In response to pressures to reduce the size of the state as well as to increase the private sector's flexibility for responding to global competition, structures associated with the welfare state and other public services have been "trimmed-down." This has involved elimination of services, privatization of delivery, decentralisation of design to subnational units or increased reliance on partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors. Municipalities, local governments and non-profit private organizations are becoming central actors not simply in service delivery but also in the definition of access to those services. In this way, they are taking on some of the responsibilities that previously belonged to state actors, such as public servants, and to democratically determined forms, such as rules and regulations.

Moreover, because these arrangements often involve partnerships of various kinds, there is a blurring of the boundary between those who speak as representatives of the public interest and those who speak for other interests. On the one hand, private sector organizations have clear responsibilities, to their Boards of Directors and shareholders, which are not identical to those of the wider public interest, expressed through public institutions. On the other hand, because they are actively engaged in partnerships, such private sector actors may also make some claims, based on experience and knowledge, to know the public interest.

Governing by partnership raises significant citizenship issues. Given that social rights as well as access to them and their design (via democratic institutions) are core dimensions of citizenship, we might wonder about the consequences of such changes. There are obviously issues of accountability, as non-state partners take responsibility for designing and managing public programs. In removing the administration of programs from direct public scrutiny, governments may also be losing legitimacy in their capacity to articulate the common interest of the community, and, by the same token, are weakening the democratic process associated with the definition of those programs.

The capacity of citizens to exercise their democratic rights may have been reduced dramatically in this "delocalization" process. In addition to issues of democratic access, this transformation again affects public services' legitimacy as expressions of collective solidarity. Focusing on service delivery by partnership or by privatization, even when publicly funded, begins to transform citizens' expectations about social programs, making them less the expression of social citizenship and more simply consumption goods, like any other.

Many of the issues raised in the location debate are linked to the third challenge that we have identified in the literature on citizenship, that of the status of social rights and support for the disadvantaged.

THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

Historically, the notion of citizenship was closely associated with the individualization of society and the elimination of traditional ties of obligation, derivative for the most part of feudal and patrimonial representations of social relations. Nonetheless, this individualization has never meant that theories of citizenship could not understand the importance of social ties and cohesion. The French revolutionaries, for example, clearly sought to rework traditional ties of social solidarity into modern ones by giving fraternity the same standing as liberty and equality. By fraternity they meant what we call solidarity (Bernard 1999: 49). They were concerned to identify the existence of social bonds and to signal the need for their sustenance.

Because citizenship has so long been imbued with notions of solidarity, it was not surprising that T.H. Marshall (and James McCaig, as we saw above) identified in the politics of the inter-war and immediate post-war years, the emergence of a new set of rights – social ones (1964: 86ff; 105ff.). Whereas in the nineteenth century, during the heyday of classical liberalism and its nightwatchman state, "dependency" had brought a loss of citizenship, by the twentieth century access to certain public supports in time of need was a citizenship right and recognition of belonging.

The treatment of poverty exemplifies this shift. Under the Poor Laws, individuals in receipt of relief were excluded from citizenship:

> The Poor Law treated the claims of the poor, not as an integral part of the rights of the citizen, but as an alternative to them – as claims which could be met only if the claimants ceased to be citizens in any true sense of the word. For paupers forfeited in practice the civil right of personal liberty, by internment in the workhouse, and they forfeited by law any political rights they might possess (Marshall 1964: 88).

Even the early English Factory Acts (Marshall 1964: 88-89), protective legislation in France, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions permitting "restraint of trade" in order to protect the health and safety of workers, applied only to non-citizens, that is, women and children. Adult males, the "citizens *par excellence*" in Marshall's language, were not covered by these early health and safety measures, precisely because to be a full citizen still required the capacity to be self-supporting and fully responsible.

A first break in this pattern came with public education, interestingly enough provided usually for both girls and boys, even though adult women still lacked full citizenship. Public education obviously met many goals simultaneously but one could be described, as it was by Marshall (1964: 90), as the adult's right to be educated when a child. There was also a dose of citizen responsibility; schooling was compulsory and removed parental "choice" whether for moral or economic reasons about whether to send the child to school. In some countries the citizenship content was front and centre, as it was in France, for example. For the proponents of the *loi Ferry*, the public school and the school master or mistress were the republican bulwark against the influence of the Church and were the Republic's guarantee of its future.

With the expansion of social programs in conjunction with the broadening of political rights to new groups (the working class and women), a major shift occurred in notions of economic autonomy. Mobilization by social reformers, Social Democrats, the organized working class, promoters of positive liberalism, Christian Democrats, and so on all gradually transformed "poor relief" into "income security," the "dole" into "social programs" and charity (both public and private) into the welfare state. The individual no longer had to be economically autonomous in order to participate politically (with the elimination of property restrictions and the Poor Laws) or to enjoy full civil rights. By 1945 women in most countries had finally gained the vote, although it did take until the mid to late 1960s before married women enjoyed full civil rights with respect to contracts and many financial matters.

This move to create social rights of citizenship marked a major change in thinking about public finances. As we have noted above, enlargement of citizenship was historically constructed over time out of a more or less explicit exchange relationship. The sovereign could tax his subjects, but in exchange those subjects gained political rights and the power of the sovereign was thereby constrained. By the eighteenth century – recall the two great Revolutions of the end of that century and their emphasis on taxation – the link between representation and taxation had been clearly made in political discourse. But taxation for what?

It took until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for the notion that the state had some responsibility for alleviating the ordinary and extra-ordinary risks of life to be more widely accepted. The use of public funds for what we think of social spending required a further transformation, one which transmuted longstanding private commitments within religious and other communities to voluntary taxation – that is to tithing – into an acceptance of public

spending for social purposes.

The institutions of the Judeo-Christian tradition had always committed themselves to some responsibility for the poor, in their own communities and beyond. Therefore, social reformers, many coming from faith communities and with ideas about the social gospel, social Catholicism and so on, contributed to this transmutation. In order to avoid the stigmatization, the moral overlay and the general "hit-and-miss" nature of charity, public provision and state spending came to be identified as a better way to disperse the tithe, or tax, from the richer to the poorer and certainly the weaker.

Of course, there was another route to the notion that the state should use its resources on social spending. A range of additional arguments came from social democracy and other left formations, which had strong views about public spending and taxation. In their case, the state was the proper institution to offset the power of capital and to alleviate the social costs of living in capitalist societies. The basis of the claim was to deploy democratic power in politics to counterbalance the economic power of capitalists in markets and elsewhere. Through public institutions citizens could make choices and impose them in the economic realm, as well as on themselves and their fellow citizens.

The various traditions of self-taxing of faith communities became important allies of the social democratic forces in some countries and an autonomous source of support for public spending in others. The existence of the one route by alliance (which is where we might locate Canada with the social gospel roots of the NDP and left liberalism, the British Labour tradition and Swedish social democracy) and another arising directly out of a reforming religious tradition (which we might see in the social Catholic roots of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, and Germany and many other European countries' Christian Democracy), meant that post-war citizenship was deeply imbued with a vision of social rights of citizenship, and the legitimacy of using public monies to achieve social ends.

Indeed, we might read the longstanding disputes in Canadian inter-governmental relations over the "spending power" and tax points – controversies that have been constant since the mid-1940s – as a reflection of the importance of these issues, as well as differing interpretations about citizenship and rights. Governments then, as now and in all intervening decades, have understood that the way they spend their taxes expresses the content of their particular societal projects, their understanding of citizenship and the role of the state (Bourque et Duchastel (1996) review these debates in detail).

Social citizenship, within the mixed economies of the post-war years, generated rising expenditures on education, health, children and the poor.[31] People often made explicit links to citizenship, as Canada's Liberal government did at the post-war Reconstruction Conference, where social welfare was described as making "… a vital contribution to our concept of Canadian citizenship and to the forging of lasting bonds of Canadian unity" (quoted in Cameron

1997: 4).

Eventually, the justice of such spending was widely accepted, and through the 1960s and 1970s new expressions of social citizenship were devised. In Canada, for example, these years saw bodies like Secretary of State take on a large agenda, in which social and political equality were linked (Pal 1993; Jenson and Phillips 1997). This said, of course, there is never complete consensus on these matters, any more than we have seen in the other large debates. By the late 1970s, a debate had broken out within and across two political traditions, those of the right and the left.

Social Citizenship – The Critique from the Right

For politicians and political forces on the right of the political spectrum, the consequences of too much investment and spending on social citizenship had become very obvious by these years. One was ballooning expenditures, described as "out-of-control" and threatening to sabotage future economic growth. As the contours of globalization became clearer, threats to competitiveness were often evoked as the downside of high levels of state spending or costly social programs, whether financed by public spending or employers' contributions. Therefore, throughout these years in most European and North American countries there was a critique of social spending as a threat to economic well-being. There is no need to delve deeply into these opinions; they have become familiar.

Such arguments, while much debated and no doubt having much empirical validity, would not have had the moral and political force they came to enjoy, if were not for the fact that some political forces on the right linked the spending debate to far-reaching criticism of the organization of citizenship. In what came to be called variously the New Right, neo-conservatism, and neo-liberalism, post-war citizenship was faulted for being too "passive."[32] Citizens' lack of engagement was both economic and political. While we will explore the second in more detail in the next section, criticisms of the economic consequences of "passivity" gained ground quickly.

The basic notion was that social citizenship – often described as "entitlements" – encouraged citizens to take but not give, to disengage from the labour force, and to be willing to live in the semi-poverty of social assistance. This construction of the negative effects and unintended consequences of social spending led to a clear political conclusion for right-wing politicians and parties. It would be necessary to reintroduce the responsibility dimension of citizenship, in particular by developing incentives for individuals to take responsibility for themselves and their families.

The policy package became a mixture of sticks and carrots. On the first side were policies seeking to reduce dependency by removing those who "could be" working from social

assistance. Gradually over time the list expanded from the "welfare bums" to include virtually all able-bodied individuals and to force those still on welfare to work for their benefits. Compulsory and punitive workfare was one manifestation of this position. On the side of the carrots were some workfare programs which coupled the requirement to work with a range of supports to enable people to do so, with training, childcare and transportation being on most lists.

Another important element of the carrot side, and one which interfaced easily with the thinking about workfare, was the notion that people had to have sufficient resources to be responsible citizens. Therefore, they needed to retain a larger portion of their income; they ought not to "spend" so much on taxes. Such thinking provoked a range of political arguments about the costs of taxation, which went far beyond the concerns of economic competitiveness. Too high taxes were cast as hindrances to competitiveness and individual liberty, to be sure. But they had also begun, from this point of view, to interfere with citizens' capacity to exercise their responsibilities of citizenship, that is to be independent, autonomous, and self-reliant.

Such thinking has resulted in a substantial narrowing of the terms of citizenship for some. It has been reduced to the civil and political rights identified by Marshall and the liberty and political equality identified by the French revolutionaries. Moreover, markets, rather than collective choices exercised through political institutions, have been identified as the locale most appropriate for the exercise of consumer sovereignty. This has been described as the liberal paradigm of citizenship, which finds public good in private decisions, particularly those organized by markets (Snellen 2000: 1). We would be hardly surprised, then, to find that this position has not been adopted by everyone.

Improving Social Citizenship – The View from the Left

To say that the right's vision of social solidarity and the place of politics has not generated consensus does not mean that the alternatives currently proposed as alternatives are simply a call for a return to the past. As we will see below, updating has been going on among progressive forces as well. Before examining these discussions, however, it is worth summarizing the way that many in Canada read the post-war expression and institutionalization of social citizenship.

Throughout the years of the Second World War, the Liberal government promised a future of peace with security and a new social contract. This was eventually expressed as a pan-Canadian social contract between individual citizens and the government in Ottawa (Bourque and Duchastel 1996: 83; Senate 1993). As the 1943 Throne Speech put it: "a comprehensive national scheme of social insurance should be worked out which will constitute a charter of social security for the whole of Canada" (quoted in Cameron 1997: 3). The recovery of this history in the 1980s, as the post-war social contract was being remade via trade agreements and

reduced government spending, resulted in renewed attention to social policy as a dimension of citizenship and battles to preserve the programs that represented it. As a result, decentralization of the state and its withdrawal from political and economic regulation, described in the previous section, could increasingly be represented as an assault against the basic values of Canadian citizenship (for example, Morris and Changfoot 1996).

In this sense, the situation in Canada is the obverse of that in the United Kingdom and the United States. Despite the fact that it was a British sociologist, T.H. Marshall, who announced the arrival of the social rights of citizenship, the welfare state was rarely framed in such terms in the UK. Therefore, the terrain remained open for the Conservative government to lay claim to the citizenship discourse and propose a *Citizen's Charter* in 1991. It put the emphasis on service delivery and accountability rather than program content. In Canada, in contrast, from the 1940s on, the substance of Canadian citizenship was presented in social as well as political terms. This has meant that proposals to change social programs have always had to carry a heavy baggage of other values, as has been seen in the last 15 years in debates about medicare and free trade.

Embrace of and enthusiasm for post-war social programs had not always been the stance of the left, of course. Well before the New Right began to take on the post-war welfare state, criticisms from the left of its limits and its nefarious effects were in wide circulation (of the many, see for example, Marcuse 1968; Panitch 1977).[33] Most frequently faulted were the disempowering effects of dependency and the consumerist society which undermined sociability and engagement. The bureaucratic welfare state was already accused of transforming citizens into clients, who no longer participated politically or otherwise.[34] There was a call to couple strategies for empowerment with strategies for income security (Bélanger and Lévesque 1992). The most forward-looking of these visions generated policies of community development of various sorts and levels of radicalism. The government of Canada participated with the Local Initiatives Programs of the early 1970s, for example.

Such criticisms of the hierarchical and bureaucratic welfare states never disappeared, even when lefts had to turn their hand to defending rather than improving welfare states in the face of the political assaults of the New Right. This has led to a series of initiatives described variously as lowering the "welfare wall," "supply-side labour market policy," and "moving children off welfare." In all of them, the goal is to manage the interface between market participation and market failure. They involve, for example, analyses of the restructuring of labour markets which are shedding workers, and therefore creating the need constantly to invest in training and retraining, including life-long learning if citizens are to be able to participate (for example, Martin and Ross 1999). Others focus on the mounting needs for services, needs left unmet by current markets; they seek to provide resources to communities and associations so that they will be able to begin to address such needs.

While such thinking might be read simply as social or economic policy redesign (which

it is), it is interesting to note that it is increasingly phrased in citizenship terms in a range of countries. There is a return to the language of solidarity and of equality. For example, Tony Blair, writing of his vision of citizenship in *New Britain: My vision of a young country* (1996), said:

> People are not separate economic actors competing in the marketplace of life. They are citizens of a community. We are social beings. We develop the moral power of personal responsibility for ourselves and each other… People are not just competitive; they are co-operative too. They are not interested in the welfare of themselves; they are interested in the well-being of others (quoted in Pollitt 2000: 2).

If the Right can be described using a definition of citizenship narrowed to political participation and freedom, this centre-left can be described as treating citizenship as a phenomenon of "the *social* sphere – civil society – rather than the *political* sphere – the state and membership of a specifically *political* community" (Pollitt 2000: 2). A variety of authors, coming from different political horizons, agree that the core of the Blairist project is equality of opportunity, responsibility and "true community" (see the references in Lewis 1999: 63, who also makes the links to the British liberal tradition, including Beveridge).

Such new attention to citizenship elsewhere has led to a number of initiatives touching directly on its social dimensions. For example, following the efforts in the early 1990s to insert a social charter of rights into the Canadian Constitution during the debate preceding Charlottetown, anti-poverty and other advocates have pursued strategies through the courts seeking better recognition of social rights in the foundational documents. Here the emphasis is on using political institutions to achieve social citizenship.

Another direction of action has brought, in several countries, a resurgence of language of democracy, linked to the economy as much as to politics, via the concept of the social economy. In France, Belgium and Canada (although primarily only in Quebec), the notion of the social economy has been developed to carve a new space for interaction of state and societal actors, including the major economic ones (Lévesque and Mendell, 1999). Proponents of the development of this sector see it as a place in which the excluded can be brought back into society by providing them with the wherewithal not only to engage in the market economy but also in politics. All of this has led to efforts to reanimate community life at the local level in poor and disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Helly 1999: 37 [efforts in France]; 41 [in the U.S.]; the literature on community development in Canada is immense).

There is, indeed, increasing recognition that economic exclusion and poverty hinder access to the full rights of citizenship. From something as straightforward as the need to have a fixed address in order to vote, the broader consequences of exclusion for citizenship have been elaborated in many places. The creation of the category, involving economic, social, health and

familial dimensions, has been studied by several authors (see Thomas 1997; Castel 1995; Helly 1999: 36ff. for a summary). The intersections with citizenship can be seen in this quotation from a French government report in 1987:

> Il existe un lien d'interdépendance entre les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels et les libertés civiles et politiques. Faute d'une sécurité minimum dans les domaines fondamentaux de l'existence, une partie de la population française ne peut disposer des moyens d'insertion sociale, notamment par une participation associative. Faute d'un domicile reconnu, un citoyen ne peut obtenir sa carte d'électeur. Illettré il ne peut pas prendre connaissance des programs politiques (quoted in Helly 1999 : 37).

In a recent publication Paul Bernard (1999) makes a similar argument, going beyond the category of the excluded to describe the inevitable interconnections among all three classic values of citizenship, and links therefore across policy domains.

THE CHALLENGE OF PARTICIPATION

As has been clear throughout this paper, democratic institutions and practices are a basic component of modern citizenship. The right to vote and to stand for office marks the shift from subject to citizen. The responsibility of citizens to participate in public affairs has an even longer pedigree. As David Held (1993: 17) writes:

> In Renaissance republicanism, as well as in Greek democratic thought, a citizen was someone who participated in 'giving judgement and holding office'. Citizenship meant participation in public affairs...The limited scope in contemporary politics for the active involvement of citizens would have been regarded as most undemocratic.

Several issues in this statement touch directly on the dimensions of citizenship; these will be elaborated below. The first relates to rights and responsibilities. While the formal right to vote and stand for office has been universally available for decades, the reality of that right and access to participation remains an issue. Second, there is the issue of civic duties, and the extent to which good citizens must participate in civic, and particularly in political, life, and therefore the need to educate them to do so. The question of content of citizenship education remains highly contested, however. Third, as the quotation also indicates, participation may be less active than democratic theory and theories of citizenship might consider necessary in order to make citizenship a reality. There can be both structural and contextual reasons for a low participation. Therefore, much attention has gone to matters of citizen engagement and approaches to facilitate participation as well as to explanations for the low rate of participation in certain areas.[35]

Between Formal Rights and Real Access

The existence of this gap between theory of democracy and actual levels of participation has solicited discussions in both the academic literature and politics about how to assure meaningful access to groups who are hindered from participation for socio-economic or other reasons.

From the beginning of liberal democracy, observers noticed that politics, even after universal suffrage, was dominated by the presence of the better off, the better educated, and men. Therefore, a variety of efforts have been made to expand the net and include groups whose rates of representation do not match their presence in the population. For example, Canadian electoral law and the regime controlling election expenditures has been, since the 1960s, founded on the notion that the playing field needs levelling if access is to be fair (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing - RCERPF - 1991). Limits on expenditures or on contributions both seek to avoid not only corruption but also a politics open only to those with access to large sums of money, whether their own or their supporters'.

In recent years, attention has turned to mechanisms, both public and private that will increase the presence of women, for example, in elected office. While the major responsibility for promoting the election of women has always been considered to belong to private groups, especially political parties and other organizations, in some jurisdictions it is also treated a public responsibility linked to the need to achieve full citizenship.

For example, the RCERPF proposed providing public funds to parties which succeeded in electing a substantial number of their female candidates. This idea has recently resurfaced in France. The French Constitution was amended in July 1999 and the state is now required to foster parity (as many women as men) in all elected offices. One mechanism to be used for doing so is to provide public funds or impose fines on parties that do not respect the principle of parity.

But the French reform goes beyond the use of public funds to promote a certain outcome, as the RCERPF suggested. It mandates equal numbers of women and men in elected office. This constitutional change is the fruit of a long and controversial mobilization of women across Europe and with the support of the institutions of both the Council of Europe and the European Union. Similar reforms have been promoted in Belgium, Italy and Spain.

With these mobilizations an issue resurfaces: what is the purpose of political representation? Is it to mirror the population or to represent other qualities? If one accepts the notion that fairness requires a substantial presence of all groups, and especially minorities, in parliamentary and other representative bodies, then the issue of democratic representation quickly begins to resemble the controversy around cultural diversity, dealt with above. It is interesting to note that the arguments made by supporters of strict parity (equal numbers of women and men in all elected bodies) structure their arguments in ways that are familiar to those

claiming national recognition (in Kymlicka's terms) or "deep diversity" (in Taylor's parlance). Indeed, they are careful to dismiss out of hand any idea that gender is comparable to ethnicity, language or other differences which might lead to claims for recognition. For supporters of gender parity, gender is a "deep diversity" like no other (Jenson 2000).

The reactions to such claim and their dismissal by not only those defending the neutrality of republican universalism but also those seeking better representation for their group indicates that the fundamental principles of translating rights into real access remains unsettled into the present. It has resurfaced in the debates about the Nisga'a agreement, and is constantly present in discussions about the proper composition of representative bodies, both elected and non-elected.

Fostering Responsible Citizenship

There is a certain amount of irony in the fact that women seeking gender parity, or other institutional mechanisms for ensuring their inclusion, do so because they place a high value on active citizen participation in the traditional institutions of liberal democracy, exactly at a time when many others are concerned about increasing disenchantment with democratic politics. Levels of participation remain a controversial issue. While some surveys indicate a decline in levels of trust and confidence toward governments, detailed analyses of the different patterns of participation in civic life are contradictory.[36]

Those who focus on the decline in participation often do so because they see in the civic community, founded on democratic values and participation, the ties that bind in plural societies (for example, Weinstock 1998; Habermas 1992). Indeed, in the absence of a shared culture, the values of liberal democracy, including tolerance, respect and activity, carry a heavy load for such analysts (Senate 1993, for example).

The ways to sustain such commitments to the responsibilities of citizenship are not obvious, however. A few years ago Kymlicka and Norman (1995: 292-300) identified four schools or groupings and their categorization remains valuable today. These are:

1. *Proponents of participatory democracy*, who see empowerment as a response to apathy. As we have seen above, this group's concerns overlap those of social citizenship in that their attention most often goes to those parts of the population disempowered by exclusion. We have seen them, therefore, in the previous section.

2. *Adherents of civic republicanism*, who see an intrinsic value in political participation. This group has the most difficulty coming to grips with growing

expressions of apathy as well as lack of respect for civility and other values of liberal democracy. They find some explanation in the "perversions" of current political practice (corruption, elitism, manipulation, etc.), and therefore can seek a return to more appropriate forms, and certainly improvements on current practices. For example, the calls for reforming campaign financing currently so popular in the U.S. fit here, as does the discourse of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin in France on the need to "modernize" French political life. Plans for instituting new forms of civic engagement, such as deliberative dialogue, would also fall into this group.

3. *Civil society theorists*, some of whom are an offshoot of communitarian thought, seek to strengthen the voluntary organizations of civil society. They see in them the locale for learning the virtues of mutual obligation. A variant of this grouping, a Tocquevillian liberal version, has become very popular since Kymlicka and Norman wrote. It is the social capital approach of Robert Putnam (1993) and others (Weinstock 1998 for example). They find the roots of well-functioning democratic institutions in the private associations which foster trust relations in civil society. At least two unresolved issues remain for this group: what to do with unsavoury forms of associations, which contravene fundamental principles of citizenship (such as the Mafia which is high in trust but low in civic virtue); and which mechanisms work best and are most relevant for translating private association into public virtue (is bowling really as productive of good democracy as parent-teacher associations?).

4. *Liberal virtue theorists* seek to foster the underlying forms of behaviour which will provide a solid foundation for citizenship. They often stress the importance of education for citizenship, and in particular the teaching of certain values in school. As such, they run into the difficulty of identifying the necessary content of such virtues, without contravening the values of groups in the population which do not share them. In other words, unless the values identified are very "thin," we are back to the issues raised with respect to cultural diversity.

As the examination of this list, and the brief descriptions associated with make it clear, civic virtues, even in the narrow sense of participation of liberal democratic politics according to rules of civility, tolerance of differing views, and respect of minorities, are not easily achieved. Conflicting values, a normal part of modern pluralist society, render difficult any identification of common values, while practices associated with the technologies of politics may actually undermine them (see Paul Thomas' paper in this volume).

Nor is the proper role for public institutions at all clear in this dispute. For some, particularly in the first group, as we have seen, the state is a necessary partner. Similarly, those who put the emphasis on regulation and on citizenship education also see a role for public

institutions. But the civil society theorists, in both their communitarian and social capital versions, assign the state the task of guaranteeing individual liberties but grant it less of a role in promoting or guaranteeing the equality and solidarity we associate with citizenship (Helly 1999: 40-42).

Promoting Active Engagement

This last issue, promoting active engagement, brings us back, then, to the arrangements which can improve political participation in the institutions of liberal democracy and citizens' acceptance of them. Several governments, including the Canadian government, are engaged in a process of transition from a group-based mode of democratic access to an individualistic perspective favouring the individuals as representatives of the democratic order.

Increasingly, from both inside and outside government there is the recognition of the need to improve governance practices and especially accountability as a way of re-engaging citizens and fostering their belief in liberal democracy (for an overview see O'Hara 1998, chapter 6). Those who promote "civic engagement" may do so for two – perhaps quite different – reasons (O'Hara 1998: 83-84). One reason is to foster attachment and commitment to increase belonging. The other is to redesign the policy process by seeking input from citizens at a variety of points, that is to change the patterns of access, providing a route to representation via the bureaucracy alongside the traditional institutions of parliamentary democracy. Priority to one goal over the other determines the institutional choices about how and when to engage citizens.

The Framework Agreement on the Social Union (SUFA), for example, provides for mechanisms of citizen engagement, so as to strengthen its legitimacy. The Quebec government's Socio-Economic Summits and recent Youth Summit are also examples of the use of institutions of engagement to generate solidarity around particular projects. On the other hand, governments and departments may also develop initiatives to collect information and to engage citizens in thinking through complex policy options. Thus departments and agencies have been actively promoting certain forms of direct participation through community-level consultation processes or other mechanisms to test different legislative or policy options. The idea behind all such initiatives is to break down the wall of negative perception toward the government policy-making process. By involving people in the process, it is assumed that their interest will be stimulated,and, as a consequence, trust and commitment will increase.

There are some downsides to this new initiative however. First, there is a risk that citizens will find such processes to be a mere exercise of public relations. This is a valid concern since there is no mechanism to guarantee the real impact of these consultations in the decision-making process.

Another concern is with the tendency to replace funding and support for organizations

representing various sectors of the society with direct involvement for individual citizens. This individualistic approach, focusing on equality of principle among citizens, is problematic for numerous groups who fear their views and interests are not well represented in political debates. All individuals do not have the same capacity to articulate a coherent position or advise on complex issues. Only groups with expertise and institutional capacity can rival the public sector in articulating coherent alternatives. Yet these groups have seen their funding drastically reduced over the last decade and their legitimacy as advocates called into question (Phillips 1991).

Another policy tool for promoting active engagement is education for citizenship. There is a great surge in interest currently in the notion of citizenship (or civic) education.[37] As mentioned above, citizenship education is often associated with the definition of civic virtues and other necessary prerequisites to be an active citizen contributing to the richness of the community. Educators have been concerned with the issue of delimiting the values and practices that should be taught, however. In a pluralist society, it is difficult to determine what is an essential (a minimum standard) value for democratic practice and what is actually a cultural norm.

Citizenship education, moreover, has taken on a whole new perspective following the emergence of issues related to "deep diversity" and the integration of newcomers into the Canadian polity. It is now widely accepted that citizenship education is an essential part of the integration process of immigrants. Again however, it is hard to define the actual content of education programs for immigrants.[38] Defining formal criteria regarding the assimilation of citizenship virtues can be highly contingent to the specific views of the government of the time. The question then is what "kind" of citizens we want.

The debate in Quebec on the content of the new curriculum on citizenship education is exemplary in that sense. The controversy lies around the content of history courses and the perspective adopted in these courses. As the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation noted in a report to the Quebec Minister of Education in 1998:

> Les efforts de promotion de la citoyenneté québécoise s'inscrivent dans un rapport politique avec le gouvernement fédéral qui déploie ses propres stratégies en vue de promouvoir sa représentation de la citoyenneté" (1998:5).

As a result, the content of citizenship education programs remains highly contentious. What is supposed to form the prerequisites of participation in democratic debates is now an integral part of this debate.

Nonetheless, citizenship education occupies a growing place as a tool to foster public trust and participation in the polity. The search for an informed and critical citizenry, the ideal of democratic societies, is seen as a solution to the "dissolution" of civic ties discussed above.

Recent proposals for a new citizenship education suggest that a greater emphasis should be put in the development of specific skills. Critical skills and group skills are examples (CSE 1999; Sears 1998). In this perspective, schools would have less say in the content of citizenship but would be involved in fostering the toolkit of effective citizens.

SOME UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS; SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

As should be clear from reading these pages, the history and practice of citizenship – being at the centre of the development of our modern polity – have always been full of controversy. Therefore, there are no technical questions to be resolved, no simple list of "unknowns" which could be researched. Nor have Canadians and their governments any clear consensus on where things *are* going, let alone where they *should* be going. Indeed, the field of "citizenship" is most often experienced – at least by these authors – more as a swirling mass of unknowns than as a well-mapped terrain, even at the end of this exercise. Nonetheless, this overview of the challenges to citizenship does lead us to identify a number of areas where research would help to map the situation.

Diversity

Although the theoretical debate on the various approaches to diversity is rich and lively, few empirical studies have detailed the strategies of governments to adapt their citizenship regime and model of governance to this reality. Comparative analysis of citizenship regimes, keeping in mind the three dimensions of citizenship described in this paper, could help improve our understanding of various avenues offered to "organize" rather than "manage" diversity. Several questions could inform such studies, for example:

! To what extent does the recognition of cultural specificity of various groups engender fragmentation and political instability? Is belonging weakened, as liberal theory often suggests? Here, it would be very useful to have at least a scan of policies debated and employed in other countries and jurisdictions.

! Does asymmetrical citizenship (differential rights) undermine or strengthen the sense of solidarity and belonging to the broad political community? What are the consequences of such arrangements in terms of democratic practices and full access to rights?

! How are current self-government experiences changing/affecting Aboriginal people's conception of citizenship? How is it transforming our understanding of governance as a

multi-level (and asymmetrical) process? And are federal and provincial governments adapting their practices to take into account Aboriginal governments?

! One response to the challenge offered by national minorities in Canada was to promote and create a strong attachment to Canadian citizenship and promote Canadian identity. To what extent have these policies been successful? Can identity actually be created by such policies or is it rather a by-product of other policies and their spillover effects? Can the European experience shed some light on the process of creating identity through policies?

Location

The changing sites of citizenship practices, both above and below state institutions, raises a series of questions about governance and democratic practices.

- A general question remains as to which, if any, elements of citizenship are being transferred to subnational or transnational political institutions and the impact of such displacement for the capacity of states to generate democratic debates and more broadly, to incarnate democratic citizenship. More empirical data and fewer assumptions are needed here.
- What are the consequences for the capacity of government to foster solidarity and generate broad collective policy orientations if the sites of citizenship are dispersed? Do federal systems have advantages in this process?
- Is an officially recognized multi-layered citizenship, as experienced in the European Union, a workable response to the need for democratic practices in the global arena? How are governance practices affected by such process? Is the European experience conclusive? Does it include lessons for federations, such as Canada?
- More research needs to be undertaken on the consequences for the constitutive elements of citizenship of the decentralization and semi-privatization of policy-making and service delivery. Does this process affect people's sense of common citizenship? The question of legitimacy in the context of decentralization should also inform further analysis: where is the legitimate expression of collective solidarity and public interest located in this new context?

Social

We need to assess the consequences of shifts in practices of social citizenship on the other dimensions of access and belonging. Are there any consequences to retrenching citizenship to political and civil rights, as it is in the liberal model? For example:

- Is it necessary for the maintenance of a well-functioning society, and therefore a productive economy, that social citizenship receive significant attention? Is some

commitment to social equity a condition of successful economies? Here an assessment of comparative case material, based on the links between social and economic policy and population health, would provide some helpful information.

- Do practices of community development that include an empowerment dimension to labour market inclusion re-knit social bonds better than those which focus only on the participation in labour markets?

- Are there any consequences of decentralizing responsibility for social policy in citizenship terms? Are feelings of pan-Canadian belonging weakened and interest in gaining access to pan-Canadian institutions reduced by the decentralization of service provision to the provinces and by the increasing use of partnerships?
  Does citizenship education play sufficient attention to the duties of citizenship beyond voting, such as paying taxes?
  Are "brain gain" immigrants attracted and retained because of the social rights of citizenship or do they find the responsibilities, especially in terms of taxes, too onerous?

Participation

We need more information on the role of public and other institutions in fostering civic values and good citizenship practices. We have information about public values and attitudes, some of which is "thin" (being from public opinion surveys) and some of which is more detailed, coming from public dialogues and so on. However, there is much less information about what the interactive consequences of public institutions engaging with citizens really are. For example:

- Do consultations and other dialogues foster support for basic democratic institutions or do they actually exacerbate suspicion because there is no clear policy link and because they exist in an undetermined relationship to policy outcomes?
- What are the consequences of individualizing consultation (1-800 policies) for the advice which is received and for the capacity of citizens to have access?
- If good citizenship practices also develop in the private associations of civil society, what can governments do to foster a healthy civil society?
- One solution often suggested to resolve the challenge of diversity is to increase the participation of minorities in the political process. Unresolved issues, however, remain: what kind of participation (individual, collective) and at what level (party politics, parliamentary representation, dialogue, civil service, local government)? It could be relevant to undertake a review of various attempts to foster participation of minorities in different countries or at different levels of government.

NOTES

[1.] It is interesting to note that within the last decade, governments in the United Kingdom (White Paper), Canada (Senate report), Australia (Joint Standing Committee report), Austria, Sweden and Denmark among others, have produced official reports on the relevance of citizenship. For details on some of these reports, see Gagnon and Pagé (1999).

[2.] The concept of citizenship regime was developed in Jenson and Phillips (1996).

[3.] These three dimensions were originally worked out with Antje Wiener. They were used in Jenson and Phillips (1996). Since then Wiener has slightly redefined them for her own use (1997: Chapter 2). These three dimensions differ from the two (rights and belonging) used by Kymlicka and Norman (1995: 283) and the four developed by Gagnon and Pagé (1999: 6), who analyze the three we identify plus "other identities" as the dimensions of citizenship.

[4.] Quoting Bodin, Lamoureux (1991: 56) writes, "Les citoyens sont 'égaux en tous droits et prérogatives' et un rapport mutuel d'obligation puisque : 'C'est dans la reconnaissance du franc sujet envers son Prince souverain et la tuition, justice et défense du Prince envers le sujet qui fait le citoyen'."

[5.] Dominique Schnapper quotes Max Weber's historical description of the emergence of this new status (1994: 89).

[6.] Despite his work being dated and frequently criticized, T.H. Marshall remains a central reference for anyone studying citizenship (Juteau 1998: 50).

[7.] While many are critical because the dates of change do not correspond to his oft-quoted schema, even he was careful to moderate his position (1964: 81). For one ferocious criticism, see Birnbaum (1997).

[8.] For an analysis of the differences between citizenship rights in various countries, see Gagnon and Pagé (1999).

[9.] It is important to note that we are using the term "belonging" to refer to an identity, and not to any sense of community obligations, as communitarians sometimes use the word. See, for example, Snellen (2000: 1), who uses it that way.

[10.] For an excellent example of a liberal point of view, see John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (1971).

[11.] Political parties, especially in North America, have always assumed a heavy responsibility for incorporating immigrant and ethnic communities and for "brokering" these differences as well as those of language. Thus, while individuals might participate in partisan politics as members of a cultural community, and might gain access as well as a sense of belonging from doing so, as "citizens" their responsibility was to the whole.

[12.] For similar notions of Canada as a country of diversity, see Lindal (1947: 156-57), who calls on Canadians to make their "diverse loyalties" a model for the world.

13. Will Kymlicka (1998), for example, makes a clear distinction between cultural minorities resulting from voluntary immigration and national minorities whose existence precedes the formation of the state and can claim a certain territorial basis.

14. It is interesting to note that this was also, until recently, the position of the New Democratic Party of Canada regarding Quebec nationalism (see the platform for the 1997 elections).

15. Authors such as McIntyre or Sandel can be considered "conservative communitarians" because of their moral point of view, as Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer or David Miller are often categorized as "liberal-communitarians." See Helly (1998 :16).

16. These ideas are developed in Jenson and Papillon (2000) and used by Yashar (1999).

17. For an example based on the Australian experience, see J. Pakulski (1997).

18. See, for example, Lise Bissonnette in *Le Devoir*, July 24, 1998.

19. For the Spanish example, see K. McRoberts (1999).

20. For a review of the literature, see Keck and Sikkink (1998).

21. See, for example, the documents of the Council of Canadians on their web site: http://www.canadians.org/.

22. Soysal based her argument on a study of migrant workers in Europe. While they have no access to formal citizenship, they benefit from most of the protection and advantages attributed to citizens in European states.

23. See *Law Society of British Columbia v. Andrews*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 143.

24. The case of Aboriginal peoples is of particular interest in that sense. The campaign against the Great Whale project by the James Bay Cree, even if played mostly at the international level, was directed toward the Quebec state. The main objective was to access the national political space and national institutions in a direct challenge to the national citizenship regime (See Jenson and Papillon 2000). The same argument could be made with regard to Aboriginal peoples in Brazil or in Mexico who use extensively transnational networks to make claims for a better access to the decision-making process within their own countries (see Yashar 1999).

25. European Union Treaty, section 8.

26. Among them, the right to free movement within Europe, the right to residency and to work in other member states, the right to vote in and stand as candidate in local elections in any member state and to vote and stand as candidate for European Parliament.

27. It is necessary to be a citizen of a Member State to be a European citizen. The European Court of Justice has stated clearly that Union citizenship could not contradict in its substance nor replace national citizenship.

28. In a 1999 Eurobarometer poll, 41 percent of Europeans identified only with their country, 42 percent with their country first, then the Union, 13 percent with Europe first and 4 percent with Europe only. It is interesting to note that European identity is strongest in small countries like Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

29. The "relevance" of the federal government in Canadians' daily life is a constant theme in federal policy development priorities since the program review of 1994. The drastic reduction in direct services resulted in a corollary lack of visibility for the government.

[30.] In addition to nationalists' claims in Quebec and claims from Aboriginal peoples, geographically based autonomists claims from British Columbia, the West, Northern Ontario, Gaspésie in Quebec all have made headlines in recent years.

[31.] In Canada, the Liberal government made wide-ranging commitments in the 1944 Throne Speech, in preparation for the post-war years, promising "a national minimum of social security and human welfare," "useful employment for all who are willing and able to work, social insurance, and family allowances" (quoted in Cameron 1997: 4).

[32.] For an overview of terms of citizenship, see Kymlicka and Norman (1995: 288-91).

[33.] Helly (199: 35) provides a succinct summary and references to these positions.

[34.] For some of these arguments see Birnbaum (1997: 136).

[35.] Although Canada does much better than the United States with regard to the level of participation in federal and provincial elections, general disenchantment with politics and politicians indicates a certain decline in interest toward political issues and active involvement in politics. The level of participation in 1997 federal election was the lowest since 1925.

[36.] Surveys have found low levels of confidence in public institutions (O'Hara, 1998: 82). But the decline thesis seems to contradict studies on high levels of participation in associative life and voluntary activities. On this topic, see Statistics Canada (1998).

[37.] See Gagnon, et al. (1998); Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation du Québec (1998).

[38.] See Gagnon, et al. (1998) as well as Sears (1998).

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THE FUTURE OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY:
The Impact of Information Technology

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This paper examines the future of representative democracy in Canada, paying particular attention to the impacts of information and communications technologies (ICTs).

The main argument of the paper is that the uses and impacts of ICTs will be shaped and conditioned by economic, social and political forces more than the inherent attributes of the technologies themselves. To date the impacts of the new technologies on Canadian democracy have been more incremental, contradictory and less positive than the proponents of electronic democracy and government have predicted. Progress towards stronger democracy will depend less on technology and more on social development, political changes, the structures of governmental institutions and the priorities of governments.

The glittering array of present and future ICTs is said to offer Canadians a choice between supposedly discredited representative institutions and processes from the industrial age model of government and the possibility of a new model of *governance*, adaptive to an interconnected, instantaneous, knowledge-based society and economy in which governments share their traditional functions with other institutions in society. In the information society of the future, governments will interact more directly and continuously with citizens.

The paper predicts that Canada will end up with a hybrid form of democracy which continues to rely mainly upon representative institutions and processes, complemented by greater use of consultative mechanisms to obtain public input, with occasional use made of direct democracy devices.

Context for the Study

The declining faith and confidence of Canadians in traditional representative institutions and processes has been well documented. However, the literature on public discontent fails to take adequate account of different objects of political support for the political community, for regime values and democratic principles, for institutions, for political actors and for government performance. Canadians have not forsaken representative democracy completely, but their faith in existing institutions and actors has been shaken.

The sources of public discontent are many:

- better-educated and less-deferential citizens
- economic slowdown, insecurity
- restraint and cutbacks on public spending
- more divisive issues on the agendas of governments
- the creation of more visible winners and losers
- the discovery that earlier, ambitious programs had not fulfilled their promise
- the emergence of new cleavages in Canadian society and new concepts of political representation
- the impacts of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- the misdeeds of politicians: breaking promises, ducking responsibility, scandals, denigrating opponents
- the rise of a more adversarial media
- the decline of "civil society" and the loss of "social capital," including political capital.

Since there are multiple sources of public disappointment with governments, there is no one avenue of reform to restore public confidence.

The Future of Representative Institutions

Political parties are in disrepute, but representative democracy cannot function without parties. Parties perform a number of crucial functions and it is only in relation to certain of these functions that they have lost ground to other institutions. Parties have used ICTs mainly for electoral purposes. As organizations, parties have become more subject to control by full-time professionals. They have avoided a serious commitment to membership participation because this would supposedly compromise their brokerage function.

Parliament is seen by many as largely irrelevant in the policy process, but this may be a function of how parliamentary influence is measured. For a number of reasons, Parliament's approach to the adoption and use of ICTs has been cautious. ICTs will make Parliament more efficient in terms of its internal operations and will allow parliamentarians to keep in closer touch with constituents and public opinion in general. However, changes in the attitudes of governments will be required for Parliament to use ICTs to increase its role in the policy process.

Pressure groups will continue to grow in influence as channels of communication with governments and to some extent as rivals of political parties and Parliament. ICTs will facilitate lobbying efforts, both in terms of gathering information, communicating with governments and mobilizing supporters to put political pressure on government. They will not equalize the contest

between mainstream established pressure groups and the newer social movements. The entire lobbying process is likely to become more transparent and to promote the proliferation of groups pressing their demands upon governments. Finding a consensus to serve as the basis for public policy will become more difficult.

The *media* will continue to play a key role in disseminating information about the political process to citizens and will continue to function as an agenda-setter within society. As the technologies converge (such as the proposed takeover of the CTV television network by BCE), there will be increased pressure to merge information and entertainment values. This trend may compromise the potential role of a better-informed media in the broad process of holding governments accountable.

The *bureaucracy* will benefit from the availability of new technologies to support its core functions of policy analysis and design, coordination and monitoring of administrative practices and the provision of efficient, quality services. IT innovations in the administrative domain will have potentially wider impacts on our political culture, conceptions of citizenship, the nature of representation, our definitions of political space and time, the distribution of power and how policy is formulated and implemented.

Citizens in the emerging electronic democracy will be given more opportunities to participate, but they will face a difficult challenge in gaining the understanding necessary to use the new interactive technologies to make a constructive contribution to the policy process. In their current cynical mood, and without the active encouragement from governments to become better informed, it is likely that only a minority of Canadians will take the time to learn what they need to know.

For the future, ICTs have inherent democratic potential. Whether this potential is realized will depend more on human and political factors than on technological obstacles. If the technological futurists are to be believed, most of the current technical limits will be overcome during the next five to ten years. The real obstacles to the full realization of the democratic potential of ICTs are political and human:

- the powerful role that private and public elites play in the current policy process
- the lack of political will to really open up the decision-making process to outside players
- the lack of interest, knowledge, and willingness on the part of the general public to participate in the policy process
- the generational factor, meaning the lack of familiarity and comfort with ICTs by current public sector leaders and citizens.

Only the latter factor is likely to disappear as the younger generation of computer-literate people assumes positions of power with society and government.

Future Research Topics

What are trends in terms of the diffusion and use of information technology within society? Will there be information "haves" and "have nots"? What incentives are needed to encourage citizens to use ICTs to deal with governments?

Will political parties use ICTs to reinvigorate their role within society? Is there a tension between ongoing membership involvement and the need for parties to play a brokerage role?

Will the potential of ICTs be used to reform Parliament? Will the information society lead over time to less adversarial politics within Parliament?

Will the bureaucracy's use of technology for citizen engagement and the new electronic approaches to service delivery reduce reliance upon other representative processes?

How will the right balance be found between openness, transparency and two-way communication and the continuing requirements for confidentiality, anonymity and neutrality within the bureaucracy?

- Have governments approached the governance question too much from a "managerial" perspective without taking sufficient account of the wide range of ideas, interests and institutions potentially involved?
- Have some of the ideas driving managerial reform been anti-political in content and in their consequences?
- Has the management reform movement taken sufficient account of how the new approaches fit with the traditions, practices, existing political cultures of parties and cabinet-parliamentary government?
- Does the adversarial nature of cabinet parliamentary government detract from learning which is at the heart of successful governance in a period of rapid change?
- How can more constructive and collaborative relationships be built between political and administrative leaders?
- As new methods of engagement with citizens are adopted will this undermine traditional representative processes?
- If the public service becomes more accessible and responsive, and delivers more satisfactory services, will there be a reduced role for elected representatives as liaison agents with government?

How will the right balance be found between openness, and two-way communication and the continuing requirements for confidentiality, anonymity and neutrality within the bureaucracy?

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to examine the future of the institutions and processes of representative democracy, as part of a wider study of the changing nature of governance arrangements and processes in Canada. Particular attention is paid in this study to the impact of existing and future information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the emergence of an information society (IS) on how Canadians will govern themselves in the twenth-first century.

The integrating theme for the study is that the relationships between democracy and technology have always been more mediated by other forces, more reciprocal and more problematic than the technological determinists have maintained. In short, the paper rejects the McLuhanesque proposition that the medium is the message. Instead, the paper argues that the uses and impacts of ICTs will be shaped and conditioned by other economic, social and political forces operating within Canadian society on both a short-term and longer term basis. Disentangling the separate impacts of ICTs from other developments is difficult, if not impossible. Wider, deeper, more subtle and probably more powerful forces than the dazzling array of new technologies are affecting how democracy is perceived, understood and practised by citizens and public officials, both elected and appointed. To date, the impacts on the political system by the new ICTs have been more incremental, contradictory and less positive than the bold and optimistic predictions of the technology gurus and other futurists have suggested. Previous communications technologies – like radio and television – were heralded at the time of their introduction as likely to have revolutionary impacts, both positive and negative, on the political process. While there have been impacts, it would be easy to exaggerate the extent to which past technologies alone have transformed Canadian democracy.

In examining the impacts of ICTs on Canadian democracy, we must distinguish among different uses to which they are put within the economy, society and the political and administrative processes. Impacts can be both direct and indirect, immediate and longer term. Technological changes in one domain of activity can reverberate throughout society in a complex and unpredictable manner. For example, applying ICTs for purposes of the administration and delivery of government programs and services can have impacts on Canadian attitudes towards government, political representation, citizenship, sense of time, etc. Glib and confident statements about the impacts of ICTs on Canadian governments and democracy ignore the fact that large parts of the future are unknowable at this point. Any statements made have to be presented with caution, qualifications and tentativeness.

There is a temptation to believe that the information revolution is inherently democratic in its potential. However, the democratic potential of ICTs and of the information society which they are producing will only be realized if accompanied by other changes, some of them fundamental, in how Canadians govern themselves. How emerging technologies will affect democracy will depend at least as much on the type of democracy Canadians adopt as on the types of technologies which emerge. In short, progress towards stronger democracy will depend less on

technology and more on social development, political change, structures of governmental institutions and the priorities of governments.

The paper is divided into five main sections. Following an introduction (Section I), Section II clarifies the key concepts used in the study. Section III examines the current challenges to representative democracy in Canada arising from the widespread cynicism towards politicians, political institutions and, to a lesser extent, the public service. Section IV examines how ICTs are affecting the roles of the key players in the policy and political processes in Canadian society. Section V attempts to evaluate how ICTs and the information society will in the future affect democratic processes in Canada. It is argued that Canadians currently seem to be in transition in terms of the models of democracy to which they are attached and wish to see practised by public officials. The different models reflect various fundamental values which democracy embodies and each assigns somewhat different weighting to those values. Whatever form of democracy Canadians decide to practise in the future, some values will receive priority and others will receive less emphasis. While the paper examines the future of representative democracy from the perspective of the impact of ICTs, the concluding section seeks to identify a number of other issues related to governance, representative democracy and public management reform which the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) might investigate through further research.

II   Key Concepts

This section seeks to provide a foundation for the subsequent analysis of trends within Canadian democracy by clarifying how a number of key concepts will be used. All of the ideas involved are complex and their meaning is much debated in the literature. The brief definitions of the concepts presented here are not meant to be comprehensive or to settle disagreements over their meaning, but to provide a consistent basis for their use in the discussion to follow.

Let us begin with democracy, an idea which is old, constructed from many different traditions and discourses, and which remains a fundamentally contested concept. There is no single model of democracy. Also, there are many different institutional means by which the fundamental values of democracy can be realized. These facts lead to many different adjectives being placed before the term democracy: liberal democracy, representative democracy, consociational democracy, participatory democracy and direct democracy, to name but a few.

In his book *Democracy and Elections* (1997), Richard S. Katz argues that there are four basic models of democracy reflecting different conceptions of the ends which democracy serves: popular sovereignty (government should reflect the people's will); liberal democracy (government should be organized and conducted so that its power is limited); participatory democracy (government should enable people to become active citizens and to develop their potential); and

communitarian democracy (government should express and promote the values of the community). Katz devotes considerable space to the discussion of all four values. His main thesis, however, is that all four models are important. Each of the models reflects fundamental values which democracy embodies – limited government, the rule of law, respect for individual freedom and civil liberties, a balance between majority rule and minority rights, political pluralism and competition, public participation, access to information about government, accountability of public officials and concern for social cohesion.

Some writers would argue that concern for social justice and the avoidance of excessively wide gaps in economic and social well-being is another requirement for a healthy democracy. In recent years the concept of "civil society" has become very fashionable to describe a prerequisite for democracy. While its meaning has been blurred through overuse, the term civil society refers to the existence of numerous associations and institutions which operate within pluralistic societies and stand between individuals and the state. These institutions represent places where people can develop as individuals, they are "schools" of democratic practice and they are buffers against state encroachment on private matters. It is within the institutions of civil society that people learn to speak and to interact freely. As well, the institutions protect people against the power of the state by acting as a buffer and an intermediary for interaction with government institutions.

The voguish nature of the concept of civil society leads to the danger of undue faith in the role of community-based organizations in nurturing and protecting democratic values. In his book *Civil Society* (1998), John Keane warns that there is not one kind of civil society, but many different types, all historically and culturally contingent. Civil societies may not be as open and participatory as some proponents suggest. The rise of civil societies can bring mixed results as evidenced by countries like India, Mexico, Romania and others. In addition to civic institutions, societies need democratic political institutions, like free and fair elections, competitive political parties and representative legislatures.

Various models of democracy assign greater or lesser weight to various values. Determining what is the appropriate balance among such values is a fundamental political issue which countries usually approach in an indirect and implicit manner through the choice or modification of constitutional and institutional arrangements. Because there is no single model of democracy or ranking of democratic values which commands universal endorsement, it is not possible to state that a particular set of constitutional and institutional arrangements is more democratic than another. This fact provides opportunities for critics of existing arrangements and practices to call for reform, often citing foreign models of democracy as examples of how things could be better arranged.

From its beginning as a country, Canada is said to have practised *representative* and *responsible* democratic government. Often, these two concepts are confused or conflated into one

model. A *representative democracy* is a political system in which the governors who make laws and decisions based upon them obtain their authority directly and indirectly in periodic, competitive and fair elections in which the bulk of the population is entitled to participate. In this system those elected to high office are invested with legitimate authority (see discussion of "legitimacy" below) to make decisions on behalf of the public.

Representation has been defined broadly as "acting in the interests of the represented in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin 1967: 209). Of course, this definition leaves much unsaid about how the representative process actually works. It is generally understood that for representation to occur the interests and demands of citizens must find expression in government action. Responsiveness to citizens has been usefully conceptualized by Eulau and Karps (1977) along four dimensions: *policy* (some meaningful connection between policy preferences of the public and the actions of government), *allocation* (the distribution of the costs and benefits of government), *service* (intervention with government on behalf of constituents) and *symbolic* (the perception that representatives are trustworthy and reflect the needs of others).

Representative democracy requires complicated institutions and procedures for monitoring the performance of office holders and allows for their replacement at regular intervals. A primary premise of this system is the need to balance the values of liberty, political equality, pluralism and order. Representative democracy grants elected representatives sufficient autonomy from public opinion to accommodate competing perspectives and to develop a consensus which balances majority demands and minority rights, as well as the short-term and longer term interests of society. In principle, all citizens should have equal access to and influence on government policy-making through elections, membership within political parties, the activities of pressure groups, and communication in various ways with elected representatives.

Responsible government refers to the legal concentration of authority in the Crown, or the Crown's representative, the Governor General. However, the political convention is that the Crown does not act on its own initiative but on the advice and direction of responsible ministers who have the support of a majority in the elected legislature.

Cabinets remain in office only so long as they retain the confidence of the House of Commons, not the Senate. If defeated in the Commons on a matter of sufficient importance to be regarded as a matter of confidence, the Prime Minister has the choice of resigning at once, along with other ministers, requiring the Governor General to find an alternative government; or advising the Governor General to dissolve the House of Commons and call a general election. If the Prime Minister's party wins a majority in the election, there is no change of government, though the exact composition of the ministry may change. If another party wins a majority, the Prime Minister will resign and the Governor General will call on the leader of the majority party to form a government. There is also the potential for minority governments – no party has an absolute majority of the seats in the Commons and Canada has had some experience, both

nationally and provincially, with coalition governments involving more than one party.

In addition to the collective responsibility of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet for the overall performance of government, individual ministers are, in strict constitutional terms, legally responsible for all official actions of the departments they lead and are politically answerable before Parliament for problems that arise. The ultimate sanction for policy errors and serious mismanagement of a department is for the minister to be forced to resign from Cabinet.

Canada's cabinet-parliamentary system focuses responsibility in the hands of small groups of partisan officeholders and then seeks to hold them continuously answerable for the exercise of governmental authority through a number of accountability mechanisms, such as the confidence convention and the daily Question Period in Parliament. In contrast, a presidential congressional system like the United States takes a very different approach to the control of governmental power. Reflecting a suspicion of government, the American constitutional order relies upon an elaborate separation of powers and checks and balances which ensures that, major actions require the support of all three branches of government – the President, Congress and the courts. The resulting diffusion and sharing of power, the extensive reliance upon visible bargaining among competing interests, and the availability for different groups of a greater number of access points to national policy-making creates the impression for many Canadians that the presidential-congressional model is more open, responsive and democratic than our cabinet-parliamentary model. On the other hand, critics of divided government "American style" insist that it prevents bold, timely and coherent policy-making, leads to "log rolling" and parochialism in lawmaking and budgeting, and diffuses responsibility and accountability.

According to political scientist Lisa Young (1999), "the institutions of responsible government are less appropriate to contemporary Canadian society" than they were in the nineteenth century when the country was founded. "In the eyes of significant segments of the electorate, responsible government stands in the way of representative government" (Young 1999: 105). Through the rise of disciplined political parties and the growing power of the Prime Minister, power has become unduly concentrated in the policy process. As is discussed below, the Canadian electorate is increasingly unwilling to accept decisions made behind closed doors by unrepresentative political elites who seem unresponsive to citizens' views. In addition to declining deference towards elites, the Canadian political system is being challenged by the emergence of new concepts of political representation. "As it has emerged in Canada," writes Young (1999: 111), "responsible government has not adapted well to the representation of political identities that lack a territorial basis." While Young focuses on the under-representation of women within the political process, the same concerns could be raised on behalf of other social groupings like Aboriginal peoples, francophone minorities outside Quebec, low income Canadians, gays and others. The rise of "identity politics" means that private identity takes on overriding importance for many people, making the "other" – regarding behaviour and compromises necessary for consensus – more difficult to achieve.

Direct plebiscitary democracy represents an alternative to the reliance upon political elites which characterizes representative and responsible government. The rise of direct democracy reflects the erosion of trust in politicians and political institutions, which is discussed below. It responds to the complaint that power is unduly concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and unelected elites in the bureaucracy. Ordinary MPs, especially from the peripheries of the country, are seen to lack political clout. As loyal team players, government MPs end up representing Ottawa to their constituencies rather than the other way around. Also, politically sophisticated, well-financed and well-connected groups and their slick representatives prowl the corridors of power and dominate the key formative stages of policy-making. Whatever the accuracy of these images of the policy process, they provide an appealing platform for the or Reform Party and others who call for direct democracy to make politicians more responsive to public opinion, to hold them more accountable, to lessen the influence of "special interests" in national policy-making and to counter public alienation towards the political process. A variety of mechanisms are proposed to implement the principles of more direct democracy: citizen initiatives, binding plebiscites, referenda, recall provisions, electronic consultative exercises, and so on.

The promotion of greater reliance upon devices of direct democracy is not confined to the populist Reform Party. In his book *Twenty-first Century Democracy* (1997), political scientist Phil Resnick argues that the periodic use of referenda could have a therapeutic value in helping to revitalize the political system. He argues that referendum votes could mobilize significant sections of the population who have lost faith in traditional representative processes. They may also lead to coalitions that cross party lines and thereby lessen the often artificially polarized nature of most political debates. In addition to rebuilding the links between the public and politics and keeping the power of politicians in check, referenda can also function as a "safety valve" that may prevent a further loss of legitimacy and destructive acts of civil disobedience. Resnick asks: "Is it not better that [the public] have an outlet to express its frustrations through a device such as a referendum? Does one really need to wait for anger to erupt in the streets, or to take the form of extra-parliamentary opposition that threatens to erode the very foundations of the regime?" (Resnick 1997: 93-94) Presumably for Resnick the answers to these rhetorical questions are obvious. The availability of the new information and telecommunications technologies makes the possibility of direct democracy more practical because of the disappearance of limits of time and space. Later in this paper we will return to the question of whether Canada's political system has been losing legitimacy to the point that we are on the brink of widespread civil disobedience. Also, we will review the potential and the pitfalls of using the new technologies to usher in a new era of direct, electronic democracy.

A great deal of the debate over the changing nature of Canadian democracy has been polarized into a choice between representative versus direct democracy. Defenders of representative democracy make the argument that political elites can make the creative compromises necessary to govern in a pluralistic society only if they are insulated to some extent

from the pressures of ill-informed and emotionally driven public opinion. Proponents of direct democracy insist that public ignorance is a function of being kept in the dark by politicians and that there is no evidence that the public, if given the information and the opportunity, would be any less skillful than politicians at finding the accommodations among competing interests and respecting the rights of minorities. This paper does not seek to settle this debate, which turns as much on normative, philosophical preferences and faith as it does on empirical evidence. Furthermore, consistent with earlier arguments about the multiple and conflicting values served by democracy, the paper argues that the distinctions among different models can never be absolute. Instead it may be more helpful to view democracy as points on a continuum as illustrated by the following diagram.

Representative	Responsive	Direct
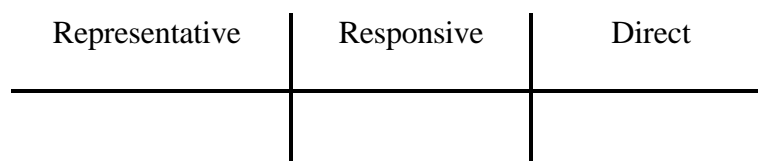
Canada may end up having a hybrid form of democracy which continues to rely mainly upon representative institutions, complemented by greater use of consultative mechanisms to obtain public input and with occasional use made of various direct democracy devices. If this scenario is less dramatic and dazzling than the images of cyberdemocracy presented by the futurists, it is based on the view that politics will condition the technology, not the reverse. Existing power structures will incorporate elements of responsive and direct democracy to the extent necessary to consolidate power and to retain legitimacy.

Because it figures so prominently in the following analysis, the concept of *legitimacy* must be briefly examined. Simply put, the term refers to the extent to which a governmental system commands the respect of, and therefore the support of, the people it serves. There are many sources of legitimacy for governments, but they can be grouped under the headings of legal, procedural, substantive and cultural.

In a democracy the rule of law is meant to ensure that all official actions of government have a legal basis, that everyone is equal before the law, and that no one should be denied rights without a legal basis for doing so. Procedural sources of legitimacy include fair and free elections, competitive political parties, free speech, parliamentary processes and the numerous other mechanisms for consulting public opinion as a basis for governing.

Even if policies and administrative actions are adopted by the prescribed procedures, they may lack legitimacy if they are not consistent with the widely and deeply held values of the public.

The substantive legitimacy of policies is subjective, but it goes beyond mere popularity as registered by opinion polls.

To gain or retain legitimacy, governments must demonstrate ongoing responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of the people. There is also a connection, not easily understood and measured, between the effectiveness of governments and their legitimacy in the eyes of the public. How far governmental performance must decline before institutions begin to lose legitimacy is not clear. The answer may depend on the country involved since legitimacy is affected by the public expectations of government – whether high or low, optimistic or pessimistic – and these expectations, in turn, become part of the political culture of the community involved.

Yet another ingredient of legitimacy is the stability, familiarity, transparency and ease of understanding of the constitutional order and related processes. Elaborate, complicated and extended networks of institutions, actors and processes may fit the realities of contemporary governance processes taking place in a world which is characterized by turbulence, unpredictability, complexity, interdependence, shared power and heightened risk. However, under these conditions the simplicity and the clear assignment of accountability which supported public understanding and support for government action in the past are being lost.

A number of developments within Canadian society and the political system which have contributed to a loss of legitimacy for government and the outcomes of its actions are reviewed in the next section of the paper. There appear to be many sources of public discontent with governments and not all of the disillusionment can be described as serious as a downward spiral of delegitimation leading to a rejection of democratic values and the institutions which give expression to them. Nevertheless, the level of mistrust and cynicism towards politicians and political institutions is worrisome.

This paper focuses on the impact of ICTs on the processes of representative democracy. Generalizations about the relationship between democracy and technology are inherently risky. Technologies are changing at a dizzying pace and are promoting a convergence among uses and industries. At this point, potential future applications of ICTs in the political and administrative processes can only be perceived dimly. Also, to speak in general terms about the impacts of ICTs is misleading because each of the technologies may have somewhat different consequences based upon the inherent characteristics and how they are applied.

In many ways, the so-called ICT revolution is a combination of older and newer technologies. At the heart of the revolution are the telephone, television and computer technologies which have been around for more than 100, 70 and 50 years respectively. Each technology has seen its functionality expanded by recent advances: fibre optics, wireless transmission and satellites for telephones; cable, satellites and digital transmission for television; and growth in computing power, networks and interactive capabilities for computers. The

remainder of this paper uses the abbreviation ICTs to describe both "old-new" technologies (faxes, voice mail, automated dialing, 800 numbers, touch-tone data entry, cable, satellites, etc.) as well as the "new-new" technologies (the Internet, Intranets, world wide web, e-mails, electronic transactions, multi-media kiosks, CD-Roms, web-TV, etc.). This list of technologies will change at least yearly, as the power of digitisation propels the convergence of technologies and the development of new uses. It is important to note that not all potential uses of the new technologies are liberating and democratizing in their impacts. In his book, *Spirit of the Web* (1997), Wade Rowland uses philosopher Ivan Illich's distinction between "convivial" technologies (like telephones), which are user friendly and democratizing, versus "nonconvivial" technologies (like television and perhaps the Internet) which, on balance, are used for manipulative purposes, like the creation of corporate markets.

The term *information society* (IS) is used here as a shorthand for the proliferation of the use of ICTs, together with the economic, occupational, social, cultural and political impacts these are having on society, the economy and governments. As Frank Webster argues in his book *Theories of the Information Society* (1995), the concept of an information society has many different meanings to different writers, which suggests that it is a multi-dimensional and controversial phenomenon. At the risk of oversimplification, the main attributes of the emerging IS are more interconnected, more interactive, more instantaneous, more information rich, more turbulent and uncertain, less constrained by time and space, and less formal and hierarchical. It is these attributes which suggest that IS could have a significant impact on the democratic process in Canada.

The "hot" technology in terms of its growing use by Canadians is the Internet. As of June 1998, an estimated 35.9 percent of Canadian households (8.5 million people) were using the Internet, up from 29.4 percent in 1997. It is anticipated that a majority of Canadian households will have home access by the year 2001 (Oliver Kent 2000). Already more than 60 percent of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 25 have Internet access at home. The most affluent Canadians, those earning more than $100,000 per year, are also "well connected" with approximately 75 percent having Internet access at home. Among the provinces, Alberta leads the parade with 45 percent of its household connected to the Internet compared to Quebec trailing the pack, with only 26 percent of its households connected.

A Statistics Canada survey for 1998 revealed that 22.6 percent of Canadian households made regular use of the Internet. Nearly 86 percent used e-mail, nearly 80 percent engaged in "general browsing", nearly 70 percent were looking for consumer information, 42 percent sought medical information and 36 percent went looking for government information. A 1999 survey by Pricewaterhouse Coopers revealed that for one-third of Internet users accessing government service was one of the reasons they arranged to go online (Kent 2000). Of those using government websites, most (82 percent) were getting information on government programs and services, looking for a phone number or address (54 percent) or searching for work (52 percent).

The same survey also revealed that Canadians make more use of on-line services from provincial governments (67 percent), compared to federal (59 percent) and local (23 percent) governments. Convenience was the main reason why Canadians were increasingly accessing their governments electronically.

III   The Context for the Study

The faith of Canadians in traditional representative institutions and processes seems to have declined. The most recent (1999) *Rethinking Government* survey found that 83 percent of respondents agreed that people elected to government soon lose touch. Sixty-seven percent believed that "we could probably solve most of our big national problems if decisions could be brought back to the people at the grassroots." Only 30 percent of respondents had a great deal of confidence in public sector leaders and 34 percent rated the knowledge and skills of public sector leaders as weaker than those of business leaders.

In the public sector organizational success requires both political and administrative leadership and it is not clear whom respondents had most in mind – elected politicians or appointed public servants – when answering the leadership question. However, another question in the same survey revealed that trust in politicians was nearly 30 percentage points lower than trust in public servants. Also, in a separate survey in which Canadians were asked to rank various occupations, politicians were rated second last, just ahead of used car salesmen. Finally, voter turnout fell in the last two federal elections, reaching a post-war low of 67 percent in the 1997 general election. It should be stressed that all of these developments lend themselves to varying, even contradictory, interpretations. However, there appear to be a number of signs that Canadians have lost considerable confidence in political institutions and the people who serve in them.

Paradoxically, Canadians continue to express relatively high levels of faith and pride in our overall system of government as being one of the best in the world. The same people who express low trust and confidence in political institutions and their members also express strong support for democratic norms and the legitimacy of those institutions. In understanding such apparently contradictory responses it is necessary to distinguish five different objects or levels of support: for the political community, for regime values and principles of government, for institutions, for political actors and for performance. These distinctions are often blurred in practice when there are debates over support for democratic values, institutions and actors (see Pippa Norris 1999).

Canadians have not forsaken representative democracy completely. They still see politics and government as the main way to make collective choices and to set future directions within society. However, governments and the people who serve in them are no longer placed on a pedestal above the rest of society. There is less deference towards the elites who operate

governments. There is a growing insistence that governments consult more, listen more attentively and genuinely to what citizens have to say, and incorporate these opinions more meaningfully into policy formulation and administrative activities. In survey responses, Canadians indicate a willingness to contribute more time and ideas to exercises of citizen engagement, especially if they can be assured that such dialogues will be authentic and influential in terms of shaping public policy and program delivery. However, such hypothetical expressions of commitment to involvement may not reflect the true willingness of Canadians to participate and there is also the question of whether they have the knowledge and skills to contribute constructively to public policy debates.

As one might expect with a phenomenon as complicated and controversial as the nature and health of Canadian democracy, there are many possible competing theories, explanations and judgements for what has been happening recently. Findings of widespread disillusionment with contemporary institutions should be interpreted with care. Everyone agrees there is a malaise within the Canadian political system, but what it signifies is very much open to debate. For example, rather than being seen as unhealthy, rising levels of scepticism may be justified because governments attempted to do more things during the post-war period and there were, therefore, more opportunities for disappointment with their performance. Public disillusionment may be a healthy product of rising education levels and greater scepticism regarding the claims of more active governments. Finally, given what was said earlier about the need to identify different targets of public support and confidence, we should not see the current popularity of particular politicians, governments or policies as the only measure of democracy's health.

An optimistic interpretation is that the recent anti-politics mood is a cyclical phenomenon and that public anger will fade when Canada has better political leadership, more creative policy responses to the challenges facing the country and fewer divisive issues on the agendas of governments. Support for this viewpoint might be found in the survey data which show that the downward spiral of trust and confidence in government at the national level bottomed out around 1993 and has, in fact, made a slight recovery since that period. A cautious and pragmatic Liberal government, which has created low expectations, steered clear of major controversies, brought government finances under control and benefited from the lack of strong, credible opposition parties, may have laid the foundation for a slow but steady recovery of the public's faith in the democratic process.

Most writers argue, however, that the recent downturn in public support for traditional democratic processes represents a deeper phenomenon than simply disenchantment with a current group of political actors. Professor Alan Cairns and others have argued that the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms fundamentally transformed the Canadian political system (Cairns 1993). Its impact occurred on a number of levels. First, it weakened the policy role of, and public respect for, such representative institutions as political parties, legislatures and cabinets. Second, it created a more litigious society with government actions being subject to more challenges

before the courts. Not only did governments have to spend more time and money defending themselves in courts, ministers and public servants had to develop legislation with potential Charter challenges in mind. Justice officials became more important in the legislative process. Third, by identifying certain groups – women, Aboriginal peoples and ethno-cultural groups – as the bearers of constitutionally protected values and identities, the Charter encouraged the emergence of new pressure groups. The groups named in the Charter gained moral leverage on government; this gave them greater political confidence and, in the early days, it led to core funding from governments. In summary, the Charter is alleged to have changed the psyche of Canadians. They now assume that authority flows from the people, not from the Crown at the apex of the constitutional structure.

Neil Nevitte, in *Decline of Deference* (1995), takes issue with this interpretation. It is unlikely, he argues, that the Charter alone could unleash these fundamental changes in the Canadian political culture. Confidence in governments had begun to decline before adoption of the Charter. Proliferation of pressure groups had also been occurring. In comparative terms, protest politics driven by previously inactive groups had risen even faster in other countries where there had not been an intervening constitutional event equivalent to the adoption of the Charter.

Nevitte uses the empirical data from the World Values Survey to examine Canadian conditions in a comparative context. He interprets the Canadian findings based on the "post-materialist" or "new politics" theory developed by a number of writers. In this view, disenchantment with representative institutions and the insistence upon greater public participation reflects the declining preoccupation with the satisfaction of material wants and a growing concern about higher order, post-material needs, such as quality of life, matters of personal and collective identity and the sustainability of current societal activities. This fundamental, but gradual, value change is attributed to a prolonged period of prosperity for post-war generations, who are also better educated, more mobile and have access to greater information than in the past. The knowledge and skills gaps between different segments of Canadian society have closed significantly and Canadians have become less deferential towards elites of all kinds. Younger Canadians in particular identify strongly with post-materialist values. They are more secular, more morally permissive, more egalitarian and more cosmopolitan in their outlooks. They are more accepting of change and the need to adapt. They want responsiveness and simultaneity and are turned off by the ossified procedures of traditional democracy.

Out of this subtle, but fundamental and longer term shift in Canadian values have emerged the new forms of elite-challenging political behaviour of the past three decades. New social and political movements involving women, environmentalists, Aboriginal peoples, peace, animal rights and other causes have brought new values and demands into the policy process, making the search for consensus more difficult. In addition to making less use of the traditional routes of political involvement, these new social movements have exhibited three other distinguishing

features:

- they emphasize longer term, quality-of-life issues, not the familiar left-right splits over redistribution of wealth and opportunity;
- leaders of the new movements are often better educated and more politically sophisticated;
- the various groups practising the "new politics" do not rely upon spontaneous protests; instead, they use a carefully selected array of strategies, tactics and technologies to mobilize themselves and to influence governments.

Information and telecommunications technologies of the future will facilitate contact within and among such groups and will enable them to interact with government more readily. However, such interactions will not involve the "quiet diplomacy" of elite accommodation which characterized government-pressure group relationships of the past. Many of the new movements are aggressive, demanding and uncompromising in their approaches.

At the same time as new cleavages were appearing in Canadian society, the economy slowed and unemployment increased. Previously, prosperity and steadily increasing public spending had allowed governments to keep everyone happy. Beginning in the 1980s, the economy and society became more "zero-sum" in their operation, or at least this was the perception. There were seen to be more readily identifiable winners and losers. Groups who were previously inactive organized to protect their share of a diminishing pie.

As governments became more transparent in their operations and the workings of the pressure group system were publicized through the media, a cycle of escalation took hold and new groups entered the fray. There was less inclination on the part of anyone to compromise. When they did not obtain 100 percent of what they wanted from government, groups denounced the process and insisted on reforms in the direction of greater democratization of the policy process.

It was not just the new, often single-issue groups, who were angry; Canada's middle class was increasingly anxious and upset. For the first time many people were experiencing economic insecurity as information technology, globalization, trade deals and public sector cutbacks led to layoffs and diminished expectations. To pay for public debts, the middle class was increasingly asked by governments to pay more taxes and to accept fewer services. The workforce became more polarized between the "knowledge workers" who would prosper in the information-based economy of the future and those who would be left behind in the "sunset" industries of the past. Gaps in market incomes widened and only transfers from a social safety net (which was itself becoming increasingly frayed as cutbacks occurred) prevented income disparities from increasing more dramatically. Faced with seemingly inexorable forces of economic and technological change, many Canadians became more pessimistic about their future prospects and the prospects of their

children. While they acknowledged that governments had less control than in the past over the economic conditions in the country, they nevertheless blamed them for the prevailing economic misfortunes of the 1980s and early 1990s, and continued to look to governments to ease the transition to a new economic order and renewed prosperity.

During the final three decades of the twentieth century the agendas of Canadian governments have been crowded with divisive and emotional issues. For example, applying the brakes to public spending after decades of expansion proved to be difficult in both political and administrative terms. Evaluations of the expensive programs launched during earlier decades revealed that many of them had not fulfilled the promises which launched them. Attempts to discard or even to curtail outdated or ineffective programs produced a backlash from groups who were the presumed beneficiaries of those programs. The rise of a strong separatist movement in Quebec and the development of more aggressive provincial governments created the image of constant federal-provincial quarrelling. Highly symbolic and emotional debates over the Constitution occupied a great deal of the time of government leaders. The failure to achieve a constitutional accommodation with Quebec led to a hardening of attitudes in the rest of Canada towards that province and its elected representatives. Disputes over energy policy and control over energy revenues produced deep regional divisions within the country. The adoption of free trade deals with the United States and Mexico was another complicated and emotional issue which divided Canadians and their governments along regional lines. In short, the types of issues which have dominated public sector agendas recently appear to have tested severely the capabilities of governments to forge a consensus and to mobilize consent for their actions.

Another avenue of interpretation involves the notion of a decline of civil society and an erosion of "social capital." These notions have been made popular by writers like Robert Putnam, Francis Fukuyama and others. Writers define social capital in various ways to refer to a sense of belonging among citizens, a willingness and a capability to collaborate with others to address collective problems and the amount of trust that people exhibit in one another. The concept is measured by the number of organizations in which people participate, by the number of visits to families and friends, and by the amount of their involvement in the political life of their communities. According to Robert Putnam (1995), Americans are no longer as actively involved in their communities compared to past generations. Many civic organizations have experienced sudden, simultaneous and substantial declines in membership. This "social decapitalization" has negative implications for democracy because members of associations of various kinds (church, labour, fraternal, etc.) are more likely than non-members to participate in politics and to express trust in others.

Various explanations for the decline of social capital have been presented. A number have been found lacking in terms of supporting empirical evidence. Two trends which do seem to be related to the erosion of social capital are changes in social and economic scale, particularly those that shift the centre of gravity from local communities to larger geographical units, and the

"individualizing" effects of transportation and communications technologies, especially television. ICTs may have widened existing communities and even created new communities, but the quality of the interactions involved seem shallower and less meaningful.

Institutions embedded in communities with a history of abundant social capital tend to function well, whereas communities with little social capital tend to function poorly. However, the relationship between the availability of social capital and governmental performance is weakly specified at this point. There is a need to refine the existing theoretical understanding of the nature, origins, impacts and sources of decline of social capital. For example, current theories of social capital posit a reinforcing cycle. A history of cooperation within a particular community adds to the knowledge, skills and social trust needed to foster additional types of social cooperation. In other words, present acts of cooperation add to the likelihood of mutual-support collaboration in the future. Exactly how this virtuous circle starts and why some societies are blessed with higher levels of social capital to begin with are unanswered questions at this point. Are national, provincial and local variations in social capital a function of history, cultural homogeneity, economic and political equality, geography, family structures or other factors?

Also poorly specified in theoretical terms is the relationship between social capital and governmental performance (Boix and Posner 1998). While there is an apparent correlation between social capital and institutional performance, the precise linkages are uncertain. Do higher levels of social capital enable citizens to become more sophisticated and effective participants in the policy process? Do they foster broader perspectives and longer term thinking and reduce self-interested political opportunism? Do high levels of social capital promote and support the kinds of creative compromises necessary in pluralistic society if governing is to take place on a consensual basis? What can governments do through their processes and substantive policies to promote social capital where it does not exist and to preserve it where it does? How do ICT developments and their uses by government contribute to or detract from the generation and preservation of social capital? What are the implications of varying levels of social capital for the future of the institutions and processes of representative democracy? There are clearly a wide range of potential hypotheses and research questions to be explored around the concept of social capital.

"Political capital" might be thought of as a particular form of social capital. Measures of political capital would include voter turnout, involvement with parties, allegiance to parties, other forms of participation in the political process (attending meetings, contacting officials, joining interest groups, paying attention to political news, etc.) and knowledge concerning the political system and policy issues.

Part of the concern about the decline in political capital involves the low levels of public knowledge about politics, political institutions and public issues. A review of the 1993 election survey results disclosed that only one in five respondents could pass a "political literacy" test, even though most respondents, considered being well informed important in a democracy. Older

and more affluent Canadians were generally better informed. The study also found that those who were least interested and knowledgeable about politics and government were also much less likely to vote.

Many citizens lack knowledge of the basic features of the Canadian political system. They have little accurate knowledge about the division of responsibilities within the federal system or about the total spending, revenue sources and expenditure patterns of the different orders of governments. To the extent that survey data are available, the level of public ignorance regarding "government" appears to have remained constant or improved only slightly during the past three decades; this has occurred despite rising educational levels and an enormous expansion in the quantity and quality of information available to the public at relatively low cost. Meanwhile, the complexity and volatility of the issues on the agendas of governments have increased enormously.

Such findings raise the fundamental question of whether citizens have "the right stuff" to meet the "minimum" requirements of democracy, such as to cast a relatively well-informed vote once every four years and to hold political and administrative officials accountable between elections. The findings also raise even more serious questions about the capacity and willingness of citizens to participate more directly and continuously in the governing process. Opponents of more reliance on devices of direct democracy as a substitute for, or a complement to, traditional, representative democracy argue it is unlikely that the public will take the time to learn what they need to know and to use their deeper understanding to influence the political process, no matter how inexpensive, accessible and convenient information becomes through the impact of ICTs.

Citizens rely mainly on the mass media, particularly television, to obtain information about politics, government and public issues. The role and influence of the media within the political and the policy process have grown tremendously in recent decades. They help to shape the psychic reality of how Canadians perceive politics, including their affective (emotional) and cognitive (knowledge) orientations toward government. The media also help to shape the "agenda" of government and the way that issues are framed and understood by the public. There is a symbiotic relationship between politicians and the media; both need each other, but they are also wary of being manipulated by the other party. Politicians and their advisors have become very conscious of the need to "package" issues to meet media requirements (especially television's insistence on "good visuals") and to present complicated ideas in sharply focused, often confrontational "sound bites." To protect their independence, more media actors and institutions have adopted an adversarial stance in relation to government, believing that politicians and public servants have their own communications resources and opportunities to tell the "good news" stories.

The press used to be described as the "fourth estate" of government – along with the executive, the legislature and the judiciary – and was seen as indispensable for a healthy democracy. However, there has been rising criticism of the role that the media play in the political process, a growing suspicion that they distort political reality and that they are biased in their

coverage of public affairs. The media have definitely lost a significant amount of legitimacy in the eyes of the public, although they have not slipped as low in public esteem as political institutions. Many informed observers believe that the media have played a significant role in diminishing public trust and confidence in governments in Western democracies.

There is a long list of "indictments" filed against the media by their critics and not all of the complaints are consistent or supported by empirical evidence. To provide a sense of the potential relationships between media performance and the health of democracy, the criticisms will be listed briefly without much elaboration or assessment:

- the media act as bastions of the economic and social status quo by promoting free-enterprise values and criticizing all forms of government intervention
- the growing horizontal (convergence across industry boundaries of broadcasting, telecommunications and information technology, for example) and vertical concentration of the media raises the issue of pluralism at both the production and distribution level. The media, whether driven by their owners, publishers, editors or advertisers have their own agenda and there may not be room for other voices and issues to be heard in policy deliberations
- reporters allegedly bring their own political bias to the collection and interpretation of the news
- rather than being shaped by the personal philosophies of reporters, the definition of what is newsworthy and how issues are interpreted arises out of an interactive process between reporters and editors/producers within a wider organizational and cultural context. Still, the effect is to distort the reality of political events through selective coverage and interpretation
- in an increasingly competitive environment, the various forms of media seek to protect or to increase their shares of the fragmenting audience by focusing on conflict, personalities, sensationalism and superficial coverage of events which leads to a world of "infotainment" – a blending of news and entertainment. Researchers like Joseph Cappella and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1997) have concluded that programs most sensitive to the dictates of market-driven journalism have the largest audiences and the greatest impacts on political attitudes
- leading media scholars have described a "game" or strategy schema of political reporting that has emerged in the past 20 years. The game schema emphasizes the "horserace aspect" of politics: it emphasizes winning as a central concern, the language of wars and competition predominates and there is a focus on performers, critics and audiences with style and perceptions prevailing over substantive content. Once limited to election coverage, the "games" perspective is being generalized to governance at large and is leading to the trivialization of the issues involved
- the media have no sense of history and fail to put issues in context, leading to an

over-simplified understanding of issues and to an impatience with the slow, deliberative process of democracy.

A new generation of younger, better educated journalists know how to use the new technologies. They practise computer-assisted journalism, spending increasing time on-line where large amounts of data are available almost instantaneously. There is now potential for access to information on a world-wide basis, which previously was available only to reporters in larger, well-financed media organizations. Access to more sources potentially enhances their knowledge base, allows them to offer more substantive coverage and to be more critical. However, the newsgathering and reporting processes will still be shaped to a significant degree by the economic, organizational, cultural, social and political context of the time, not just by the ascendant technologies involved.

Political parties have always been central to the theory and the practice of representative democracy, especially in political systems operated on the principles of cabinet-parliamentary government. Parties perform a number of functions within the Canadian political system. Parties help to shape and organize opinions within society by structuring them in the form of votes and other activities. They give expression to regional and other diversities and integrate them into a definition of the national interest. They act as giant personnel agencies for the recruitment, election and placement of individuals in public office. They perform the functions of government and opposition. It is on the basis of competitive, disciplined parties that voters are able to hold political leaders accountable if they fail to deliver on the "mandate" sought at election time. The government party provides policy leadership and direction within Parliament, while the opposition parties provide a valuable outlet for the expression of minority opinion and permit peaceful alternation in office. Party competition provides most of the energy that drives Parliament on a daily basis. Finally, political parties provide an avenue for involvement in the political process for that small minority of citizens who are not content with being merely spectators.

All of these contributions to the health of democracy are potential and they say nothing about how well parties actually perform these functions. For the past 30 years, political scientists have been asking whether political parties are in decline and, if so, whether it matters. Those who support the decline thesis point to a number of changes:

- public behaviour is becoming more private
- "party dealignment" is taking place, with fewer Canadians declaring strong attachment to any political party
- the erosion of party loyalties and the forces of economic change have pushed all parties towards the centre of the right of the traditional ideological spectrum
- neat ideological labels are difficult to pin on today's political parties because of the emergence of the "new politics" involving post-material issues like the quality of life and identity

- the age of the mass party has passed and today political parties are operated by "electoral professionals" close to the leaders. Party memberships are falling
- rather than forming large membership organizations, the main goal of the new party professionals is to use modern campaign technologies (polling, focus groups, television advertising, direct mail, satellites, etc.) to win elections
- the mass media have allowed political leaders to communicate directly with voters without the need for party workers and large party gatherings
- the proliferation of pressure groups and of think-tanks have displaced parties as sources of policy ideas.

While there is some evidence to support the party decline thesis, there are also some problems with the theory. Canada's political parties were never mass parties along the lines of those in some European countries; nor were the parties strongly ideological. The most successful parties are best described as pragmatic and opportunistic. Voter attachment to parties was always weaker in Canada than in many other countries. While the main parties claimed to represent all segments of society, this was mainly at the level of voting, not in terms of participation in the actual running of the party. Even the claim of ideological convergence among the parties can be exaggerated. The apparent triumph of neo-conservative ideas is at most two decades old and new issues may spark a party "realignment" (rather than dealignment) in the future. Furthermore, in respect of some of the usual functions assigned to parties, they are as strong as ever, if not stronger. They have little or no trouble attracting candidates and raising money. Party leaders still control the nomination of candidates. Parties remain the dominant force in conducting the processes of government and opposition. Parliament is organized and operated on the basis of strictly disciplined parties. In recent elections, parties have offered general statements of their policy intentions in office and refer back to the fulfillment of those commitments when seeking re-election. Even if elections do not perfectly fulfill the democratic ideal, the fact of competitive parties at least allows voters to replace one group of political leaders with others when there is significant dissatisfaction.

Despite all the things that are changing around them, parties continue to be central to democratic politics. Indeed, the question might be asked whether their continued survival relatively unchanged, is a greater worry than their supposed decline. Is it comforting to observe that parties can rely less on ideas, lose voter loyalty, attract fewer members, rely more on professionals and electoral technologies and become detached from broader social movements and yet still remain dominant in the democratic political process? It is interesting to speculate on how ICT developments will affect the functions of parties in the future. Already, the communications and computer-based technologies have reduced the space between electors and party leaders. However, most of the uses of ICT have been in connection with the election process. The use of televoting for party leadership and the creation of party web sites are two examples of limited experimentation with ICT outside of the context of a general election.

Another institution of representative democracy which many people believe has lost ground to other institutions and actors within the policy process is Parliament. The decline-of-Parliament theme has been around longer than the decline-of-party thesis. A number of arguments are made in support of the parliamentary decline thesis:

- the expanded scope and complexity of government activity made it difficult for parliamentarians to match policy expertise available to governments through the public service
- the rise of competitive, disciplined political parties meant that Parliament operated mainly along adversarial lines, with limited opportunity for MPs and Senators to collaborate across party lines
- the increased control of party leaders over their parliamentary followers as a result of being chosen by national conventions (rather than the parliamentary caucus) and the fact that the media focused almost exclusively on leaders to state party positions
- in the case of the governing party the increased concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister based upon a number of factors
- the need to streamline the parliamentary process in order to cope with the growing volume of legislation and other business and the increased use by successive governments of the rules of Parliament in order to ensure the expeditious passage of its legislative program
- a high turnover of MPs at each general election, with each new Parliament comprised on average of 40 percent freshman MPs who are engaged in on-the-job training
- the necessity, for reasons of time, lack of knowledge and government convenience, for Parliament to pass broad framework legislation and to delegate to ministers and public servants the interpretation and refinement of policy through the widespread use of regulation and administrative discretion
- the rise of more numerous pressure groups who were often consulted in advance of legislation in ways that MPs and Senators were not
- the emergence of a vast network of intergovernmental bodies and meetings in which policy and administrative agreements were negotiated before matters were brought before Parliament
- declining media attention to Parliament as a largely irrelevant "theatrical sideshow" (symbolized by Question Period) and the reinforcement this provided to the attitude of many ordinary MPs and Senators that the parliamentary process was an exercise in futility, even in terms of generating publicity for their activities
- the bureaucracy's control over a great deal of information and knowledge and the traditional reluctance to share it with parliamentarians (what Canada's Information Commissioner less charitably called a "culture of bureaucratic secrecy") for fear of embarrassing ministers and/or themselves.

During the past three decades, the House of Commons has undergone more study and reform than at any time in its history, but the payoff in terms of enhanced influence has been marginal at best. There has also been extensive study and debate concerning the future of Canada's appointed Senate, but so far political and constitutional obstacles to serious substantive reforms have proven to be insurmountable.

The theory of parliamentary decline may not be entirely accurate. First, there has never been an historical period of great parliamentary strength to which nostalgic reformers can refer. Almost from the beginning of the country control by the political executive was the prevailing pattern. What has changed is the basis for government control. During the first several decades of Confederation, governments relied heavily on patronage of various kinds to keep MPs and Senators on side with party positions. While patronage is still a factor, today's parliamentary parties also rely upon several other processes to promote party solidarity: the cultivation of a culture of team play, the use of private caucus meetings to achieve consensus and to stifle open dissent from party positions, the periodic use of various disciplinary devices (removal from parliamentary committees, travel delegations, office space, etc.) and, in the worst case scenario, the expulsion from caucus or denial of the party nomination at the next election. Most of the conformity amongst parliamentarians which the media attribute to party discipline is in fact more a product of self-discipline: MPs and Senators recognize that cabinet-parliamentary government presumes strong parties and they see the advantages of "team play."

A second problem with the decline thesis is that it refers mainly to the perceived loss of parliamentary influence on the formulation of public policy and ignores other functions performed by Parliament. To measure decline, political scientists have pointed to the small number of government bills that are defeated, modified or delayed because of parliamentary resistance. They also point to the fact that few bills sponsored by private members ever make it through Parliament to become law. Such measures, however, do not fully capture parliamentary influence. Governments draft bills with the anticipated reactions of outside groups and their own MPs in mind. They expect opposition MPs to oppose. Within the government caucus there is an opportunity to influence the content of legislation. Most of the successful amendments to bills introduced during the parliamentary stage come from the minister, but these changes may reflect pressures from outside groups which in turn are echoed by parliamentarians. Still, with regard to law-making, "scorekeeping" based on the number of defeats or amendments ignores the contribution of Parliament as "incubator" of policy ideas which are promoted and protected through parliamentary committee work and private members bills over several sessions. As a visible forum for the generation and debate of policy ideas, Parliament can play a role in setting the parameters of what is politically acceptable and feasible in terms of public policy.

While policy-making is usually taken to be the main function of Parliament, in fact it performs a number of other functions that receive little recognition in the literature about decline.

Parliament performs several and important representational functions through several types of activities: voicing the concerns of citizens, clarifying policy choices for the benefit of voters, dealing with the bureaucracy on behalf of constituents and developing leadership talent. Another function of Parliament can be described as "systems–maintenance," which refers to the processing of demands and the generation of support within the political environment. In broad terms under this heading, the parliamentary process contributes to making government actions legitimate, to the mobilization of consent and support for the outcomes of the policy process, to the management of conflict and to integration and cohesion within society. The three main functions of Parliament – policy-making, representation and systems-maintenance – overlap in practice in terms of the actual activities involved. Parliament is not the only institution within government or society at large that performs these functions.

Of all the institutions and actors involved in the Canadian policy process, Parliament may have the most to lose in terms of the impacts of the new technologies. In general terms, legislatures will be increasingly squeezed between a more demanding public and a wired-up political and permanent executive. As the new technologies make plebiscitary democracy and instantaneous bureaucratic responsiveness more and more possible, there could be less reliance on representative democracy. Whether ICT ends up weakening or strengthening Parliament in the performance of its various functions will depend on how quickly and in what ways technology is used in the parliamentary process.

IV   Governance, Democracy and ICTs

This section of the paper provides a broad overview of how our conceptions of governance and democracy seem to be changing under the impacts of the new technologies. Subsequent sections identify in more detail how existing and anticipated future technological developments will affect the roles of different institutions within the Canadian policy process. Since the main concern is the future of representative democracy, the impacts on elections, political parties and legislatures will receive the greatest attention. Pressure groups, the bureaucracy and the media are definitely influential in the Canadian policy process, but they are usually not considered part of the formal apparatus of representative government. Accordingly, their changing roles will be examined more briefly. Given the interdependence among the various institutions and actors, changes taking place in one location will reverberate, often in unpredictable ways, throughout the policy process. Along with the uncertainty surrounding the emergence and application of new technologies, this makes predictions of future trends a matter of, at best, informed speculation.

The term "governance" has recently become very much in vogue. In part, it has acquired a new cachet because of its widespread use in the corporate sector to describe the need for a strengthening of the role of boards of directors in setting directions for private firms, steering them through the frequent squalls which arise unpredictably on the economic sea, and holding

corporate executives accountable for their navigational skills.

Probably few current corporate leaders know that the governance term goes way back to Plato's parable of the ship of state. Back in the time of Greek city states, governance and politics were one and the same and both were highly respected activities. Today, authors of best-selling books like *Reinventing Government* and *Banishing Bureaucracy* argue that they are writing about governance not politics, suggesting that the two activities can and should be separated. (Thomas 2000). This interpretation reflects the current mood of cynicism and loss of confidence in politics and government. As discussed in Section III of this paper, there has been an erosion of legitimacy in traditional governance processes.

A rethinking of the role of governments within society has been taking place. Often the debate over the future role of governments has masqueraded in the language of managerialism, disguising the fact that fundamental values and principles of democracy are at stake. The longer term normative implications of recent changes to governance arrangements are only dimly discernible at this point and the changes taking place will require that new questions be asked and new answers found.

Increasingly, it is possible to talk of governance and government as two separate phenomena. Governments are no longer seen to be alone at the pinnacle of their societies making authoritative decisions which allocate material resources to different purposes and bestow symbolic recognition on different groups. Under the impact of economic change, driven in large part by technological innovations and by the trade liberalization policies which governments themselves have adopted, there is increased reliance on market forces. Governments have fewer policy instruments to rely upon in terms of economic management and they are less inclined politically to use those that remain in their policy tool kits.

Increasingly, governments share authority and power with other organizations. Again, this is as much by choice as by necessity. Governance is no longer just about governments; it involves many other institutions and actors. Governance has become a multi-centric, kaleidoscopic, complicated, extended, interactive activity involving both formal institutions and informal networks. While authority and power within government remain centralized in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, they have less control over the agenda-setting process of government, and their freedom of policy manoeuvre has become restricted by the extensive web of linkages with other governments and interests within society.

The challenge facing Canadian governments for the future is how to manage decentralized governance in an era of rapid, unpredictable and fundamental change. It used to be thought that Canada involved three tiers of governance: the federal, the provincial and the municipal governments. However, under the pressure of globalization and trade deals, power has shifted into regional/continental and global institutions. These institutions have the power to force

governments to adopt and to discard policies. Power shifts upward and downward within the resulting five-tiered governance structure in uneven, contradictory and unpredictable ways. Some observers have suggested that governance trends are "hollowing out" the roles of national governments with key economic decisions moving into supranational and international forums, while provincial and local governments are forced to accept responsibility for policies dealing with the economic and social consequences of change. The Canadian economist Tom Courchene labels this process "glocalization." There is considerable debate over whether governments are really abdicating power, setting aside permanently some types of policy tools, shifting their focus to social rather than economic issues or simply shuffling their policy cards to play smarter in the new governance processes.

Without settling those debates, this paper argues that the types of issues which are on the agendas of governments have a differential impact on the relative influence of different institutions within the Canadian policy process. For example, international trade policy and intergovernmental relations have been broad policy fields where Parliament has faced serious difficulties in becoming involved beyond insisting that the political executive boast and confess what agreements they have reached in the new arenas of policy-making. Governance cannot be reduced simply to markets and deals struck among governments. It must be about democratic processes, serving the public interest, reflecting the fundamental values of the political community, and promoting such democratic values as responsiveness, transparency, legality, accountability, integrity and morality in the exercise of public power, especially when that power is increasingly shared with private elites.

Technology is both a driving force and an enabler of the fundamental changes which are taking place within the various governance processes. Governments not only participate in the emerging information society, they also facilitate it and will be responsible for dealing with its consequences. As Bellamy and Taylor (1998: 6) point out: "governments at the international, national and municipal levels are seen as the key instruments through which the not always compatible, social and economic objectives of the information society will be secured." This statement probably exaggerates the extent to which the processes of the information society are under direct government control. The authors go on to state that "… it is important to recognize that the information age is being shaped as much by the economic, social and political arrangements from which it has emerged, as it is by the technological innovations on which so much emphasis is placed" (Bellamy and Taylor 1998: 19). The different ICTs have inherent informational and communication properties, but the political choices they present are shaped by the wider environment and the specific institutional context in which they are applied.

Some futurists use superlatives and hype to describe the inherent democratizing potential of the new technologies. In his book *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* (1996), Don Tapscott argues that future generations of citizens will not accept the disempowerment of today's governing processes. "Once the N Gens come of age," he predicts,

"democracy as we know it will be finished." People who have grown up in the information society will no longer accept the ossified procedures of representative democracy, the reliance upon hierarchies and authoritative decision-making structures. Instead they will insist on networks, interactivity, responsiveness and open discussion.

The pro-market / pro-business *Economist* magazine (October 30, 1999, p. 23) recently described the information society as a potential "godsend for the liberal political tradition." The new technologies, especially the Internet, are in the spirit of 18th century liberalism: freedom of choice, freedom of speech, freedom of information and the dispersal of power. According to *The Economist*'s vision, the Net will empower individuals, allow them to escape the coercive powers of taxation, force governments to curb their expansionary tendencies, create global economic links and networks beyond the control of particular national governments, and permit spontaneous communities, based upon common interests not geographical proximity, to bloom. Having described this capitalist nirvana, *The Economist* acknowledges it is not inevitable, but "at the very least, computerization is helping to push political debate in the right direction: linking market freedoms with wider personal freedoms and suggesting that the only way that government can continue to be useful is by radically streamlining itself for a more decentralized age". (*Economist*, October 30, 1999, p. 28).

Some of the attributes of ICTs which are cited as having democratic potential are the following:

- they promote political equality by equalizing access to political information
- they promote open government; facilitating greater input into the political decision-making process and thereby engendering a stronger sense of engagement
- they present opportunities to rebuild old and to build new communities of shared interest
- they have educational potential, promoting better informed dialogue on public problems and the development of people as citizens capable of taking responsibility for their own lives
- they facilitate what is called, in the UK, "joined up" government in which policy is joined to operations, programs are integrated horizontally and departments connect vertically to customers through one-stop service provision
- they lead to the development of new organizational designs, to the flattening of hierarchies, and to increased autonomy for front-line staff, allowing them to be more responsive to their clients
- they promote greater accountability by both politicians and public servants by making information on performance more readily available to a wider audience than in the past.

In summary, the new technologies represent an opportunity to create a new democratic

order in which the traditional constraints of time, size, access and knowledge are overcome or at least seriously reduced.

Not everyone, of course, agrees that the vision of a wired-up society is both inevitable and good for democracy. To match the positive picture presented above, there is a negative alternative consisting of the following:

- ICTs will eliminate or reduce the role of intermediaries between government and the people – like political parties and legislatures
- isolated individuals will be more exposed to manipulation by political and economic elites through the use of sophisticated tools to capture and to shape public opinion without the benefit of public debate
- a cynical public will not take advantage of the new technologies to deepen their knowledge of public issues or make a greater effort to influence the policy process
- rather than strengthening a sense of community, the new technologies will promote further fragmentation and loss of social cohesion as citizenship becomes increasingly privatized
- rather than promoting greater equality through the availability of a free information superhighway, ICTs will instead become an expensive toll road based upon user fees and only well-financed, narrow, specific-interest groups will make use of it, thereby reinforcing their existing advantages in the policy process
- politicians have so far shown little commitment to more participatory models of democracy, but are choosing instead to restrict use of the new technologies to improve service delivery based upon a shallow conception of citizenship as consumerism
- the new technology permits the centralization of control over information and communication, making new kinds of surveillance possible and threatening personal privacy which is a cherished democratic value
- greater exposure to "raw" public opinion could cause politicians to respond hastily; genuine democracy requires time-consuming interaction, deliberation and patience
- digital reasoning is binary: it promotes yes versus no choices, whereas political reasoning in a pluralistic democracy must be complex, nuanced and accommodating of differences.

In summary, critics of the new technologies fear the rise of a plebiscitary form of majoritarian democracy in which a justification for government action is assembled from the manipulated and unconsidered prejudices of private persons reflecting private interests.

Both the optimistic and the pessimistic views of the future of democracy presented above are premised on the assumption that the new technologies are in some way beyond our control.

The viewpoint represented by this paper is that technology may have its own evolutionary logic but it is not unstoppable: there are opportunities where its uses and impacts can be managed. Technology can help democracy, but only if programmed to serve democratic values. If left entirely up to the market, technology will simply reflect commercial imperatives. What private firm will take it as its duty to explore the democratic potential of the technology? Benjamin Barber makes the point persuasively: "The trouble with the zealots of technology as an instrument of democratic liberation is not that they misconceive technology but that they fail to understand democracy. They insist that the market-generated technology can, all by itself and in the complete absence of human willing and political cooperation, produce liberty, social responsibility and citizenship" (Barber 1998-1999: 586-587).

Given the unknowable nature of technology's impacts, both positive and negative, governments will have to accept responsibility for monitoring and managing the social consequences – however unfashionable and difficult that task sounds today. For governments to perform this task, they will need a greater sense of what kind of democracy Canadians want in the twenty-first century than presently exists.

The next section of the paper examines how the new technologies have been applied within the Canadian policy process. To date, those applications have been extrapolated mainly from the consumer model of the commercial marketplace. It may require citizens to demand a voice in technology policy for the democratic potential of ICTs to be realized.

V   Parliament and ICTs

In Section III of this paper, the theory that Parliament had lost ground to other institutions and actors within the policy process was examined. A number of explanations were offered to support the decline-of-Parliament theme. It was suggested that "decline" may not be the right word because it implies there was once a period when Parliament played a powerful role, whereas in practice from the beginning of the country dominance by the political executive has been the pattern. Second, most of the talk of decline is based on attempts to measure Parliament's direct contributions to law-making, and such measures may miss the indirect and diffuse influence of Parliament (operating in conjunction with other institutions and processes within society) in setting the agenda and climate of ideas for policy-making. Finally, concentration on Parliament's policy-making role ignores its other broad functions of representation and systems-maintenance within the Canadian political system.

These three broad functions of Parliament – policy-making, representation and system-maintenance – overlap in practice in terms of the actual activities involved. All will be affected by the emergence of an IS and the use of ICTs, both outside and inside the Canadian political system. Of all the institutions and actors involved with the Canadian policy process, Parliament may have

the most to lose in terms of the impacts of the new technologies. While ICTs offer opportunities for Parliament to strengthen its representational and policy-making roles, there is also a legitimate concern that it will increasingly be squeezed between a better informed and demanding public, a wired-up political executive able to monitor and manipulate public opinion, and a public bureaucracy able to offer user-friendly, integrated and instantaneous service to its clients. If the new technologies make plebiscitary democracy and bureaucratic responsiveness the more prevailing pattern, there could be less and less reliance upon elected (MPs) and appointed (Senators) representatives in Parliament as channels of communication with governments and as liaison agents with the bureaucracy on behalf of citizens.

At this state in the development of our knowledge about the use of ICTs in the legislative process, statements about the long-range implications must remain in the realm of speculation. There are, to my knowledge, no systematic surveys of the uses of ICTs by legislatures and individual legislators at the national and the provincial levels in Canada. At best, what we have are "spot surveys" of the development of web sites by Canadian legislatures and the use of ICTs (such as web sites, e-mail, the Internet videoconferencing, etc.) by individual Canadian legislators. Available sources on this topic are listed in the bibliography under the heading of *Canadian Parliamentary Review* where most of the articles describing such developments appear. In the absence of Canadian data, findings from other national legislative bodies will have to provide the foundation for the discussion of the potential impacts of ICTs on the Canadian legislative process.

In 1999, the Institute for Electronic Government, funded by the IBM Corporation, surveyed 4,506 legislators in fourteen European countries on their use of ICTs (Caldow 1999). The sample was drawn only from "wired legislators"– those who had e-mail addresses – and the survey was administered via e-mail. A total of 436 legislators from national, regional and municipal governments responded. Some of the highlights from the survey were as follows:

- the more "wired" the legislator, the more likely she or he is to engage in multiple digital practices at increasingly strategic levels; for example, 95 percent use e-mail to conduct daily business, but only 47 percent own laptops with Internet connectivity
- a "digital divide" separates political candidates and their campaigns; 39 percent of respondents have web sites, but only 31 percent of them used their web sites in campaigns
- most legislatures have not evolved their institutional web sites beyond descriptive "brochure" content; only 28 percent provide any kind of interactive capability
- elected officials at the national level are more "digitally advanced" than their peers at regional and municipal levels

- despite considerable uncertainty about web-enabled technologies across the democratic spectrum, legislators know that it is important to move ahead and are demonstrating leadership
- elected representatives believe that information technology will enhance democracy (nearly 75 percent of respondents).

It is important to note that these optimistic findings reflect responses from early adopters of ICTs among the European legislative population.

A more qualified and balanced review of ICT developments in a number of national legislative bodies is contained in the "theme issue" of *Parliamentary Affairs: A Journal of Comparative Politics* Vol. 52, 3 July, 1999. Articles by academics and parliamentarians examine developments in the legislatures of Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. While the articles lack the empirical survey findings of the IBM report, they provide a more qualitative interpretation of how ICTs are increasingly, for better or worse, impinging upon the parliamentary process. The editors of the volume state their main concern is whether ICTs are "enlarging, constraining or reducing democratic opportunity." Not surprisingly, the fourteen contributors to the seven articles do not come anywhere close to reaching an unequivocal and unanimous conclusion to this fundamental question.

Instead of trying to summarize the various perspectives, only a sample of the more important findings and observations will be presented here:

- public cynicism towards politicians and political institutions is caused in part by a "crisis of political communication" because the public is exposed to poor quality information regarding the parliamentary process
- the advent of ICTs is described as the third information revolution in parliaments, with the other two being the development of the printing press and the introduction of radio/television. Originally distrusted, then grudgingly accepted and regulated, eventually radio/television became an integral part of the institution
- if ICTs are to become an institutionalized feature of parliamentary life, users must know how to employ the technology – this includes parliamentarians, their staffs and the people with whom they interact
- while most parliamentarians in all the countries are making growing use of ICTs, many approach the new technologies with caution. Several reasons were offered: belief in the superiority and greater political acceptability of traditional mechanisms of communication with outside parties; habit; unfamiliarity with the new technology; lack of time, staff and money for tasks like updating home pages; fear of a deluge of e-mails (mass mailings called "spamming"); the lack of incentives in executive-dominated legislatures to utilize the new technologies for policy research; and the limited demand from constituents for access via electronic routes.

Despite these obstacles, as the communication infrastructures serving parliaments change, so too will the dynamics of parliamentary democracy.

ICTs will affect both internal and external activities of Parliament which support its three broad functions. An "inside" versus an "outside" interpretation of parliamentary behaviour is admittedly artificial since most of the behaviour of MPs occurs with an eye to how it will be perceived by the public and whether it will lead to support for re-election. In terms of internal benefits, ICTs could:

- allow for better time management
- facilitate better record keeping and office management
- permit greater continuity of work when time is split between Parliament and the constituency; the use of laptops will allow parliamentarians to connect with Parliament Hill or their riding from anywhere on the planet
- allow access to outside sources through use of technologies like the Internet, Intranets, CD-Roms and other sources
- allow access to parliamentary schedules, debates, committee proceedings, status of bills, etc., for Parliament and other legislatures on-line
- provide a basis for MPs/Senators to question ministers and senior public servants more effectively since performance reports from over 80 departments and agencies are now available on-line.

To date, most of the use of ICTs has been for internal purposes.

Limited experimentation with the technology to interact with outside parties has occurred. Reform Party MPs have used a mix of both telephones and television to consult their constituents:

- in 1994, Preston Manning and four other Calgary area MPs organized a television program on physician assisted suicides with experts discussing both sides of the issue. Manning then presented his viewpoint and the public was invited to call in and vote. Of an audience estimated at 20,000 people, 1,533 voted by phone
- several Reform MPs have done telepolling by assigning constituents a PIN number and inviting them to vote on issues like budgets, federalism and the Young Offenders Act. Turnouts in such polls ranged from 600 to 15,000 in constituencies containing 80,000 to 90,000 voters.

William Cross (1998a) explains the low participation rates on several grounds: the small audiences for community cable programs (on which Reform aired its programs), the lack of access to the necessary equipment (touch-tone phones and cable TV), the fact that respondents are self-selected and are likely to be activists, and the presumed futility of the exercise since it is assumed

that governments will not listen.

Future developments are likely to involve such mechanisms as the following to open up the representation and policy-making processes within Parliament:

- more extensive use of e-mails and web sites by parliamentarians to keep in touch with constituents
- the use of interactive web sites and the Internet to seek public input on draft legislation
- electronic petitions, rather than printed documents which could be received and printed in Parliament
- electronic access to voting records for voters as a way to enhance accountability
- electronic surveys of constituent opinions before parliamentarians take public stands on controversial issues
- the use of video-conferencing to allow for long-distance evidence to be given by witnesses before parliamentary committees
- the fusion of digital broadcasting with video-conferencing equipment to allow members to follow Parliament and its committees, even participate in debates, from their riding offices
- the distribution of digital video images of parliamentary proceedings on the Internet to allow people to keep up with issues and to solicit their opinions.

At this point, these developments represent the potential of ICTs, not the reality. Thus far, the new technologies have had limited impact on how Canadian parliamentarians interact with constituents and on their role in the policy process. ICTs are being used mainly to distribute and receive more information faster. The public still prefers the traditional ways of communicating with their elected representatives; i.e. by telephone, letter and, better still, face-to-face meetings with their representatives. Access to wider sources of information allow for far more challenges to the government, but the adversarial nature of Parliament means that many MPs/Senators continue to approach the gathering and interpretation of information with the goal of "scoring political points" in the permanent election campaign which is the essence of much, though not all, parliamentary activity.

In summary, on their own ICTs will not increase the policy role of Parliament. In the private meetings of the party caucuses, better informed backbenchers may be in a better position to influence their leaders and opposition MPs may have more knowledge to challenge ministers on the floor of the House of Commons. However, an enhanced policy role for Parliament will depend on more than the greater availability of information; it will require a change to the political culture of Parliament. This would involve, in general terms, a willingness by governments to allow for greater parliamentary influence over the shaping of policy and the supervision of the bureaucracy and, in return, the adoption of a more constructive approach by opposition parties to debates over policy and administrative matters.

Interestingly, it appears that Canadians at large would like to see Parliament adopt a more consensual approach to decision-making; apparently they are turned off by the negative theatrics of the ongoing party battles which "appear" to predominate in Parliament. "Appear" is the right word, because most members of the public gain their impression of the institution from the highly selective coverage provided by the mass media. Most of that coverage focuses on the adversarial and negative features of the parliamentary process because stories featuring disagreements, accusations, misdeeds, and the clash of personalities fit with the media's definition of what is newsworthy. The availability of on-line access to parliamentary proceedings may add balance to public perceptions, provided people use future web sites. Televised proceedings of the House of Commons have been available since 1977, but the number of Canadians who are regular viewers has been relatively small. More interactive forms of broadcasting via the Internet might attract a larger audience over time. If most Canadians continue to see party conflicts in Parliament as disturbing and unproductive there will never be a large following for parliamentary broadcasts regardless of the medium. Disagreement, conflict and competition for power, however, are both inevitable and healthy within a democracy, if collective choices for society are to be made and if consent and support for such actions are to grow.

VI   Political Parties and ICTs

Political parties have been seen as central to the process of representative democracy. Political scientists have assigned various functions to parties: structuring the vote, mobilization of the mass public, recruitment of political leaders, performance of the roles of government and opposition, formation of public policy, and the aggregation and brokerage of various interests to encourage non-majoritarian decisions, based on consensus and compromise. Although Canadian parties have not always lived up to this lofty definition of their functions, their capacity to promote political discussion, to structure political debate and to broker competing interests, remains unrivaled by other institutions in society, such as the bureaucracy, pressure groups and the media, which have increasingly come to share in the performance of these functions. (Meisel and Mendelsohn, 1995) Despite the central importance of political parties, they have been, until recently, little recognized in public law and subject to very limited regulation by the state. During the past three decades, electoral law and parliamentary rules have acknowledged that parties are crucial to representative democracy, but the traditional view that they are essentially private institutions continues to be promoted by party elites.

The nature of political parties has changed in the past in response to the emergence of new technologies. This has been especially evident in connection with the rise of television as the principal source of political information for Canadians. Television was first used in Canadian federal elections of the late 1950s, but really came into its own as a campaign medium during the 1960s. The result was to "privatize" a great deal of political experience. During earlier

decades campaigns consisted mainly of public events: national leadership tours, political rallies, all-party candidate debates, shopping-mall tours and face-to-face meetings with voters. Increasingly, politics took place mainly in the private setting of Canadians' living rooms in front of the television. Events were staged and carefully choreographed to fit the visual demands of television. The dominance of television gave rise to a new breed of political professionals — pollsters, advertising executives, spin doctors, etc. — who displaced traditional party elites and local, volunteer activists. Campaigns were increasingly centralized around the leader and his/her entourage of paid advisors.

Competition for control of the dominant media "frame" around a candidate or an issue became the essence of media relations. "Politicians compete with each other, and with journalists, to control the news frame" (Fox 1999: 94). Campaign reporting gave less and less attention to the policy positions of leaders and parties and instead focused on the "horse race" aspects of campaigns. Also, reporters became a more intrusive presence in the coverage. An analysis of the 1997 federal campaign concluded that the leaders' sound bites clocked in at between two or three seconds, leaving the bulk of the TV time for coverage of political events very much up to the whim of reporters (Fox 1999: 49). In summary, television and the new election technologies (polling and mass marketing) made Canadian political parties more electoral than policy machines and also made them more leadership driven and dominated than in the past.

The idea that political parties are in decline, that they no longer serve as the sole or even the primary link between government and the governed was examined in Section III of this paper. It was argued there that the party decline thesis seems to have been overstated. The emergence of the new information technologies has been seen as an opportunity for political parties to renew themselves through improved communication, greater internal participation, access to better knowledge for policy-making and restoration of their role as the main intermediaries between citizens and governments. An alternative scenario, however, is that ICTs will hasten the obsolescence of parties by allowing leaders to interact directly with citizens, with increased opportunities for the manipulation of public opinion and with declining reliance on the party organization by individual candidates to get elected. Research into the relationship between parties and the new technologies has been limited, but certain trends can provide the basis for some informed speculation. It may be that the future of Canadian political parties is neither increased obsolescence nor renewal as mass democratic institutions, but instead, their continued evolution toward leadership-driven entities which reach the electorate directly and do not depend on their membership for winning and keeping power. In this scenario, parties remain viable by ignoring ideology and the beliefs of their members in favour of tapping into, shaping and responding to broader public opinion within society as a whole

Political scientist Heather MacIvor (1996/97) has examined two areas where parties have used ICTs: party leadership selection and communications between party organizations and their members. Nineteen of Canada's major federal and provincial parties have switched to various

forms of universal membership voting (UMV) as a substitute for the traditional leadership convention. There are various forms of UMV, but televoting from a central party location or home is the most relevant here. MacIvor speculates that the new technologies, ostensibly designed to increase participation in the political process, have actually reduced membership participation in the selection of party leaders. She notes the low turnout rates for the televoting within the parties, with a high of 49 percent and a low of 20 percent of eligible members bothering to vote. Technical problems and eligibility issues may account in part for the low turnouts, but MacIvor also speculates that many members could not be bothered to perform a duty which does not involve a gathering with their political friends.

A 1993 survey of constituency association presidents of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and Reform parties found strong support for universal membership voting. Half of the Liberals, two-thirds of Reformers and three-quarters of the PCs believed that their parties should introduce election of leaders by a direct vote of all party members (Cross 1998: 47). These findings help to explain the subsequent move by all three parties towards various procedures for direct election. According to Cross (1998) the principal concern regarding election was the loss of consensus-building opportunities derived from the convention process. In the past, bringing delegates together from all parts of the country allowed people of different regional, linguistic and social backgrounds to share perspectives over several days and to hear the leadership candidates address their particular concerns. "In parties with deep regional, linguistic or rural – urban cleavages," writes Cross, "the loss of this collective decision-making opportunity may thwart attempts to build consensus" (Cross 1998: 48).

A related concern about televoting for party leaders is the temptation for candidates to ignore regions of the country where historically the party has been weak. To address this concern with respect to Quebec, the Progressive Conservative party adopted rules providing for the allocation of an equal number of votes to all 301 ridings and for those votes to be cast in proportion to the leadership preferences of party members within each riding. In theory, this gave all leadership candidates an incentive to address the concerns of all regions.

A second use of technology by parties is to keep in touch with their members. For this purpose, parties have created 1-800 numbers, computerized membership lists, e-mail, web sites, electronic-voting at policy conventions and some experimentation with electronic forums. Broader distribution of ICTs within society and more user-friendly technology may create an opportunity for greater participation in political parties, but given the general public's negative perceptions of parties it will take more than access to improved technology to increase party membership beyond the three percent of the electorate who currently belong. According to reliable estimates, Canadian party membership's figures are among the lowest in the Western world (MacIvor 1996/97:16).

It is in connection with election campaigns that Canada's political parties have made the greatest use of ICTs. Astute polling, combined with the merger of diverse databases, has

enhanced the capacity of political parties to make use of the speed, relative low cost and targetability of the new technology to segment the electorate. The primary purpose of party polling is not to determine who is ahead, but rather to find out what kind of people are for, against or undecided and why. Polling data can be combined with "geodemographic" lists (available from wholesale list brokers) which indicate where people with different social backgrounds are located. On this basis, parties can target campaign messages to different sub-groups. Messages can be tailored to reinforce the soft-favourable, to persuade the undecided and to convince the soft-opposed. After polling and focus groups have revealed what people are thinking, messages can be crafted to strike all the responsive chords, and direct-mail technology allows parties to send different messages to different audiences (Armstrong 1988).   Direct mail has been described as "the silent killer" because it allows parties/candidates to attack their opponents without their necessarily knowing it. Highly personalized letters, conversational in tone, which rely on "involvement devices" (surveys, fax-backs, gifts, etc.) are used to recruit members and to raise funds. The development of cheap and easy-to-use desk-top publishing systems can be linked to geodemographic lists to permit a blitz of letters purporting to come from the party leader or some other party luminary.

Sophisticated telemarketing technologies have also been adopted by parties. Almost all Canadian householders have a telephone, making coverage much wider than for e-mails and faxes. The use of computer-based technology, called a predictive automatic dialer, means that all the dialing is done automatically, by passing answering machines. Once a voter is engaged on-line, the party worker follows a carefully written script, which often leaves the impression that the voter is talking to someone near the top of the campaign structure. Follow-up letters can be sent immediately to floating voters.

There is a rapidly growing use of the Internet and web sites by political parties during election campaigns. During the 1997 federal election, all major Canadian political parties mounted their own "home pages" where biographies of leaders, party platforms, candidate listings and responses to late-breaking events were featured. According to the Liberal pollster, there was moderate use of the party's site and most of the users were the media. In the past, media representatives used the wire services to get information, but now press releases were available directly from the source. Web sites can be used as well to sign up members and to raise money. Party leaders have also gone on-line to do question-and-answer sessions. The reliance by parties on web sites is likely to grow because they allow parties to appeal directly to voters without the sceptical filter of the news media interpreting every position and statement.

To date, the mainstream parties in Canada have resisted more widespread use of the new technologies to promote direct forms of democracy. It has been argued that direct democracy is incompatible with our parliamentary tradition, with responsible government, with executive federalism and with the necessity of "brokerage politics" in a national political community which is divided along regional, linguistic, ethnic, economic, and other lines. In a fractured country like Canada, it is often suggested that parties must accept as their primary function the

promotion of national integration through the formulation of policies based upon compromise and consensus. Through the intermediary of parties – operating through elections, party conventions, Parliament, party caucuses and Cabinet interests – are articulated, aggregated and incorporated into policies which hopefully transcend the narrower, more parochial perspectives which comprise raw public opinion. By incorporating minority interests into their decision-making structures, parties help to ensure that majorities do not systematically exclude the concerns of the others. Widespread reliance upon unrefined public opinion, which has not been informed and perhaps moderated through collective debate, could weaken this brokerage role of political parties.

It must be acknowledged that Canadian political parties have not always fulfilled the lofty ideal of formulating policies which transcend differences within society. At times, parties have made narrow regional appeals and gained political ground by attacking other parts of the country. For example, the perception of excessive majoritarianism of parliamentary democracy and the dominance of the national policy process by the concerns of the more populous provinces of Ontario and Quebec has led to the emergence over the years of a number of Western protest parties. It is also the case that the traditional parties have been most successful at aggregating interests at the level of votes; they have not had nearly as much success in reflecting the plurality of values and interests found in society in their internal operations. For example, delegates to the conventions of the traditional parties were in the past drawn mainly from the founding English and French groups and were predominantly middle and upper class in their social background. Affirmative-action type policies of the parties have changed this situation somewhat. Finally, the parties have not encouraged strong, internal democracy in terms of ongoing debates over policies and holding leaders accountable to the rank-and-file members. Parties have become predominantly election machines and even during the election period, power has increasingly been centralized in the hands of the new professionals who are skillful at using the new electoral technologies.

William Cross (1998) and Matthew Mendelsohn (1996) have argued that the traditional Canadian political parties, by emphasizing their roles as consensus-builders at the expense of meaningful membership participation, have contributed to voter dissatisfaction with elite-dominated decision-making processes. Both authors contend that political parties can and must increase opportunities for meaningful membership participation in policy development, leadership selection and candidate nomination without jeopardizing their consensus-building capacity.

In support of this argument, Cross (1998) points to the hybrid approach to leadership selection adopted by the Ontario Liberal Party. In this process all party members vote both for their leadership choice and for convention delegates. While delegates are compelled on the first ballot to vote on the basis of the outcome of the constituency vote, on subsequent ballots they are freed from the obligation to reflect local sentiment and can respond to a brokerage dynamic in the convention if that emerges.

Living alongside the United States gives Canadians a false impression of how direct democracy must work, according to Mendelsohn (1996). "The central qualities of American direct democracy – its majoritarian, non-deliberative and disorganized structure – run contrary to Canada's political culture and institutional history" (463). He offers a proposal which will supposedly revitalize parties through the incorporation of increased citizen involvement. He advocates the use of the initiative device as a means by which citizens can place issues on the agendas of governments. Rather than having narrow, special interest groups draft initiatives, they should be drafted and debated through party conventions and then submitted to the public. Mendelsohn describes this as "direct democracy's 'Canadian way': more organization, mediation, brokerage, deliberation and checks on the momentary will of the majority" (463).

Clearly there is a possible middle ground between the brokerage politics model of political parties which are elite driven and depend on largely passive consent from their members, and a direct democracy model which seeks to involve members more continuously through unmediated processes like initiatives, referenda and recall provisions. ICTs can play a role in the development of mixed models of intra-party democracy if that is the direction that parties decide to go.

VII   Other Institutions in the Policy Process – Pressure Groups, The Media and the Public Service

Pressure groups have always been influential actors in the Canadian policy process, but there is greater acknowledgement today of the important role they can play in the shaping of legislation, budgetary policy and administrative decisions. While not officially part of government, pressure groups play a central role in representative democracy and governance. They perform many of the same functions as political parties, with the important exceptions of not trying to put their members in elected public office and not having to aggregate interests beyond the segment of society they represent.

The number of pressure groups acting to influence governments on behalf of their members has increased for several reasons:

   !   the evolution of a more complicated, specialized and interdependent society
   !   the emergence of new cleavages within society
   !   the expanded role of governments
   !   the dissatisfaction with traditional representative mechanisms of elections, parties, Parliament, etc.

- **!** the encouragement received from governments through the creation of advisory networks and the enlistment of groups as partners
- **!** the greater media attention to the role played by pressure groups, causing new groups to form
- **!** the improved communications technologies.

The last point – better access to information and the ability to communicate rapidly and inexpensively – has undoubtedly contributed significantly in recent years to the proliferation and strengthening of pressure groups. Many of the so-called new social movements – women's groups, environmentalists, the disabled, gay organizations, animal rights, peace and other groups – have benefited particularly from the new technologies because they are diffuse, loosely structured, often poorly funded and shifting in the focus of their concerns. The perceived success of these new social movements both reflects and reinforces the declining deference towards elites and has increased the public's interest in improving mechanisms for holding public officials accountable and in creating new opportunities for direct participation.

The strategies and tactics used by the more successful pressure groups have not changed dramatically due to the new technologies. Established groups rely mainly on continuous interaction with ministers and public servants on the basis of an underlying philosophy of elite accommodation and mutual support. Having gained institutionalized status in terms of their standing with public officials, the main pressure groups are prepared to compromise on issues and to forego public attacks on governments when their demands are rejected in order to preserve their ongoing access to the key decision-makers. Senior public servants are the preferred targets of lobbying efforts, even ranking ahead of ministers. This pattern reflects the fact that policy is formulated at the working level within departments and that, to maximize their impact, interventions must occur early in the policy cycle when policy is taking shape. Representatives of rich and powerful groups can pick up the phone and arrange a meeting with the relevant public official in order to make their point in the corridors of power. They seldom have to use e-mail alerts or the Internet to mobilize coalitions when they are caught off-guard by a government policy initiative.

The new social movements are less involved with discussions over policy at the pre-parliamentary stages. They rely less on low-key, discreet, quiet diplomacy with people in the inner circles of government. Often it is the historical and symbolic nature of their cause – such as Aboriginal peoples and women's rights – which provides moral leverage with government decision-makers. However, for such leverage to work requires publicity for their cause through participation in parliamentary and other hearings, media campaigns, and protest activities of various kinds. The new technologies have probably shortened the reaction time of the new social movements, facilitated the formation of coalitions and enabled them to deluge governments with communications from their members.

The success of groups in influencing public policy depends upon a number of factors:

! the compatibility of their general values, goals and tactics with the country's political culture and whether they are therefore perceived as legitimate
! the popularity of the issue on which they are campaigning at the time
! the status of the group within society, but particularly its reputation with government officials
! the cohesion and continuity of the group
! the resources (including money to buy knowledge) and organizational capability of the group
! the political sophistication of the group, particularly its knowledge of the policy process and the machinery of government
! the adaptability of the group; its willingness and capacity to adapt its goals, strategies and tactics in response to changing circumstances.

In general, ICTs have not altered these success factors. They have opened up new and faster channels of communication with governments and among groups themselves. Information about government organizations and programs is more readily available on web sites. This may reduce the demand for the services of so-called "for-hire" lobbyists; clients will be more reluctant to pay such firms money for repackaged information which is readily available on the Internet. However, the ability of lobbyists to identify and to gain access to key decision-makers – which seems to be their most valuable asset – will not be adversely affected for the foreseeable future. Their knowledge of who is in charge, how the system works and how to structure messages for maximum impact will continue to be a valuable resource, especially for groups who cannot afford full-time representation in Ottawa.

As mentioned above, the *public service* is the preferred target of the lobbying efforts of organized pressure groups, which is a reflection of the fact that public servants play an influential role during all phases of the policy cycle from the point of problem identification and diagnosis through to implementation of programs and projects and the evaluation of their progress. All of the core public service functions are affected by the new technologies.

In terms of input to the policy process, ICTs facilitate the informationgathering and synthesis role performed by public servants. There are more numerous and more readily accessible sources of policy intelligence available to public servants through the use of e-mails, web sites, intranets within government, etc. Interaction with other orders of government, with pressure groups and with private parties engaged in the joint provision of projects and programs is facilitated by the new technologies. The public service is being exhorted to become a learning organization capable of anticipating change and adapting quickly. This implies that the old internal power structure based upon authority and control must give way to the power of new knowledge and new policy ideas. Policy work will become less focused around individual disciplines; instead, multidisciplinary, interorganizational task forces with shifting focuses and composition will become more the norm. The influence of the bureaucracy within the policy process has always depended greatly on the possession of large amounts of specialized

information and knowledge, and the new technologies reinforce this advantage, especially at this stage when these technologies are not evenly distributed among various segments of society.

The new technologies enable the wider and more immediate dissemination of information from government and have the potential to create new forums of consultation with citizens over policy and administrative matters. It is often claimed that ICTs will cause a move away from centrally controlled hierarchies to more informal, decentralized, loosely-structured networks. Decentralized policy-making is held to be more open, more responsive, and hence more democratic. Two qualifications are worth noting. First, there are many studies which suggest that the "politics" of the wider organizational context play a crucial role in determining the use of ICTs. On strategic policy questions of a sensitive nature, the existing power structure controlled by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet is not likely to support more decentralized, consultative approaches. Second, the act of decentralizing in itself does not lead to greater public participation or democracy, even if the barriers to access are removed, and they will not be removed for everyone for some time, if ever. Even when the majority of people can go online, the quality of the information they receive and their capacity to utilize it will vary widely.

A third set of impacts of ICTs will be to support policy and administrative coordination, program integration and performance management. In the United Kingdom, the Labour government of Tony Blair has coined the phrase "joined up government" to describe the use of ICTs for achieving direction and coherence throughout the policy cycle. Although vague, the phrase "joined up" seems to refer to three broad types of integration:

- **!** joining policy-makers to the operational tiers of government at a time when more programs are being delivered by semi-independent agencies or by third parties on a contract basis
- **!** joining up departments and non-departmental bodies horizontally to attack the so-called "silo problem" of functional specialization which prevents governments from dealing "holistically" with problems
- **!** joining up organizations on a vertical basis within and across levels of governments to provide better service to customers through mechanisms like "one-stop" outlets and electronic access (Bellamy 1999).

As part of this process of administrative reform, ICTs also hold the promise of reduced cost and improved quality in service delivery. Information on programs and eligibility requirements can be disseminated more widely and quickly. Electronic kiosks and web sites can facilitate searches. Electronic transactions can remove the frustration of long lineups, telephone relays, and slow-footed bureaucracies. Redress mechanisms which work more quickly can be created. ICTs also enable governments to set performance targets or expectations, to measure what is accomplished and to report publicly on results. Service satisfaction can be measured more easily with electronic polling. Over time, if performance improves, if service standards are

raised and more people come away feeling positive about their encounters with the public sector, the image of government and the public service might improve. A more accessible and user-friendly bureaucracy, which treats "the whole person" rather than asking individuals to navigate the jurisdictional maze, may reduce the role of parliamentarians as liaison-agents (ombudsman-like figures) on behalf of their constituents.

The *media* are important within the information society because they gather, interpret and disseminate information. In the process, they help to frame issues and to set the agenda of society. The digital revolution and the emergence of new ICTs are challenging and transforming the "old" media and causing convergences across previously separated industries. There have always been conflicting models and interpretations of the role of the media within society and the political process. These controversies have been heightened by the recent trends within the media system. Very contradictory predictions are being made about where the new media are heading and what the implications are for democracy. Only the broad themes emerging from these debates can be highlighted here; there is not the space to explore the controversies in depth.

The structure of the Canadian mass media system and the growing concentration of ownership raises concerns about free speech and a plurality of voices within a democratic society. As illustrated by the recent spate of mega-mergers, there is growing horizontal and vertical concentration in the media, raising issues of pluralism at both the production and the distribution levels. Whether driven by their owners, publishers, editors, reporters, advertisers or audience tastes captured by focus groups (which of these sources "control" content is controversial), the media often have their own agenda and interpretation of events. They do much more than merely hold a mirror up to events within society. The concern arising from concentration of media ownership and cross-ownership to other industries is that, as agenda-setting institutions, the media will limit public debate to "safe" issues which do not challenge the economic and political status quo, whether from the left or the right.

Governments and their regulatory bodies seem to have forsaken any role in limiting media concentration on the grounds that technology and intense global competition make this impossible. Instead, the CRTC embarked earlier on the deregulation of the broadcast and telecommunications industries and announced in 1999 that it would not even try to regulate the Internet. Ironically, that technology was developed in the public sector and was turned over to the private sector; in Canada's case, Ca*net became CANARIE under the control of Bell Canada. Critics also suggest that government changes to copyright, patent and trademark law have turned knowledge into the intellectual property of Canadian corporate giants like Rogers, Hollinger, or multinational firms like AOL-Time Warner, to which Canadian companies are linked.

Technological enthusiasts insist that the new media defy regulation and that the inventiveness of people and ease of entry will always lead to new challengers to existing giants.

Optimists also insist that the new technologies are inherently democratizing; they will produce many media sources, with diverse content, delivered to fragmented and active audiences. Mainstream media will be forced to share their agenda -setting roles in society.

According to media critic David Shenk, there is risk in this potential multiplication of media sources. The Internet, he argues, causes "cultural splintering. It fosters tribes, and sub-cultures, not communities" (quoted in Fox 1999: 195). The territorial definition of society becomes far less important. Governments will face electorates who are narrower in their outlooks. They will have different sets of expectations, demands, standards, and attachments to traditionally common values and institutions may decline.

Enthusiasts of the new technologies suggest they will turn the news-gathering business upside down. There will be fewer barriers and more information providers and users. Rather than waiting for so-called authoritative sources like television networks and newspapers to tell them what is newsworthy, audience members can create their own news and disseminate it at limited cost. Already the news cycle has been greatly accelerated, as seen in the 24-hour, all-news services. Not only does this frenzied pace lead to news inaccuracies, it also means that governments are forced to respond more rapidly to events. All-news channels mean more talk and more work for government spin doctors. Reflection, deliberation, substance and patience – all qualities usually thought of as important in democracies – tend to be compromised in this hot-house atmosphere.

Satellites, computers, cell phones and the Internet have changed the way that reporters operate. For one thing, there are fewer reporters, producers and editors. Pool services are more relied upon, especially for international coverage, which means that overseas events are not presented from a "Canadian" perspective. Reporters have been forced to come to terms with the new technologies. In theory they can gain access to a much wider range of sources than in the past and lessen their dependence on "official sources" in government. However, the journalistic community still focuses on the traditional institutions and processes (Prime Ministerial press conferences and Question Period). It still favours news which is readily available (electronic press releases), duplicates what other media outlets are covering (the herd mentality), and is readily understandable to their audiences and readers. In addition to changed news-gathering methods, media organizations have themselves moved into the new era by creating their own web sites featuring background information on stories.

In theory, the new, information-rich media environment offers news consumers more choice. However, as the news and entertainment businesses become closer in ownership and operating philosophy, the goal of maximizing audiences and advertiser revenues forces the media to dwell upon dramatic news, especially bad news. The late Fred Friendly, formerly director of television news at CBS, once observed that because "commercial broadcasting can profit so much from doing its worst, it often cannot afford to do its best" (Friendly 1967). Rather than helping to inform and to mobilize people, the new media organizations may

contribute further to the "media-malaise" by promoting cynicism towards government or simply providing a diversionary, entertaining escape from the real issues facing society.

The information overload experienced by most people today will get worse in the future. To cope with the rising information tide, people have developed "information-processing strategies" (Graber 1988). For example, they don't pay close attention until an issue reaches saturation coverage. They then form their views based on many bits of information they receive, mainly from television news. Also, they assess news in terms of its positive and negative orientation, and even though they claim to screen it out, negativity in news captures the public's attention more than positive stories. In the future world of numerous competing information outlets, judging the reliability and objectivity of sources and information will become even more of a challenge for news consumers.

In summary, all of the developments in terms of the information society and ICTs place potentially more demands on citizens in terms of knowledge and commitment to the democratic process. The public, however, already feels overworked, stressed, pressured for time and overloaded with information. They also do not hold government in high regard and many react cynically when told their opinion matters. If future trends follow the path predicted by the ICT gurus, the political space between citizens and their elected representatives will shrink. Elites will have less political room to manoeuvre and to accommodate competing interests if public opinion begins to play a decisive role in policy-making. In a world of "push-button" democracy, the quality of citizens and of citizenship will matter at least as much, if not more, than the quality of representative institutions and their members. The concluding section of the paper seeks to synthesize the findings and to offer an interpretation of the most probable future direction of Canadian representative democracy.

VIII   Conclusion

Everyone remembers Winston Churchill's observation that "Democracy is the worst form of government, with the exception of all others." Democracy will always be controversial, beleaguered by friends and foes alike, because the fundamental values at stake are both important, open to varying interpretation and not altogether consistent with one another in practice. In the 1993 Massey Lecture, political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain stated that in a world of paradox, ambiguity and irony, "the democratic way – moderation with courage, open to compromise with a basic principle – is the rare but now and then attainable fruit of the democratic imagination and, in action, the democratic citizen" (Elshtain 1994: 90).

In assessing the health of any large, complex, pluralistic democracy, insistence on pure principle and perfect practices will produce disappointment and discouragement. There is a natural human tendency to see democratic virtues in foreign models of democracy and in ideal interpretations of our own cabinet-parliamentary model of representative democracy.

As suggested at the outset of this paper there are a number of different models of democracy, each of which emphasizes a somewhat different weighting of fundamental values and principles. A *communitarian* model emphasized the importance of the democratic process to societal integration and the development of a sense of community. Drawing upon classical democratic theory, *participatory* models argue that involvement in public affairs serves as a vital means of intellectual, emotional and moral development leading toward the full development of the capacities of individuals as active citizens. Recognition of the limits arising from distance, time, available technology and the knowledge of ordinary citizens led to the restatement of classical democratic theory to emphasize consent from citizens rather than direct participation. *Representative* models of democracy recognized the obstacles, and competitive elites became the basis for a democratic order. In his famous attempt to make democratic theory more realistic, Joseph Schumpeter wrote: "The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for people's vote" (Schumpeter 1976: 50). In this view, democratic government is reduced to the choice of key officials in periodic free elections. The function of the electorate is to legitimate government actions by granting their consent; their role is not to initiate or to decide policy. Direct political involvement is limited to the few; for the rest, government can best serve as an expert and beneficent trustee of "the public interest."

Some writers push the narrowing of the meaning of democracy even further. They argue that individual citizens do not have to be particularly well informed or politically active to fulfill their democratic obligations. (See the excellent discussion of these issues in the theme issue on "Public Ignorance" in *Critical Review 12*, 4, Fall 1998). Within all segments of society there are opinion leaders who do the hard work of learning about party platforms, candidates and policy questions. What is important to democracy is that perhaps five percent of voters are activists and news junkies who pay close attention to events and sound the alarm if something is seriously wrong in the country. Taking their cues from such leaders and lacking the most basic information about the political and policy process, the majority of the public is still capable of fulfilling its minimal democratic duty of voting once every four years. In this "realistic" restatement of the democratic model, politics is not central to societal processes, it is only a method of managing public matters, and the real opportunities for the development of people to their full potential arises in the non-political spheres of life.

If one believes the superlatives and hype of the technological gurus, the rise of an IS and the widespread distribution of ICTs will allow us to replace the ossified and discredited procedures and institutions of representative democracy with a more continuous, inclusive, informed and meaningful direct participation of "netizens" (formerly known as citizens), who are plugged into governments at all levels. This study concludes that, for a number of reasons, this image of a future electronic democracy has been oversold and that developments to date have probably reduced democracy rather than strengthened it. Each of the following brief paragraphs seeks to summarize and synthesize the arguments presented throughout.

First, talk of ICTs in general terms fails to take account of the differences among the technologies, their maturity in terms of their inherent properties, their distribution and the uses to which they are currently put. For example, e-mail speeds communication but it is mainly a "private" medium. While web sites are potentially more "public" forums, few visitors to such sites actually engage in one line discussions. Also, political web sites speak mainly to the "true believers"; they are not democratic in the sense of encouraging debate among people with different viewpoints. On line access and Internet use is growing rapidly, but its interactive potential is not fully developed and web consultations work best with smaller, better informed groups than with the public at large. The lack of good software to analyze and synthesize large volumes of public input and the current limits on broadband capacity at reasonable cost are currently constraints. Even with improved and widely dispersed technology, people who are better educated, have higher incomes, belong to strong organizations and have a stronger sense of political efficacy will obtain access to higher quality information, and know how to make better use of it, than people who are more economically and politically marginal in society. In short, ICTs will not be a great equalizing force in the democratic process; they may, in fact, reinforce the advantages of those who are already powerful.

ICTs can reduce the costs of gathering, analyzing and evaluating information to a great extent. Empirical research reveals that the average voter's level of knowledge of political matters is relatively low. For ordinary citizens to take advantage of the new technologies to gain greater information and understanding of government will require an improvement in their negative perceptions of politics and government and a clearer set of incentives to motivate their involvement.

At the beginning of this paper, it was noted that democratic political systems serve multiple, not always consistent, principles and values. Different interpretations of the implications of the IT revolution for democracy give greater weight, usually implicitly, to some of these principles and values at the expense of others. For example, some commentators see the IT revolution as promoting greater economic freedom, limited government and less centralized control over society. This viewpoint elevates individual choice in the economic marketplace over collective choice in the political marketplace. For other commentators who favour a significant continuing role for governments in steering society, the IT revolution represents the danger of societal fragmentation, greater individualism, and widening gaps between the information "haves" or "have nots."

To date, governments have focused most of their attention on the competitive and commercial benefits of the new technologies. Their second priority has been on the use of ICTs in the administrative domains to promote program integration, and the quality and efficiency of service delivery. Any potential democratic benefits of ICTs are third and significantly lower priority.

The earlier sections of this paper examined the interactive relationship of technologies and governmental reform. Technology by itself will not automatically determine the future of the Canadian political process, but it is bound to have an enormous influence on the various actors and institutions involved. Everything will depend on how the technology is used, by whom and for what purpose. The likely developments for each of the main institutions which are involved with representative democracy will be discussed.

Political parties are in disrepute, but representative democracy cannot function without parties. To date, parties have used ICTs for electoral purposes. Party politics has changed from a volunteer, community-based effort to a costly, full-time business conducted by hired professionals. Parties have avoided a serious commitment to rank-and-file participation out of fear that greater membership involvement would compromise their brokerage function of formulating policies which can accommodate diverse interests.

Parliament is organized and operates on the basis of disciplined political parties. It continues to operate on the basis of strong control by the governing party. For a number of reasons, Parliament's approach to the adoption and uses of ICTs has been cautious, reflecting both the reluctance of governments to increase the institution's role in the policy process and the lack of technological knowledge among parliamentarians. In the longer term, the availability of ICTs will make it easier for Parliament to hold governments accountable. They will allow parliamentarians to keep in closer touch with their constituents and public opinion in general. Along with other pressures, ICTs will likely weaken party bonds over the long term. The internal operations of Parliament will, as well, become more efficient through the use of technology.

Pressure groups will continue to grow in influence as channels of communication with governments, and to some extent, as rivals of political parties and Parliament. ICTs will facilitate lobbying efforts, both in terms of gathering information, communicating with governments and mobilizing supporters to put political pressure on government. Rather than equalizing the contest between mainstream established pressure groups and the newer social movements, the entire lobbying process is likely to become more transparent and promote the proliferation of groups pressing their demands upon governments. Finding a consensus to serve as the basis for public policy will become more difficult.

The *media* will continue to play a key role in disseminating information about the political process to citizens and will continue to function as an agenda-setter within society. As the technologies converge (such as the proposed takeover of the CTV television network by BCE), there will be increased pressure to merge information and entertainment values. This trend may compromise the potential role of a better informed media in the broad process of holding governments accountable.

The *bureaucracy* will benefit from the availability of new technologies to support its core functions of policy analysis and design, the coordination and monitoring of administrative practices and the provision of efficient, quality services. IT innovations in the administrative domain will have potentially wider impacts on our political culture, conceptions of citizenship, the nature of representation, our definitions of political space and time, the distribution of power and how policy is formulated and implemented.

Citizens in the emerging electronic democracy will be given more opportunities to participate, but they will face a difficult challenge in gaining the understanding necessary to use the new interactive technologies to make a constructive contribution to the policy process. In their current cynical mood, and without the active encouragement from governments to become better informed, it is likely that only a minority of Canadians will take the time to learn what they need to know. Also, citizens will be more exposed to the risk of manipulation of their opinions through the use of the new technologies by political and administrative elites.

To date, ICTs have not strengthened the democratic process in Canada; they may in fact have detracted from democracy in some ways. For the future, ICTs have inherent democratic potential. Whether this potential is realized will depend more on human and political factors than on technological obstacles. If the technological futurists are to be believed, most of the current technical limits will be overcome during the next five to ten years. The real obstacles to the full realization of the democratic potential of ICTs are political and human:

!   the powerful role that private and public elites play in the current policy process
!   the lack of political will to really open up the decision-making process to outside players
!   the lack of interest, knowledge, and willingness to participate in the policy process on the part of the general public
!   the generational factor, meaning the lack of familiarity and comfort with ICTs by current public sector leaders and citizens.

Only the latter factor is likely to disappear as the younger generation of computer literate-people assumes positions of power within society and government.

Finally, the suggestion in much of the literature on the implications of the IT revolution for politics is that Canadians are facing a fundamental choice between revitalizing representative democracy by reforming institutions which have fallen into disrepute, or by applying the new and future technologies to usher in a new era of push-button democracy. In theory, we could have a wider-ranging public debate on the merits and problems of representative versus direct democracy before making decisions on how to reform or replace existing institutions and procedures. In practice, however, societies rarely choose their constitutional, institutional and procedural arrangements in such a straightforward and rational manner, especially when there is an existing political order in which various institutions and individuals have acquired a vested

interest. Therefore the most probable scenario is the emergence of a hybrid form of democracy in which citizens will not only select those who govern on their behalf, but will also participate more directly in making the laws and policies by which they are governed. Ideally, this will be a more deliberative form of democracy in which ICTs are used to promote informed dialogue rather than merely to register unrefined preferences, based upon the self-interest of individuals. Democracy based on social interaction and discussion will seem, compared to the speed and simultaneity of the IT world, to be messy, cumbersome, time consuming, demanding and unentertaining, but it will serve fundamental democratic values more fully.

IX   Future Research Topics

This paper has examined the future of representative democracy in terms of the emergence of an information society and the growing use various types of information technologies. A number of potential topics for further research arose in the course of the analysis presented above.

The integrating theme of the paper was that the use and impact of ITCs will be conditioned by wider social, economic and political forces. From this perspective a number of broader issues related to CCMD's governance research agenda can be identified:

1.   Have governments approached the governance question too much from a "managerial" perspective without taking sufficient account of the wide range of ideas, interests and institutions potentially involved?

2.   Have some of the ideas driving managerial reform been anti-political in content and in their consequences?

3.   Has the management reform movement take sufficient account of how the new approaches fit with the traditions, practises existing political cultures of parties and cabinet-parliamentary government?

4.   Does the adversarial nature of cabinet-parliamentary government detract from learning which is at the heart of successful governance in a period of rapid change?

5.   How can more constructive and collaborative relationships be built between political and administrative leaders?

6.   As new methods of engagement with citizens are adopted, will traditional representative processes be undermined?

7.   If the public service becomes more accessible and responsive, and delivers more satisfactory services, will there be a reduced role for elected representatives as liaison agents with government?

8.   How will the right balance be found between openness and two-way communication and the continuing requirements for confidentiality, anonymity and neutrality within the bureaucracy?

Undoubtedly, there are many other potential research topics.

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GOVERNMENT ROLES
IN GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

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Introduction

The ultimate purpose of this report is to suggest a few avenues of research that might be pursued in order to improve our knowledge of how the roles of government fit into the new form of governing called "governance." As specified in our terms of reference, this research should aim to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the changing role of government in governance.

In Section I, we will define the respective concepts of governing, governance and government as they are used in this report. We will also make an initial attempt to describe the particular characteristics of government actors as they take part in the various processes of governing and, in particular, of governance.

Section II describes four explanatory models that give different views of the role of government actors in governance. Depending on the model used, the role is defined as an "instrument," "one of several players," a "symbol manager" or an "entrepreneur."

In Section III, these models will be compared with actual governance processes as studied by public policy specialists in Canada and other countries.

In Section IV, the results of our analyses will be compared with the governance models and characteristics of government actors, as established in Section I. We will then draw certain conclusions about the roles of government in governance and the characteristics of public policy that are linked to the various forms of these roles.

The final section of the report will make certain suggestions to the Canadian Centre for Management Development on lines of research that might shed light on the "grey areas" identified in the report.

I.   Governing, Governance and Government

This report revolves around three central concepts: governing, government and governance. The idea, in effect, is to define the roles of government in the particular form of governing known as "governance." The concept of "governing" is the most general of the three, and that is why we are going to define it first.

Governing

Our definition of "governing" is very similar to Kooiman's (1993: 2):

In terms of working definitions: by governing we mean all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage (sectors or facets of) societies.

As part of our attempt to define "governing," we will be talking, in more general terms, of a regulation approach to problem situations in the community, while acknowledging, as Kooiman points out, that social, political and administrative actors can also participate in these processes. These regulation processes can be considered as public policy, comprising three distinct subsidiary processes: policy initiation, policy development, and policy implementation.

Thus, the concepts of governing, as distinguished from those of government and governance, can be extended to include the regulation of non-political social organizations. We can speak, for example, of "governing" a hospital, a university, a company and so on. Nonetheless, in this report we will confine ourselves only to the process of governing social entities that are subject to political processes.

Governance

The concept of "governance" still gives rise to a lot of confusion. Yet there is general consensus around two of its facets: first, governance is a new form of governing; and second, government's role in governance is not the same as it is in traditional forms of governing.

Rhodes (1996) and Stoker (1998) are two of a number of authors who have tried to identify the particular characteristics of governance. Some of these characteristics seem to be a function of circumstances – for instance, the relationship between governance and the idea of "the less government the better," or the new style of public service management. Other aspects are more controversial – in particular, the assumption that governance is understood to be superior to traditional forms of governing. We will not make such a value judgement. For us, governance is a particular form of governing that is not necessarily superior to other forms.

Stoker and Rhodes emphasize what seems to be a more specific characteristic of governance. Governance can be thought of as the actual "self-organized" network of both private and public sector actors, including those in government, without these actors occupying the central positions they hold in the more traditional forms of governing.

When governance is defined in this way, it refers to phenomena that have been observed by policy network specialists for several decades and which have more recently been considered as "governance phenomena." Thus, although the term may be recent, the phenomena it denotes are much older.

In the rest of this report, we will use the overall term of "governance" to refer to the processes of governing to be studied, even if these processes do not always correspond to the definition that has just been given.

The large body of work that has been devoted to public policy networks since the eighties has been particularly important in shedding light on the characteristic features of governance. The following four points are, in our view, especially significant:

1) The composition of public policy networks is a variable function, depending on the sector concerned – finance, health, environment, culture, and so on. The policy networks for each of these sectors have their own distinctive makeup. However, while the administrative actors and interest groups may vary from one policy to another, government actors are a common component in all policies. It is this characteristic that has not been sufficiently highlighted in studies on public policy networks to date.

2) It sometimes happens that more than one network becomes involved in a given public policy process, as has been noted by authors like Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) in their work on advocacy coalitions.

3) When only one network is involved in a given sector, the composition of this network is not necessarily the same from one public policy to another. For example, labour confederations might be part of a network concerned with certain health policy issues, and not intervene in other policy areas. Thus, public policy network specialists distinguish between groups consisting of a small number of actors or players, who have a stable, ongoing relationship with "issue networks," that vary from one policy to another and include actors who are not part of the core group (on this point, see especially Rhodes and Marsh 1995).

4) The "self-organized" public policy networks (in Rhodes and Stoker's words) include actors who, while generally working cooperatively, may also have some areas of conflict, as is usually the case in all coalitions. Thus, different environmental groups belonging to the same coalition will not have identical positions on every issue; likewise, two administrations involved in the same economic development policy will differ in certain areas even though they belong to the same network.

Government

In this report, we will use the terms "government" or "government actors" to refer to elected representatives and their associates who occupy positions of highest authority in society. In the Canadian political context, this would include the Council of Ministers, two "central agencies" – the Privy Council and the Treasury Board of Canada as well as the respective political entourages

of both the Prime Minister and the other ministers, including elected MPs from the governing party.

Consequently, we will focus on government, rather than the "State," as we consider administrations and independent organizations as administrative actors rather than government ones. We will also exclude parliamentarians belonging to opposition parties from our concept of government.

As we have already pointed out, government actors (in our sense of the term) have the distinctive feature of being part of all governing processes, even though the role they play in governance is less significant than the one they used to play in the more traditional roles of governing. This brings with it a certain number of advantages. In terms of the general principles of democratic government, three "formal" advantages of government are generally recognized:

1) Government actors, helped, as they are, in their functions by parliamentarians from their own party, are more representative of society as a whole and are therefore understood to have greater "legitimacy" than the other actors in the governance process. This legitimacy, however, varies from one government to another, and also varies within a given government's mandate. If public opinion polls or other indicators point to a significant drop in a government's popularity, its representative character and legitimacy will be reduced and it will thereby lose one of the primary attributes of power.

2) The main consequence of government's superior legitimacy, compared with the other political actors, is that government has the final say in the governance processes that lead to new public policy. In other words, government has ultimate authority, since it is authorized to make the final decision on the initiation, development or implementation of public policy, providing it has not delegated this authority to other actors. Even then, government is still able to countermand the decisions taken by the other actors.

3) The fact that government actors are the only players to take part in all governance processes enables them to ensure that public policy is coherent and well coordinated. This is a complex task, given the large number of public policies and the multi-faceted way in which each of them is implemented. Nonetheless, government is the sole agency that can carry out this task, or at least be responsible for it, even if helped by other actors.

These principles are now challenged by some who claim that public interest groups in fields such as health, the environment, economic development and international aid have equal, or even greater, legitimacy in their respective fields than government. These same principles are also challenged by those who question whether government always has the final say or whether it does, in fact, carry out its recognized function as coordinator of public policy.

Admittedly, these issues represent a fascinating topic for research, but they fall outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, an examination of a certain number of models and actual governance processes, as described in the following two sections of this report, will provide a number of conclusions that could usefully contribute to a discussion of these issues.

To conclude this first section, we would like to review certain definitions of the three concepts of "governing," "governance" and "government" that have been our primary concern. These definitions are designed to show how the three concepts relate to one another.

The term *governing* denotes the processes through which political, administrative or social actors seek to apply solutions to problems of concern to society. Government's role has traditionally been considered central in this process.

The term *governance* denotes processes of governing by public policy networks that include both public and private sector actors. Government is one of the actors, but does not necessarily play a central role.

The term *government* refers to the elected representatives (and their teams), who occupy positions of ultimate authority in society.

The Role of Government: Competing Models

The institutional advantages that have just been described are formal in nature. They derive from principles that are designed to ensure the democratic functioning of society. However, as we have just pointed out, these principles are debatable. In actual practice, government does not necessarily enjoy the three institutional advantages traditionally ascribed to it. The degree of legitimacy in government's action may vary. For instance, government may have the final word, but this is sometimes whispered in its ear by other actors. In another example, government is sometimes unable to ensure that its various policies mesh together well.

Observers of how governments carry out public policy have developed different models of what both government and the other actors do in this process. We will describe four models, as developed by Dunleavy (1990) who wrote on the Westland affair in 1985-86. This affair created a major crisis within the British government led by Margaret Thatcher.

After giving a detailed description of how the crisis developed, Dunleavy interpreted it in terms of four theoretical models in which he compares their explanatory value. These models can be seen as different representations of the governance process and of the role of government actors in this process.

Model 1 is based on Allison's classic work (1971) on the Cuban missile crisis and the subsequent modifications that were made to the model (Allison and Swanton 1976). Allison described this situation as a model of "bureaucratic politics," combining two distinct models: "competing bureaucracies" and "political leaders in action." Dunleavy, on the other hand, speaks of this episode as a model of "governmental politics," since it particularly involved government and administrative actors. According to Allison, these actors take part in complex processes in which the outcome remains uncertain through successive stages. The actors defend the interests and procedures of the organizations to which they belong, but also have personal interests that underlie the positions they adopt. The results achieved very much depend on the actors' skill in using available resources and presenting convincing arguments. This type of skill is particularly important in the negotiations they are involved with and in the alliances and counter-alliances they are able to form or join.

As Dunleavy notes, this is a pluralist view of the political arena. No single actor dominates proceedings or directs the process. It is not possible to determine the outcome, depending, as it does, on a number of contingent factors that are peculiar to each situation.

Government actors are always involved in the governance process, a feature that is also found in the three other models, but that is as far as the advantage of the government role goes. In Allison's model, government's greatest claim to legitimacy is not taken into consideration, and the same goes for its prerogative of having the last word. In addition, government's inability to ensure the internal coherence of the policies it takes part in implies that it is also unable to ensure their external coherence.

Let us now consider two limitations of this model according to the definition of governance that we have adopted. First, private sector actors have not been included, even though nothing prevents this being done if we were to think of them as bureaucratic organizations like the others. Second, this whole approach seems to equate government processes only with crisis situations. We have to wonder if this is indeed true or if perhaps some of the characteristic traits in Allison's model are also found in non-crisis situations.

Model 2 sees government as an "instrument," as in the Marxist conception (see Miliband 1969). *Model 2* is different from *Model 1* in several key areas. Not only are private sector actors included, but some of them, including companies, are the *dominant* actors in the governance process. The Marxist model also tries to explain the divisions that exist within the group of economic actors as a whole by advancing the notion of class division. In the Westland affair, as in others, such a division exists between large international firms and national or regional ones. These companies are part of a number of networks, in which they are allied with government or administrative actors, whom they also dominate.

As a result, unlike in the pluralist *Model 1*, government in the Marxist model is presented as an instrument of dominant economic interests, particularly those of large businesses. While it is still the government that has the final word, its positions are influenced by the most powerful private sector players. The superior legitimacy of the government actors is not taken into account, except as a means of giving more authority to positions decided by others. However, in this scenario, government cannot be counted on to coordinate policy, since its role is only to ratify the policies forced on it by others.

Model 3 is the "public policy entrepreneur" model, which is very different from *Model 2*. Somewhat like private sector entrepreneurs, public policy entrepreneurs provide leadership in the organizations they belong to, and in so doing, they try to increase their personal prestige and power (Frohlich, Oppenheimer and Young 1971). Entrepreneurs are usually government actors, although they are also sometimes administrators or leaders of special interest groups. One particular version of Model 3 is found in a book by Kingdon (1995), in which entrepreneurs are portrayed as agents linking together various social forces that need to be joined in order for public policy to be initiated and developed. Another more standard and volunteer-based model is contained in Osborne and Gaebler's work (1992) on reinventing government. Sub-titled *How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, the book advances ten basic principles that an entrepreneur should follow in order to reinvent the art of governing. Unlike the more general model of "public policy entrepreneur," Osborne and Gaebler put greater emphasis on the role of government and administrators in providing leadership to governance processes.

In the "public policy entrepreneur" model, and particularly in Osborne and Gaebler's version of it, the specific advantages of government in governance are implicitly and, in some respects, explicitly articulated. Government actors, supported by administrative actors, are the ones most likely to act as entrepreneurs for a number of key reasons: they are involved in all public policies; they see this approach as a way of reinforcing their legitimacy; they still have the final say; and they are also able to provide needed coordination. As we see, this model presents a very different conception of government's role than the first two.

Model 4 is most similar to *Model 3*. Embodying the symbolic aspects of politics, it was first constructed by Edelman (1964), and then adopted and developed by other authors such as Elder and Cobb (1983). Like *Model 3*, *Model 4* is based on government leaders, who, in this model, are seen as "symbol managers", rather than public policy entrepreneurs. The leaders, by virtue of the positions they occupy, have tremendous potential ability to arouse very strong emotions in the general population, either in the form of encouragement or fear. However, in order for a political system to appear legitimate, its leaders have to give the impression of controlling the machinery of government. Media, for their part, try to provide a personalized portrayal of the system and its policies, thus simplifying issues which would otherwise appear very complicated.

Dunleavy points out that this model is difficult to apply in practice. It does, however, have the advantage of emphasizing an aspect relatively ignored by the other models – namely, the symbolic character of political action. The general public relate to government action in this way and, were it not so, they would understand very little of what government does. As in the previous model, government actors seek to reinforce their legitimacy with the difference that they achieve this by using symbols rather than by taking specific action. Only the principal elected leaders can perform this function, whereas the "public policy entrepreneur" model envisions more people playing a role. Furthermore, the institutional advantages of government actors' having the final say and coordinating public policy seem less obvious in the model representing the symbolic character of politics as compared with the "public policy entrepreneur" model.

Overall, it is the "public policy entrepreneur" model that most corresponds to government's role in governance, followed by the "symbol manager" and "instrument" models, in that order. But how do all these models play out in reality? We will attempt to answer this question by reviewing a certain number of empirical studies on governance through public policy networks. We will first look at the experience in other countries and then examine a few examples in Canada.

III.   Comparing the Models with Actual Examples of Governance

We cannot claim to have made an exhaustive review of empirical studies of governance processes in which public policy networks have played a role. Instead, we have tried to present a certain range of cases taken from different sectors of public policy in different political systems, Canada included.

At the end of this section, we will provide a summary assessment of the degree to which our case studies correspond to the models that have just been described.

Non-Canadian Cases

We will first deal with a group of six non-Canadian cases, and then a group of six Canadian cases, for a total of 12 cases in all.

Nuclear Eenergy Policy in the Netherlands

Zijlstra (1979) took an original approach in his multi-year study of nuclear energy policy in the Netherlands. He was particularly interested in how information was exchanged between the various participants in the public policy network concerned. The network was composed of

government actors heading up three different departments, the Dutch parliament, several administrative bodies, and several private sector organizations.

Zijlstra shows that information exchange between the various actors was not always symmetrical. In certain relationships, the actors involved did not give and receive the same amount of information, with the result that those receiving more information than they gave enjoyed a strategic advantage over those in the opposite situation.

Zijlstra's analyses revealed that the network itself was of a pluralist nature in which private sector actors enjoyed a more important place than their governmental and administrative counterparts. At the same time, the latter group was not a mere instrument of the former. This situation is largely explained by the very technical nature of the nuclear energy industry.

In such a policy context, government's role more or less corresponds to Dunleavy's *Model 1*, namely, that of one of several actors in a pluralist power network.

A Secondary School Policy in Scotland

In a paper containing lengthy discussion of public policy networks, Raab (1992) illustrated certain of his comments by referring to a small case study dealing with secondary school reform policy in Scotland. This study found that the policy networks involved consisted of government, administrative and private sector actors, with parent-teacher associations being represented in the latter group.

Raab showed how government's role in the situation varied according to which political party was in power. When Labour was in power, the government played more the role of a "referee" between the various private sector interest groups. However, when the Thatcher government came on the scene, government started to behave like an entrepreneur in the way it changed the relationships between network members, emphasized the need to assess the secondary school system, and curbed the autonomy of the various professional associations.

While the Conservative government's role may very well correspond to Dunleavy's "entrepreneurial" *Model 3*, the Labour government's role does not, in fact, fall into any of his four models. In Labour's case, government was neither one of several actors, nor an instrument, nor an entrepreneur, nor a "symbol manager", but rather a referee. It would therefore be appropriate to postulate a *Model 5*, assuming, of course, that the Labour government's role was not one of a kind.

The Chemical Industry and the Telecommunications Industry: Comparing Two Policy Approaches in the German Context

Schneider (1992) made a comparative study of two public policy networks in Germany — one involving the regulation of chemical products and the other focused on institutional reform in the telecommunications field.

In the first case, the two main actors in the network were the government (including the German parliament) and private sector actors connected to the chemical industry. In this paper, Schneider distinguishes between three different types of network in this field: corporation oriented, pluralist, and customer oriented. Of these, he considers that the chemical product regulation network is inherently corporation oriented, both in terms of policy initiation and policy development. The country's chemical producers' association is all the more powerful, inasmuch as it is the exclusive representative of private sector interests. On the other hand, government has a dual role. In some respects, it can be considered as an "instrument" controlled by the producers' association, on whom it depends for technical information that would otherwise be unavailable to it. At the same time, the German government is also a "referee" with power to set standards and regulations to govern the chemical industry.

The situation is very different in the telecommunications industry. There, the public policy is both pluralist and customer oriented. The main actors in this network are private companies and an independent body created by the government. There is also an advisory body composed of elected politicians, the finance ministry, and employees and groups from other ministries. In this way, government plays a supervisory, protective role without taking an active part in how policy is carried out.

This case is a good illustration of situations in which government does not play a major role in governance. At the same time, government is not totally absent, since it still delegates, supervises and retains the power to change the composition of the network. Thus, we could also actually talk of a "supervisory" role for government – like the "referee" role, another new role for government, compared with Dunleavy's four original models.

Health Policy in Great Britain and the United States

Smith (1993) made a multi-year study of health policy in Great Britain and the United States.

In Great Britain, the main public policy network actors are the Health Minister, the Minister's department and medical associations. At the time the National Health Service was created in 1940, government and physicians both belonged to a pluralist network that had several

key advantages: it made decision-making possible; it reduced the number of claims; and it enhanced autonomy for both government and the medical profession.

When the Thatcher government took power in the late seventies, it had the same effect on the health sector as it had on secondary education. From being one of several actors, the government became an entrepreneur prepared to impose restrictions on the medical profession.

One of the significant differences between the British and American political systems is that members of Congress in the U.S. play a much larger role in health policy networks than do members of the House of Commons in Great Britain. In the United States, the President has a certain power of initiative, but is always likely to run up against a veto from physicians, private companies and Congress itself. Sometimes, the President succeeds with an entrepreneurial initiative, but in most situations the President is simply one of several participants in a pluralist governance network.

Agro-Environmental Policy in Denmark and Sweden

In a 1998 study, Daugberg (1998) compared the agro-environmental policies of Denmark and Sweden to show how the role of government was different in each country.

In Denmark, the agricultural policy network is closely integrated. It is centred on the Ministry of Agriculture and includes an agricultural council composed of various agricultural associations. The agriculture ministry and the council are linked to other administrative and private sector actors. When the Danish Environmental Protection Agency initially succeeded in having taken steps to control nitrates, it ran into the network of the agricultural associations and their allies who had access to more information than the Agency itself.

It took some time for members of the government and administration to finally impose their rules. The result has been a complicated policy with vague objectives and unrealistic time lines – a situation that suits the agricultural network's interests quite well.

In Sweden, a network of environmental organizations has taken shape since the sixties. It is supported by the government in power (the Social Democrats) as well as by the Centre Party. Cooperative, employers' and consumers' organizations have joined the network. This group worked so well that environmental protection measures began to be formulated as early as the seventies and have continued ever since. The parallel agricultural organization network has not succeeded in counteracting these steps as effectively as in Denmark.

Thus, the government in Sweden can be seen as playing the role of both entrepreneur and referee, whereas in Denmark, the government's role is only that of referee.

High-Speed Train Policies in France and Germany

In a study completed in the mid-nineties, Dunn and Perl (1994) compared networks in France and Germany that contributed to policies concerning high-speed trains. In France, a small network undertook the project to create high-speed trains (TGVs) in the early seventies. It was the government itself which initiated the project, with the help of expert advisors. The French national rail company, *SNCF*, also participated in the project. On the other hand, steps were taken to see to it that industrial firms and environmental groups that might have opposed the project were kept out of the loop. Little information was divulged about the project until it became too late to challenge it.

In this case, the role of government was entrepreneurial, although not in the same sense as in the model proposed by Osborne and Gaebler. It seems that this type of situation occurs frequently in France.

The situation in Germany, on the other hand, is quite different. There, two high-speed train projects were developed. In the first project, it was envisaged that trains would travel on tracks that were also being used by freight trains. A network which included many government, administrative and private sector actors took part in the debate. Government participants included representatives from the state governments or *lander*. Government actors were thus simply one of several representative groups in a pluralist network.

The second network in Germany includes government, administrative and private sector actors. Their goal is to create faster trains using magnetic levitation technology. Government and administrative actors from the Ministry of Science and Technology initiated the project, but the Chancellor and the federal cabinet have intervened to create a network allowing for cooperation between government, the administration and the private sector. Thus, government played an entrepreneurial role in the beginning, which later evolved into that of referee.

Canadian Examples

Of the six Canadian cases selected, some involve only federal policy, some only provincial, and some both. The Canadian sampling will enable us to compare the role of governments in Canada with that in other countries.

Two Environmental Policies at the Federal Level

In the early nineties, Harrison and Hoberg (1991) published a paper on emerging policies on toxic substances, such as dioxin and radon. This article is interesting from several standpoints: it provides a rare example of a study focusing on policy initiation, it analyzes two different but related policies; and it compares the Canadian and American situations.

Although the authors did not deal with public policy networks as such, they did note, in the case of dioxin, the alliance that developed in British Columbia between Greenpeace, other environmental groups, and a number of experts, including jurists. On the government and administrative side, the federal departments of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment, and Health and Welfare, contributed analyses on dioxin content in fish and certain products that helped put the issue "on the agenda." In the case of radon, it was Health and Welfare that was the most involved. In both instances, the companies concerned were relatively cooperative. According to the authors, this can be explained by significant prevailing public interest in environmental issues.

The authors show that in the United States, Congress plays an active role in bringing environmental issues to the fore, whereas in Canada, the role of the House of Commons is negligible.

Nevertheless, in the end it is government which decides to create measures to reduce the harmful effects of these two toxic substances. Although these two authors make very little distinction between government and administrative actors, it can be deduced from their analyses that the federal government, through the departments involved, played a role along "pluralist" lines as one of several actors in the process, even though it also acted as "referee" at certain times.

East Coast Fishing Policy

In the early nineties, Pross and McCorquodale (1990) studied several policies related to fishing on Canada's eastern seaboard. Their work showed that a considerable number of actors took part in the policy process, but the composition of the various policy networks varied according to the issues in question (resource use, resource allocation, market development, and so on). A wide range of players were involved in these proceedings from both the federal government and the Atlantic provinces, as well as special interest groups, experts, consultants, and local development groups, among others.

From 1977 on, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), especially the government leaders played a more active role in formulating relevant policy. Already separated from the Department of the Environment, DFO began to think of itself as an entrepreneur and referee

rather than merely as an advocate for the fishing industry. As a result, the federal government is represented in each of the policy sub-sectors identified by the authors, which is not the case for the other groups represented in the various networks.

On the other hand, when a crisis hit the East Coast fishing industry in the early 1980s, intergovernmental negotiations were opened with the provinces. In this case, the federal government, represented by DFO, became simply one of several actors in the negotiations.

This case is interesting in that it shows how government actors can play a number of the roles we have identified, depending on the particular circumstances. In the case of the East Coast fishing industry, government assisted by the administration, sometimes plays an advocacy role on behalf of the interest groups, sometimes an entrepreneurial role, sometimes the role of referee, and sometimes just as one of several players in a pluralist network.

Agro-Environmental Policies in Ontario and Quebec

More recently, Montpetit and Coleman (1999) compared agro-environmental policies in Ontario and Quebec to show that public policy networks were different in each province.

In Quebec, there are two competing networks, given that the Quebec Department of the Environment is legally authorized to take part in formulating agro-environmental policy. This department is a member of one network composed of environmental groups, whereas another network consists of the Quebec Department of Agriculture and the *Union des producteurs agricoles*, a powerful interest group composed of Quebec farmers.

In Ontario, the Ministry of the Environment has no authority over agro-environmental policy. On the other hand, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture belongs to a network that includes farm organizations but no environmental groups.

The authors show that in Ontario negotiations within the network focus on resolving agro-environmental issues and that common ground is found relatively easily. Government is simply one of several groups represented in a network that seems to fit the "pluralist" model.

The situation is quite different in Quebec, where the relative financial costs and benefits between the farmers and the environmental groups often lead to difficult negotiations between the two networks. In this situation, government actors have to act as "referees."

Social Welfare Policy

Back in the early nineties, Haddow (1990) became interested in networks that had been actively involved in social welfare policy since the fifties. Altogether, this was a vast ever-changing group consisting of government and administrative actors, as well as representatives of community organizations.

Haddow emphasizes the key role played by political parties in the initiation of social welfare policy. Social welfare concerns were often a major issue in federal election campaigns and government actors, once elected, played an entrepreneurial role in initiating new policy.

Policy development was quite another matter. While government may not have been totally absent, administrators, including those from the Department of Finance, have been the main players in this field since the early eighties. Community groups and the organizations supporting them, such as the Social Development Council, exert very little influence on the process. To a large extent, these groups depend on the federal government for their funding, and they do not have information resources as extensive as those available to the departments.

In formulating policy, government, assisted by administrators, plays a dual role as both entrepreneur and referee. In the case of social welfare policy, the government has a freer hand in initiating public policy because community organizations have little power.

Policy Concerning Extra-Billing by Physicians

In her article on the issue of extra-billing, Tuohy (1988) did not adopt the public policy approach. However, she did show that government and administrators, supported by public opinion and several social groups, took sides against medical organizations in a situation that can be seen as consisting of two distinct public policy networks.

This study has been included here because it emphasizes the symbolic nature of public policy. It is the only one that does this in the various case studies we have presented so far. Tuohy distinguishes between entrepreneurial autonomy and the kind of autonomy exercised by physicians in their clinics. She shows that while government restrictions on extra-billing curb the entrepreneurial autonomy of physicians, it has little effect on their freedom to act in a clinical context.

When the federal Liberal government in Ottawa was suffering from a decline in popularity in 1984, it decided to attack extra-billing by Ontario physicians. In so doing, the government appeared as a "symbol manager," presenting itself as the protector of the population against the extra costs being charged by physicians. It was the same story for the provincial Liberal government in Ontario, elected in 1985. Managing symbols did not prevent the opening of negotiations with the physicians in an effort to provide them with some financial compensation for

their ceasing to practice extra-billing. In the end, intervention by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada helped to find common ground between the parties concerned. The result has been no more extra-billing, but physicians continue to receive additional payments for "administrative" services.

In Tuohy's view, the governments were "symbol managers" so far as extra-billing policy was concerned, but acted more as one of several players in the actual negotiations with the physicians.

The Policy to Alleviate Emergency Room Overcrowding in Quebec

Like Tuohy, Demers and Lemieux (1998) did not explicitly adopt the public policy network approach to examine the policy to alleviate emergency room overcrowding in Quebec. However, it becomes very clear in reading their text that this policy was the result of input from an extensive network composed of the Quebec Minister of Health and Social Services, the department's employees, district health and social services councils (and the regional health and social services boards that succeeded them), two minister-created task forces on the emergency room situation, hospitals and various medical organizations. The party in political opposition can also be considered as a network participant in this context.

As this policy has evolved through various stages since the early eighties, it has been studied from the standpoint of the three policy-related processes of initiation, development and implementation. The picture of government's role that emerges varies according to the process concerned. During the policy's initiation and subsequent re-emergence after initial setbacks in implementation, the Minister seemed to play a central entrepreneurial role, particularly in placing the issue on the provincial government's agenda. In succeeding policy development, the government appeared more like a referee with final deciding authority on sometimes complex discussions and negotiations. In the implementation stage, the government became one of several players, whereas the administrators, hospitals and task forces were largely responsible for how the various measures adopted were implemented.

This conclusion is consistent with our previous impressions of the varying roles government plays from one process to another, as public policy unfolds through its various stages.

IV.   The Main Conclusions to be Drawn from the Case Studies

Several conclusions concerning the role of government can be drawn from the twelve case studies described above. We will begin by discussing the relevance of the models adopted as a means of interpreting the role of government in governance, then we will present some considerations on how the role of government varies in a number of ways. It is very clear that our conclusions are based on a small number of case studies. Nevertheless, this sample is sufficiently varied to allow for a number of significant conclusions to be drawn.

The Relevance of the Models Used

A proportionately very high number of the case studies reflect government roles corresponding to two of Dunleavy's models – some situations where the government was simply one of several actors and other situations where government played an entrepreneurial role. This is clearly shown in Table 1 which presents the results of our conclusions.

In many cases, government plays more than one role. This is due to variations in historical context or to the aspects of public policy involved.

In eight of the twelve cases, the government is simply one of several actors; three of these cases are non-Canadian and five are Canadian. Government plays an entrepreneurial role seven times (in four non-Canadian and three Canadian cases).

The two other roles modelled by Dunleavy occurred far less often. Government as "instrument" only occurred twice, once outside Canada and once in Canada. Government as "symbol manager" only occurred once, in a Canadian case, and even this was because the author developed his own interpretation based on Edelman's model. The authors of the other case studies did not use Dunleavy's four-model system so explicitly.

The "government as symbol manager" model appears to be different from the other three in that it is not incompatible with any of them, whereas the other models are mutually exclusive. A "symbol manager" government may act, in practice, as one of several actors, as an instrument or as an entrepreneur, whereas at a given moment in the public policy process, it is virtually impossible for a government to be simultaneously one of several actors and an instrument, or one of several actors and a referee, or an instrument and a referee.

Other Models

Dunleavy's four models are not adequate to explain government roles. Another role, as referee, exists, although it cannot equated with any of Dunleavy's four roles. We observed this role in eight of our twelve case studies, four outside Canada and four in Canada. Thus, it and "one of several actors," are the two most common roles for government in governance.

In one of the non-Canadian case studies, we also identified the government role as "supervisor." This occurred in a highly technical context where the government delegated its powers to an administrative agency and limited itself to a supervisory role.

It is possible that this latter role occurs more frequently than indicated in our case studies. It is also possible that government plays roles other than those identified. For example, we often use terms like "government as associate" and "government as catalyst" to describe roles that are somewhat different from those we have described. The only way to determine whether governments actually play such roles or play them only on rare occasions is to conduct a greater number of case studies, covering a wider range of sectors.

Different Roles Depending on the Political System Concerned

The table shows differences in government roles from one political system to another. These differences are especially interesting when two political systems are compared in terms of the same public policy sector.

In the fourth case study, health, there is little significant difference between Great Britain and the United States, although differences are apparent in Great Britain, depending on the political party in power. Labour acts as a referee, while the Conservatives during the Margaret Thatcher era behaved more as entrepreneurs. The same difference also appears in secondary education policy.

There are three other comparative case studies related to different political systems. In the fifth case, agro-environmental policy, the Danish government acts as a referee, whereas the Swedish government behaves like both an entrepreneur and a referee. In the sixth case, high-speed trains, the French government acts like an entrepreneur, whereas the German government plays three different roles depending on the project in question and its stage of implementation. In Canada, agro-environmental policy, studied as the ninth case, shows a difference between the governments of Ontario and Quebec. Ontario seems to act like one of several players, whereas Quebec seems to behave more like a referee.

Let us remember that even though numbers may be too small to be significant, Canadian governments appear to behave more like "one of several players" and somewhat less like

entrepreneurs, when compared with governments in other countries. On the other hand, Canada does not seem to be different when government acts as a referee.

Differences by Public Policy Sector

The difference between Quebec and Ontario in agro-environmental concerns lies, as we have seen, in the official rules of the game that exclude the Ministry of the Environment from agricultural policy in Ontario, but include it in Quebec. Thus, the two provincial sectors are not strictly the same, when one considers the respective governments, administrators and private sectors that are involved.

Table 1 also tends to show that in highly technical sectors, where companies possess expertise that government and its administrators lack, government rarely behaves like an entrepreneur. It acts more like either a referee, or a supervisor, or one of several players, or even as an instrument. This seems to be the situation in Dutch nuclear energy policy (the first case), chemical industry and telecommunication policies in Germany (the third case) and, to some extent, in the dioxin and radon environmental policies in Canada (the seventh case). On the other hand, it would be very surprising if this were not the case in high-speed train policy in France and Germany (sixth case). However, it should be borne in mind that in both countries, especially in France, there are important autonomous organizations (*SNCF*, in particular) that contribute considerable expertise to government.

In social policy sectors such as education, health and social welfare, it is more common to find government, assisted by its administrators, behaving like an entrepreneur or referee.

Process-related Differences

Most authors of the case studies we have considered did not concern themselves with all the processes involved in public policy articulation. If we come back to the useful distinction between initiation, development and implementation in the policy process, we see that many authors focus on the development aspect, without dealing with the other two aspects of initiation and implementation stages.

Table 1
Government Roles in Twelve Non-Canadian and Canadian Case Studies

NON-CANADIAN EXAMPLES	GOVERNMENT ROLES
2. Nuclear energy policy in the Netherlands On	One of several actors
3. Secondary school policy in Great Britain	Entrepreneur or referee
4. Chemical industry and telecommunications industry policy in Germany	Chemical industry: instrument or referee Telecommunications: supervisor
5. Health policy	Great Britain: one of several actors or entrepreneur United States: entrepreneur or one of several actors
6. Agro-environmental policy	Denmark: referee Sweden: entrepreneur and referee
7. High-speed train policy	France: entrepreneur Germany: one of several actors, entrepreneur or referee
CANADIAN EXAMPLES	**GOVERNMENT ROLES**
8. Environmental policy in British Columbia	One of several actors
9. East Coast fishing policy	One of several actors, instrument, entrepreneur or referee
10. Agro-environmental policy	Ontario: one of several actors Quebec: referee
11. Social welfare policy	Entrepreneur or referee
12. Balance billing policies by physicians in Ontario	Symbol manager or one of several actors
13. Policy to alleviate emergency room overcrowding in Quebec	Entrepreneur, referee or one of several actors

When the three processes, or two of them, are distinguished either implicitly or explicitly, it is usually found that government plays a different role from one process to another. This is how it is in agro-environmental policy in Sweden, where the government acts first as entrepreneur and then as referee, and also in the second high-speed train policy, the German one, where the successive roles are the same as in Sweden.

The Canadian case studies also show role differences from one process to another. In social welfare policy, government acts as an entrepreneur in policy initiatiion and like a referee in policy development. The same may be said of the Quebec policy to alleviate emergency room overcrowding, where the implementation stage shows government as just one of several players.

In fact, this may very well be the case in many instances of public policy. Government begings by acting as an entrepreneur in the initiation stage, becomes a referee in the development stage, and ends up by being only one of several players in the implementation stage.

V.   Further Research

To follow up on the various questions that have been raised in this report, especially those in the last section, we would like to propose three areas of research on government roles in governance processes. These areas would cover:

- the factors affecting government roles
- government roles according to the various processes
- and how government actors and other actors relate to each other.

With reference to each of these areas, we would like to formulate a certain number of questions that could be the focus of research projects. At the present stage of planning research in the area of governance, we will confine ourselves to formulating the questions, without specifying the strategies and methodologies required to carry out the research projects that could find answers to the questions.

Factors Affecting Government Roles

Based on Dunleavy's proposed models and our 12 case studies, we have identified six different roles that government can play in governance, while recognizing that it is highly likely that other roles might eventually be identified.

If we accept that government can play a number of roles such as "entrepreneur," "symbol manager," "referee," "supervisor," "one of several actors," and "instrument," it becomes important to clarify the various favourable or unfavourable conditions that can affect each of these roles, starting with the historical circumstances that gave rise to these conditions.

1) The first research area should be an examination of the nature of political systems. What are the distinctive characteristics of the federal government in Canada, compared with the provincial governments, and what are the distinctive characteristics of each provincial government when compared with one another? Is the concentration of power observed by Donald J. Savoie (1999) at the federal level to be found everywhere? Is there something in institutions, the political culture or the power of the main actors themselves that influence government into playing one role rather than another?

2) There is, in addition, the situation where public policy sectors also exert an influence on government roles. As we have already noted, it seems difficult for government to act as entrepreneur or referee in highly technical sectors, whereas it lends itself more easily to these roles in social policy. Is this situation always the case, and, if there are exceptions, why so?

3) We can also inquire if different political parties make a difference, as seems to be the case in certain non-Canadian policies we have studied. Is it the same in Canada as in the provinces?

Process-related Government Roles

The second research area we propose concerns the roles played by government from one process to another in the articulation of public policy – in other words, from initiation to development, and from development to implementation.

Most of the case studies we have examined focus on the development stage of the public policy process. There are at least two reasons for this. On the one hand, it is the intermediary process between initiation and implementation, and the common impression is that it is the most determining process of the three. On the other, many of the activities related to this phase are public in nature and are therefore easier to study. However, while most of the focus so far has been on the development stage, we should also give appropriate attention to the other two stages.

1) In fact, we think it important that research on the role of government in governance focus more on policy initiation and, most especially, on policy implementation. In virtually all the cases where we have information on all three processes, government acts as an entrepreneur in the initiation phase, as a referee in the development phase, and as one of several undifferentiated players in the implementation phase. Is this a universally consistent pattern, or are there exceptions?

2) When it plays the role of "one of several actors" in the implementation stage, government, as also shown by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) in their classic study, observes none of the principles underlying the institutional advantages it enjoys. Why is this the case, and is it not likely that these defects will become more serious if government is limited in the implementation stage to only a role as either "one of several actors" or simply a "supervisor"?

Research on policy implementation is complicated because it varies from region to region, depending on how action under given policies is carried out and how good relations are between policy administrators and the general population. However, such research is necessary simply to show the extent to which government has mastered the concrete applications of the measures it has adopted.

Relations Between Government and the Other Actors

At several points in presenting the case studies, we noted that government works with administrators or that the private sector has connections with government. In most of the case studies, relations between the various network actors are not clarified, and the question often arises as to whether the actors belonging to a so-called network have really formed one or are just simply juxtaposed to each other.

1) Relations between government actors and administrators are particularly crucial with respect to the different roles that government can play. For instance, can government act as an

entrepreneur without administrators providing it with the information required for this role? When government acts as a referee, to what extent does it distance itself from the viewpoints of its own departments? When it acts as only one of several players, is this because administrators in competition or in conflict with it have reduced it to such a role?

2) If government actors are thought of as playing an increasing role as supervisors of independent or private organizations that exercise a high degree of autonomy in the way they implement public policy, what exactly does such a role consist of? To what extent should government actors remain accountable for the actions carried out by these organizations? Would government not have to play a role as referee, in addition to its role as supervisor?

3) It is usually the private sector that reduces government to being simply an instrument, but why do its departments not therefore help it to overcome its powerlessness? When government acts as a symbol manager, does it do so with the connivance of the media or does it do so independently?

The answers that research could provide to these questions and to those concerning the two previous areas would help improve our understanding of governance processes and the network relationships that influence government into playing one role rather than another in these processes.

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THE PUBLIC SERVICE AS A
LEARNING ORGANIZATION:
Maintaining the Momentum
in Public Service Reform

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INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to enhance our understanding of the extent to which the Canadian public service can, and indeed must, function as a "learning organization" in order to maintain the momentum in public service reform. I argue that public service reform is not simply a case of adopting the prescriptions of "new public management" in contrast to the traditional methods of public administration. Rather, I suggest that there are four major paradigms of public management reform extant in the Anglo-American systems: what I call the politicization, privatization, performance measurement and professional public service paradigms. I conclude that the Canadian model, for various reasons particular to the Canadian federal regime, is predicated primarily on the professional public service paradigm. The success of this model requires that the public service function as a learning organization.

The paper is divided into five parts. The first sets the context of public service reform. The second outlines the four paradigms noted above and seeks to illustrate how reforms in foreign regimes have been based on these paradigms. The third examines the so-called "Canadian model" and seeks to show how the professional public service paradigm has been dominant. The fourth examines the ideal of the learning organization in terms of its evolution as a concept of governance and management, the political dynamics of change in organizations where knowledge is mission-critical, the idea of learning as applied social science, the organizational requirements of a learning organization with respect to resources, systems and networks, and the crucial link between organizational processes and organizational learning. The fifth outlines three possible research approaches to address the question of enhancing the public service as a learning organization.

THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

Public service reform constitutes a concerted effort to address the changing requirements of governance and public management. In Canada, as elsewhere, a good part of reform over the past decade has been driven by the need for affordable government (Aucoin and Savoie 1998). While this requirement is unlikely to recede in importance, given the continuing expectations and needs of citizens and the responsibilities of government, several other requirements are independent of the so-called fiscal imperative (Peters and Savoie 1995). Accordingly, it needs to be emphasized that improved budgetary circumstances will *not* fundamentally alter the dynamics of the important transformations occurring in the context of governance and public management. This is not the place to discuss these transformations in any detail, but a number of points need to be noted as they affect public service reform.

First, citizens have increased their expectations respecting the quality of public services and service quality. They increasingly expect greater public service value for their tax dollars. They are also less inclined to defer to government or the public service concerning their needs and preferences for public services and service delivery mechanisms. At the same time, citizens are now more divided on the role that government should play in the socio-economic order, have low levels of trust in government, and are less tolerant and accepting of partisanship in the administration of public affairs. They expect greater openness and transparency in government, aiming especially, to establish the public accountability of elected, and even appointed, officials.

Second, government leaders have increased their expectations respecting the responsiveness of the public service to their political agenda. They expect the public service to be more efficient and effective in the use of public resources and the delivery of services, and, are more inclined to demand that the public service demonstrate that results, in fact, are achieved. At the same time, there is now greater division among the political parties respecting the role of government, given the collapse of the post-Second World War consensus on economic management and the welfare state. There is also an increased concentration of power at the centre of government, if only in regard to matters considered of strategic political or policy importance.

Third, public servants generally are less deferential to authority and thus less accepting of hierarchy as the norm for public service work. They want greater opportunities for meaningful assignments, personal development and recognition, and they expect a greater commitment to a quality workplace. At the same time, there is an increased diversity in the public service workforce. The public service is also less attached to the idea of public service as a lifelong career, with many considering their options outside the public service.

Fourth, the administrative systems and methods of public management and public service provision have been transformed in important respects by developments in information and communications technologies. These technologies are having dramatic effects not only on internal management but also on citizen-state and government-public service relations. They constitute new "tools" that enable both new things to be done and traditional things to be done in new ways.

The nature of these changes illustrates, better than theory ever could, the extent to which public service reforms are shaped by their environments. However, there is more to it than simply this. It is also the case that different reforms create different environments, for good or ill, because the reforms become integral elements of their environment. While it is possible to identify and analyse the ideas, values and practices of a reformed public service in abstract terms, reforms extracted from their contexts lose an important dimension of their meaning. They do so insofar as it is not acknowledged that the reforms of a given system are embedded in a particular paradigm (or a combination of paradigms) of public service reform.

It is for this reason that the transformations in the environments of governance and public management listed above also should not be viewed only in the abstract as though they were universal determinants of change in a unidimensional direction. The context varies by jurisdiction and so too, accordingly, do the reforms of each jurisdiction, however much there are similarities in what is attempted and even where reforms proceed on the basis of a shared paradigm.

FOUR PARADIGMS OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

In order to situate the Canadian approach to public service reform in its context, and thus to understand what is necessary to maintain momentum, it is important to understand the basic paradigm(s) of public service reform in Canada in a comparative context. While this analysis must necessarily be brief, we need to appreciate that public service reform as found in the international context is not all of one piece, notwithstanding the universalism that is often claimed for the "new public management" movement. Not only are there important variations in what is pursued across different jurisdictions, but there are also, and more critically, significant differences in the actual paradigms – the underlying ideas, values and practices – found in different jurisdictions, even where they may appear to speak the same language of the new public management (or "reinventing government").

To simplify matters, I suggest that there are four major paradigms extant in the Anglo-American regimes at present. They are what I will call the politicization, the privatization, the performance measurement, and the professional public service paradigms. These paradigms are ideal-type models in that they do not conform in every respect to what can be found in the real world in any given public service context. Yet, in any given public service context (at least where reformers are not driving off in several directions at the same time, which may well be the case in some jurisdictions), one will find one or two paradigms paramount, although elements of other paradigms may be competing as well.

Politicization

The politicization paradigm proceeds from an understanding that public service reform is best achieved when there is strong political conviction respecting what needs to be done. The impetus for reform, it is assumed, cannot be expected from the public service itself because the public service is deemed to have a vested interest in the status quo. Change must thus come from outside. This means that political leaders must impose change themselves and deploy assistants who will help them to accomplish this end. This requires a coterie of politically appointed staff advisors and/or managers from outside the public service, or, at a minimum, a cadre of politically appointed public servants who are willing to associate with the political direction of the government and its agenda of reform. In the latter case, the most senior of these politically committed public servants essentially function, to use the language of the Westminster systems, as "junior ministers."

Organizational learning by the public service as an institution in this context is hardly a condition of reform; what needs to be done, or what is perceived to be needed to be done, is already determined. The agenda may be inspired by partisan ideology or by abstract theory; and, it may or may not fit well with the full range of circumstances in the context in question. In any event, it is arbitrarily imposed. While the political leadership may well wish to co-opt the non-partisan public service in the service of its agenda, it most likely will seek to override it. This approach is more likely since a politicized approach to reform will doubt the willingness of the non-partisan public service to implement a reform agenda without constant political direction.

Privatization

The privatization paradigm proceeds from an understanding that public service reform is best achieved when the full range of public service functions is subject to the competitive forces of the marketplace. Although privatization usually, and most appropriately, means the full transfer of public service undertakings to the private sector, I use the term here to highlight the operative assumption in this paradigm. This assumption deems the traditional public service, as an institution, to be a less than ideal arrangement both for advising government and for administering services. It is deemed inferior to arrangements whereby public services, including policy advice, are provided by private sector organizations that are subject to market competition or, at least, whereby public service organizations are required to compete with private organizations. At a minimum, public service organizations need to be encouraged to partner with private sector organizations. Under this conception, in short, public service provision by way of the traditional public service is viewed essentially as an institutional arrangement of last resort.

This paradigm asserts that the contracting out of public services better ensures economy and efficiency because management, especially private sector management, has the incentive to

derive the greatest value from the resources provided. Organizational learning in this context is essentially focused on managerial questions of economy and efficiency. The effectiveness of services is thus taken for granted because the issues of policy are considered a given in the specified outputs to be delivered under the contract. To the degree that any learning occurs, it does so where services are provided by a number of service providers and government is thus able to identify the most innovative practices in its ongoing monitoring and review of performance. Innovation, however, results not from what public service managers of contracts do in monitoring and reviewing contracts but rather from the competitive dynamics of the marketplace. The learning occurs primarily in the private sector. The public sector benefits but is essentially a passive beneficiary. If public service organizations are required to compete in the marketplace for contracts to provide public services then they too may learn as a consequence, although, in some important respects, such public sector organizations are essentially organizational hybrids – publicly owned and operated but completely dependent on winning publicly tendered contracts.

Performance Measurement

The performance measurement paradigm proceeds from the assumption that public service reform is best achieved when the structures of the public service are based on clearly established contractual arrangements that specify the results that public servants and their organizations must meet. These agreements govern both executive appointments/performance and organizational resources/outputs. The contractualism implicit in this paradigm derives from assumptions about the risks to "principal"s, namely, government/ministers, in securing the responsiveness and compliance of "agent"s, namely, their public servants/public service organizations. The major risk for principals is the need to trust the public service to be loyal to the ministry and thus give primacy to its interests, that is, the agenda and objectives of the government. Contracts are the principal means to reduce this risk.

The performance measurement paradigm thus requires an organizational separation of responsibilities for policy and operations respectively. While this can be achieved in more than one way, the acceptance of this requirement has led to the creation of "agencies" (variously defined as "executive," "operational," "service" or "autonomous") that are managed and deliver their services under contractual, rather than hierarchical, arrangements. These agencies, whatever the nomenclature, can be distinguished from traditional organizational structures in the core public service system in two ways. On the one hand, they function on the basis of such contracts. On the other hand, they are given a greater degree of devolved or delegated powers to manage both their resources and their services than is the case with traditional organizational forms. The trade-off for their enhanced administrative powers is that they are accountable for meeting their contracted obligations. But the acceptance of this trade-off assumes that performance, writ large and

encompassing both individual executives and their organizations, can be "measured" in ways that make their contracts effective instruments of accountability in pursuit of continuously improved performance. Otherwise, the approach amounts to little more than a form of decentralized management.

This paradigm can be viewed as a close relative of the privatization paradigm, given the assumptions that underlie its reliance on contracts. It differs in the extent to which it assumes that organizational learning can be advanced by the measurement of performance without going to the marketplace. In regard to the more operational or service delivery dimensions of public service, the development of information and communications technologies has contributed significantly to the appeal of this paradigm. This is especially the case to the extent that these technologies have facilitated the expansion of citizen service and staff surveys, performance based assessment and reporting methodologies, and the broader application of various kinds of performance-based audits. Indeed, in some formulations, a learning organization is an organization that has adopted this paradigm.

Professional Public Service

The professional public service paradigm assumes that political leaders and public servants function as partners, with the former trusting the latter for essentially two reasons. First, they assume that the non-partisan public service provides them with advisors and administrators who will pursue the public interest in public management as defined by law and the policies of government. Second, they assume that a career public service will possess the technical expertise and practical experience necessary to enable government to realize its agenda and to fulfill its responsibilities for good governance. The paradigm thus enables public servants to provide confidential advice, to exercise authority on behalf of the political executive, and to do both without fear of reprisal on partisan-political grounds. The professional public service provides the organizational space, or institutional bargain, to secure this element of protection from the partisan political process.

This paradigm assumes that there is a seamless connection between policy and operations, even if the administration of the latter for all practical purposes is carried out almost exclusively by public servants. There is not, therefore, a clear line drawn between the delivery of "outputs" and the achievement of "outcomes" under this paradigm. As trustees of public authority, both political executives and public servants have the duty to pursue results that secure the objectives of the law and public policy. The fact that only elected officials are deemed to be publicly accountable, because such lines cannot be drawn, does not detract from this duty on the part of

public servants. Indeed, they should be held accountable, within the confines of the public service, for their performance of this duty according to the best professional standards.

Under this paradigm, it is assumed that the public service functions as a learning organization. This is what justifies the public trust placed in it as a non-partisan professional institution of government. If the public service does not continuously learn, it cannot bring knowledge and judgement to bear in the provision of policy advice or in the administration of public services in ways that add public value to the decisions of government in the context of changing requirements. The discretion that must inevitably be exercised by the public service is deemed constitutionally legitimate and necessary to good governance under this paradigm because a professional public service, as a learning organization, is seen as an essential support to democratic governance which is itself an exercise in continuous learning. A professional public service is necessarily part of this equation for purely practical reasons: the modern democratic state cannot expect its political institutions to function effectively without "administrative" support. The public service is not thereby deemed intellectually superior to the political class in its capacity to learn. But, properly organized and managed, the public service possesses the institutional autonomy, resources and time to pursue learning, broadly defined, to an extent and in ways that are simply not practical for the political class given its multiple governmental and political tasks.

Paradigms in the Real World

Paradigms, as noted, are ideal-types; they constitute models based on ideas, values and practices; in this respect, they contain both normative and empirical dimensions. On the normative side, they posit what should be done to achieve a desired state of affairs; on the empirical side, they constitute propositions about organizational behaviour under given conditions. But governance and public management are subject to a multiplicity of objectives, a complex set of desired states of affairs. Knowledge of organizational behaviour is always incomplete, given the indeterminate consequences of various alternative ways of organizing and managing under different conditions. It follows that in the real world of governance and public management, practice is invariably characterized by adherence to more than one paradigm. At the same time, the public service reform program in any single regime will be characterized by adherence to a particular paradigm or a particular mix of paradigms.

For example, the New Zealand regime has been dominated by the performance measurement paradigm (Gregory and Hicks 1999). The entire edifice of its reforms is predicated on the propositions of agency theory with its emphasis on contractual structures with an organizational separation of policy and operational responsibilities, wherein devolved management

of public services is in held in check by an elaborate set of performance measurement accountabilities (Boston, Martin, Pallot and Walsh 1996). While strong political direction and conviction were necessary to effect this approach to reform, and some considerable privatization was also undertaken along the way, the primary focus has been increased managerial economy and efficiency through performance measurement. Aspects of a professional public service have been present throughout, especially in the non-partisan independent staffing of the public service, starting with chief executives, but only recently has the issue of public service capability resurfaced (New Zealand, State Services Commission 1999).

In Britain, the politicization and privatization paradigms were dominant under Thatcher, although this mix was then followed by increased reliance on the performance measurement paradigm with the creation of the executive agency architecture of the core public service (Campbell and Wilson 1995). Blair has reasserted the politicization paradigm, given his frustration with what he perceives to be the tardy response of the public service to fundamental change (United Kingdom 1999). Lip service is paid to the professional public service paradigm but the public service could be forgiven for regarding the prevailing paradigms as less than receptive to the idea of the public service as a partner with the government.

In Australia, the Hawke-Keating reforms of the 1980s were driven by a combined acceptance of the politicization and professional public service paradigms. This is an invariably tense combination of paradigms. Iit was nevertheless well managed because the political arm of government was staffed largely with experienced former public servants and the professional public service was given space to operate in an increasingly devolved management regime (Campbell and Halligan 1992). The Howard government has adopted a politicization-privatization combination, with a strong dose of performance measurement (Halligan 2000). The traditional professional public service paradigm has been regarded as an impediment to reform; the emphasis is now on creating a "high performance" public service within a highly devolved and competitive management framework (Kemp 1999).

In the United States, there has been a mix of politicization, with conviction political leadership emanating from both the White House and Congress, and the performance measurement paradigm, also emanating from the two sources of authority in the American system of separate and shared powers (Kettl 1994). The National Performance Review initiative has come from the executive branch; the Government *Performance and Results* Act regime from the legislative branch. The privatization paradigm has been an extension of this mix, given the political conviction that less government is better government as well as the reformulation of the policy-administration dichotomy as the preference for a government that "steers" but does not "row." In all of this the professional public service paradigm has been a poor cousin. The public service has been subject to significant politicization in its senior ranks over the past two decades and extensive bureaucracy-bashing over the same period. In any event, a regime of micro-management

by Congress not only reduces the scope for the public service as a trustee of public authority but also encourages a highly fragmented set of public service agencies to pursue separate agency objectives within the ambit of executive-legislative competition.

THE CANADIAN MODEL

In contrast to the other Anglo-American systems, the Canadian experience of public service reform over the past decade or so has not been perceived as distinctive in any important respects. It appears less coherent than the "new public management" reforms pursued in New Zealand or Britain. It has not had the same high profile as the "reinventing government" movement in the United States. And, it has been regarded as less vigorous than the Australian reforms, in either their Hawke-Keating or their Howard manifestations. In short, the Canadian federal record of reform suggests that Canada is a laggard or at least merely a follower. During the 1980s, the Canadian record of innovation was deemed modest as well as derivative. The Public Service 2000 initiative begun in 1989 failed to attract any international attention, let alone emulation, and withered even within the confines of Ottawa as a reform movement with any momentum (Aucoin 1995).

Nonetheless, over the past decade, the Canadian system has experienced considerable change. In her 1998 report to the Prime Minister, the Clerk of the Privy Council, as head of the public service, reported on these changes in the following manner: "Public sector reform was carried out in a typically Canadian way – calmly, competently, without much fanfare" (Bourgon 1998:1). These reforms were portrayed as "pragmatic" and "experimental." Although these reforms covered a wide spectrum of governance and public management, there still appeared no "grand plan" that would constitute a radical departure from Canadian traditions.

Yet the Clerk argued that Canadian reforms have been predicated on a number of important distinguishing characteristics that, in an international comparative context, make the "Canadian model…uniquely Canadian…and sufficiently different from all others to warrant attention" (2). The Canadian model, she stated:

! is based on the belief that government and government institutions are essential to a well-performing society

! asserts that public sector reforms must start by examining the role that government is expected to play in the future

! affirms that a well-performing public sector requires both a strong policy capacity and a modern service delivery function

!   recognizes the importance of a well-performing, professional, non-partisan public service

!   requires leadership from both elected and appointed officials (3-4).

In some respects, these elements were explicitly contrasted to other models. For instance, it was stated that the Canadian model "rejects the philosophy that less government is synonymous with better government"; that it "does accept that the policy and service delivery functions should be separated as a universal principle"; that it "recognizes that public servants have a key role to play in shaping policies and delivering services; and, that it acknowledges that "the public service leadership has been relied upon to put bold and creative ideas before ministers, to marshall support for change and to ensure smooth implementation." Implicit in these assertions are several assumptions.

The first is that public service reform should not proceed on the basis of a political conviction that the professional public service has a vested interest in the status quo and is self-serving in protecting its status against reform, and, therefore, that it must be overridden in order to effect reform. The second is that the public service is capable of achieving greater economy and efficiency on its own terms, that is, without resort to market competition between the public service and private sector providers, let alone going entirely to the marketplace for the provision of public services by private sector providers. The third is that enhanced performance on the part of the public service can be realized without separating responsibilities for policy and operations via the universal application of contractually organized "agency" structures with statutorily imposed performance measurement systems.

In each of these respects, the Canadian approach to reform differs from the approaches found in other Anglo-American systems, including some Canadian provincial jurisdictions (especially Alberta and Ontario). The Canadian approach has been the result of the interplay of at least three major factors.

First, precious few federal ministers, and none of the three prime ministers over the past two decades, including those in the current ministry, have viewed public service reform *per se*, at least not in the fashion pursued elsewhere, as central to their political agendas (Savoie 1994, 1999). This has been due in part to preoccupations with broader political and public policy issues; it has also been due to a rejection of the premise that public service reform need entail a diminution of ministerial capacity to administer public affairs in direct collaboration with the public service. The practical necessity of coping with the exigencies of the fiscal imperative has required more affordable government. This has resulted in a considerable downsizing of the state apparatus, its programs and its expenditures. Further, it has resulted in a greater reliance on public sector-private sector partnerships (as "alternative delivery systems") in recognition of the

limited resources of government, and even some contracting out to obtain economies. Yet, for the most part, major government restructuring and program review exercises have proceeded with ministers wanting to maintain the traditional ministerial department form and traditional central agency structures supporting ministers in order that they retain their political control over public administration. They have done so, thirdly, because they have continued to believe that reliance on the public service as their main source of advice on matters related to public policy and public service delivery does not threaten their control over public administration. For instance, in the major government restructuring and program review exercises, they fully engaged the professional public service as partners, even if the latter was more extensively participatory than the former (Aucoin and Savoie 1998).

In this context, it is not surprising perhaps that pragmatism and experimentation, even "disjointed incrementalism," have characterized public service reform. Since the political leadership has not overridden the public service, those public servants who might otherwise have wished to promote more radical reforms could not obtain support for such changes. Paul Tellier, Clerk of the Privy Council during the Mulroney regime, for instance, after his departure from the public service, wrote that he had been persuaded by his public service colleagues not to pursue radical reform, something he subsequently regretted (Tellier 1994). But what he did not make clear was what more radical reform might have entailed. The conventional wisdom at the time was articulated by Ian Clark, then Secretary to the Treasury Board, who argued in favour of a "realistic" approach to reform (Clark 1994a and 1994b). What this entailed was a continuation of the basic tradition of ministerial government combined with a professional public service but incorporating elements of the new public management as they could be accommodated within this tradition.

The preference for this approach was partly due to the factors noted above. It was also due to the fact that the generation of federal public servants who reached the senior levels of the public service at the time of the emergence of the new public management had already experienced, in the earlier stages of their careers, several iterations of public management reforms. These were not dissimilar to the central propositions of the new public management. Through the 1960s and 1970s Canada was a leader in public management reform, beginning with the reforms introduced by the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization. Administrative decentralization, systematic policy analysis, program budgeting and evaluation, and performance measurement were hardly new themes to this generation. Indeed, by the end of this period, in the early 1980s, the foremost international expert in budgeting had proclaimed the integrated policy and expenditure management system used by Canada as the most innovative system in the Anglo-American systems (Schick 1988). By the 1980s, when other governments initiated the "new" reforms, the federal public service could thus be forgiven for viewing these reforms as simply a reworking of what had been tried, and found wanting, in the Canadian experience. There were some new wrinkles, to be certain, but they were not viewed as constituting major innovations.

In this context, there was not much support for the abstract theories underpinning the new public management. Ministers during the Mulroney regime came to office suspicious of the federal public service and they took some steps to assert politicized control (Aucoin 1988). But they not only pulled back from a wholesale adoption of the politicized paradigm, they soon came to appreciate what the professional public service could offer. Although an uneasy tension was evident throughout their stay in office, the Conservatives did not seek to dismantle the basic structures of the Canadian tradition. Public service reform thus became the prerogative essentially of the public service itself. This approach was continued when the Liberals came to power in 1993, buttressed by a more public service-friendly ministry (Aucoin 1995).

Throughout, this tradition meant a pragmatic and experimental approach in the creation of "operational agencies," the deregulation and streamlining of central agency "management controls," the greater "delegation" of management authority to departments, the "commercialization" and "contracting out" of some common service operations, the adoption of "service standards," the expanded reporting on "performance measures," and, more generally, the modernization of the public service system. The 1993 Program Review initiative dramatically changed various contours of the public service, yet the basic architecture of the system remains in place. Even the most recent and most radical departure from tradition – the adoption of a new "service agency" model for the revenue and customs operation (encompassing fully one-quarter of the public service) with its hybrid form of ministerial department-Crown corporation – contains important traditional Canadian features.

When the Clerk of the Privy Council suggested in 1998 that there is a Canadian model of public service reform, distinct from all the others, she was essentially positing the idea that the professional public service paradigm was *the* distinguishing feature of the Canadian approach. Evidence for the paramountcy of this paradigm can be gleaned from the extent to which public service reform has focused on three major dimensions of governance and public management. These dimensions are the efforts to rebuild the policy research capacity of the public service, to institute a citizen-centred service approach to public service delivery, and to revitalize the public service itself (Cappe 2000). This is not the place to describe these three initiatives in any detail. But it must not only be noted that these reform efforts have been developed by the public service and accepted by ministers, it also needs to be emphasized that each is predicated on the importance of a professional public service to good governance and good public management. In these ways the approach is fundamentally and substantially different from the premises of the other three major paradigms. Most importantly, the Canadian approach assumes that a professional public service constitutes public value because such a service is managed as a learning organization, that is, as an organization that continuously "learns" to provide the quality of policy advice and quality of service delivery demanded by the requirements of governance. In this context, the performance measurement paradigm is also present, but clearly as a secondary element to complement the ideal of the public service as a learning organization (Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat 2000).

The paramountcy of this paradigm, or any paradigm, does not, in itself, secure success. In the case of the professional public service paradigm, the public service must actually be managed in ways that promote and advance learning; otherwise, the organization will be "learning disabled," even "illiterate." In short, it is not sufficient that the professional public service be afforded a critical position in governance and public management. It also requires more than the conditions of an independently staffed public service: it needs to demonstrate that it is superior to the other models of public service reform.

THE IDEAL OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

In one sense, the very idea of professional public service has long assumed that such a service is a "learning organization." While there might have been a time in the distant past when the capacity and opportunity of Anglo-American public services to function in this manner were virtually nil, and thus they functioned essentially as machine-like bureaucracies of clerks in the service of partisans, that time has long since passed. That is not to say, however, that a fully engaged public service, practising the high arts of statecraft, has been the norm for these public services ever since the advent of independent staffing on the basis of merit. It can be argued, nonetheless, that, at least for some time, these public services pursued the ideal of the service as a learning organization.

The nomenclature of the public service as a "learning organization" is, of course, relatively recent in contemporary public service parlance, borrowing, as it does, the language of the private sector (Morgan 1998; Garvin 1993; Senge 1990). The concept of the learning organization, as well as its sister concept of "organizational learning," have become prominent in the preoccupations of the academic and practitioner communities of private sector management in the 1990s (Easterby-Smith 1997, 1998). Yet, the idea of government, including its public service, as a learning organization is hardly a new concept, notwithstanding the fact that the current literature on the subject pays scant attention to earlier scholarship, especially from political science.

For example, and although one could no doubt go further back in time, the principal theme of Karl Deutsch's *The Nerves of Government* (1966) was that governments should be viewed as cybernetic information-based systems that, as he put it, "learn how to learn" (now the mantra of the learning organization). Deutsch was by no means a lone wolf in this regard. His work built on the scholarship of many theorists, including those, such as David Easton (1953), who had advanced the concept of the state as a "political system" operating in a turbulent environment, with scanning and feedback loops providing steering and correction to course respectively.

While the work of these scholars never achieved the widespread currency of contemporary management gurus, it did have some impact in certain governments, most notably the Kennedy administration in the United States and the Trudeau government in Canada. "Systems analysis," "cybernetics," and "information processes," as analytical constructs, if not exactly scientific methodologies, entered the lexicon of government and public administration. This was especially the case in the adoption of "planning, programming and budgeting systems" (PPBS), as instituted in both of these systems in the 1960s, and the development of central policy and management agencies staffed by "superbureaucrats" (Campbell and Szablowski 1979).

This is not the occasion to explore the fate of these early versions of government and public service as learning organizations (although Richard French did so admirably work in his *How Ottawa Decides* (1980)). However, it is necessary to make one general point relevant to the purpose of this report, one that flows from our learning on the basis of these early efforts to consciously adopt the perspective of government as a learning organization. The point is this: *the methods, techniques and approaches of an institution that seeks to function as a learning organization require that these instruments be firmly embedded in the principal processes whereby the organization carries out its central tasks.* They must, in other words, be integral to the conduct of the work of the organization in pursuit of its missions. To the degree that they are not so embedded, they became peripheral, irrelevant, even disruptive, and eventually get relegated to the sidelines or even discarded. The efforts of the 1960s withered precisely because they were structured so that the learning dimensions of the process were restricted to those engaged in "policy work." All too often, this work was divorced from both the political dimensions of the policy process and the operational side of public administration. It was not embedded in the ongoing processes of either ministerial decision-making or public service delivery.

At the same time, the legacy of these early efforts to institute a brave new world of "rational" policy analysis and decision-making in order to better "steer" the ship of state was a healthy awareness of the need to better appreciate the complexities of managing in turbulent and uncertain environments. Yet, by the 1990s, the nature of the transformations occurring in the environments of government appeared to require radical change and, since the challenges facing governments invariably cut across the boundaries of governmental organizations, comprehensive change appeared necessary as well. Hence the attraction of the idea of the public service as a learning organization that could learn how to generate and apply knowledge in ways that get at the root causes of socio-economic problems and tackle them in a systemic and horizontal rather than a fragmented or vertical manner.

The Concept of the Learning Organization

The concept of the learning organization emerged in the for-profit private sector essentially for two simple reasons. First, a key factor in competitive success in what we call the "knowledge economy" has increasingly become the capacity of a business to generate and apply knowledge in the several stages of a commercial enterprise. Second, the capacity of a business to generate and apply knowledge is dependent upon its personnel who are "knowledge workers" and "knowledge managers." With an increasingly globalized marketplace, competition has been intensified by the explosion of knowledge around the new information and communications technologies and by the limited supply of quality knowledge workers and knowledge managers (Senge 1990).

Becoming a learning organization is thus an imperative for business organizations that wish to compete in this highly competitive knowledge economy. How does a business organization do this? The literature on the subject is now extensive. Taken as a whole, it suggests a number of characteristics of the ideal-type learning organization but there is not a consensus on a single ideal-type. The litany of characteristics identified by one overview of the literature includes: systems perspective/thinking; concern for measurement; operational variety; climate of openness; involved leadership; continuous education; ongoing experimentation; evaluation; learning from others; shared vision; challenges to mental models; personal mastery; team learning; reflection and iterative learning; and attention to tacit knowledge (Easterby-Smith 1997).

One reason why there has not emerged a consensus on a single ideal-type is because the several scholars and practitioners who have addressed the subject come to it from different disciplinary and managerial perspectives. Indeed, the literature reads like a reformulation of old and new organization and management theories refocused to accommodate the requirement that business organizations learn to function as learning organizations given the demands of the knowledge economy. To the extent that there is anything novel or distinctive in the literature, it is that the learning organization must be an enterprise that exploits its collective capacity to learn and apply what is learned by integrating the dictates of management with the dictates of science (Leonard-Barton 1995). The latter can be distinguished from the former to the extent that they demand openness to the primacy of evidence-based analysis; to challenge and criticism; to an equality of participation in dialogue and debate; and to the treatment of knowledge as public, that is, shared, knowledge. Although the dictates of management do not always contradict the dictates of science, there is an obvious and inherent tension between what C.P Snow, in his classic account of the relations between science and government (1960), defined as the "two cultures," a tension that must be addressed in any organization that seeks to be a learning organization.

The dictates of management require that there be a hierarchy of authority linked to a distribution of responsibilities in order that managers be subject to an accountability regime. The rationale is that all authority, especially public authority, is ultimately conferred or delegated. At the same time, organizations can be managed in ways that are participatory, inclusive, collaborative and civilized. They can seek to fulfill their missions by adopting methods of management that foster comprehensive research and analysis, evidence-based decision-making, continuous experimentation, systematic measurement and evaluation, and constant challenge to established procedures and regulatory frameworks.

Nonetheless, public service organizations, as is the case with business organizations, are engaged in applying knowledge in the pursuit of their purposes, however great their investment in research as the generation of knowledge. They are not scientific academies interested in knowledge *for its own sake*. This means that such organizations must be managed in pursuit of their purposes; knowledge is the means to this end. Moreover, the applied knowledge in question is, for the most part, applied social science knowledge. And, it is in the social sciences, including the management sciences, where one finds the greatest degree of contestation between competing paradigms or schools of thought. It should not be surprising that most constructions of an ideal-type learning organization either ignore the "political" dimensions of organizational life or have great difficulty in accommodating it as an inherent feature of a learning organization. Politics is seen as corrupting the learning organization.

The Politics of Science

Yet in the context of science, even within the academy, there is a fundamental political dimension. This is the politics associated with the generation and dissemination of new knowledge, as new ideas or new paradigms. New knowledge challenges the existing order of ideas or paradigms. It is thus inherently a political process, as existing and new paradigms battle for intellectual supremacy. This is why Kuhn (1962) portrayed paradigm changes in the course of the history of science as constituting "revolutions," and he meant this in every sense of the word. They were as intense, as competitive, as personal, and very often as nasty, as anything experienced in the political realm of governance. This dimension of change in science itself is not well appreciated or understood, even within the scientific community itself.

The mythology of science, as opposed to the history of science as articulated by scholars such as Kuhn, portrays the processes of intellectual discovery and change as merely intellectual – new theories replace old theories because the evidence is convincing and they possess greater powers of explanation. This mythology is just that – fiction and not reality. The mythology, however, contributes to a public understanding of science as objective knowledge, politics as

merely subjective biases. The politics of science-in-governance is thus all too often portrayed by scientists as "truth" set against against "manipulation."

It ought to come as no great surprise, accordingly, that some understandings of organizational learning assume that a learning organization, by virtue of the objective knowledge it generates and disseminates, will necessarily be devoid of politics; "knowledge" will constitute "power" itself. But, this is to set up a false dichotomy between knowledge and politics. Knowledge and politics are always intertwined, especially in the context of practical affairs where applied knowledge, as distinct from theoretical knowledge, affects what we do to pursue organizational purposes and missions. And, as noted, social science knowledge – the knowledge applied in governance and public management – is invariably subject to a high degree of intellectual contestation, at least in "open," that is, liberal democratic, societies.

None of the above should be taken as an argument against the pursuit of the ideal of the learning organization. Rather, it is simply a warning not to expect a learning organization to somehow rise above, let alone eliminate, organizational politics. Indeed, in some critical respects, the politics of a learning organization is likely to be even more politically tense and combative than those of an organization that pays little attention to change based on learning. Not only is more often at stake when, for example, major paradigms contest for supremacy, or wage battle over a long period, but many, if not all, knowledge workers are intensely committed to their ideas. At the same time, this kind of politics is usually more intellectually exciting and stimulating than the politics of competing interests or partisan factions. An organization committed to organizational learning, if well managed, can govern the politics of ideas in ways that encourage its members to engage in dialogue and discussion that is not only civil but places the highest premium on promoting, as best as possible, the public interest.

Finally, a well-performing learning organization manages the politics of knowledge by recognizing that successful strategic change can be based on knowledge that is either incremental or radical in nature, depending upon the challenges emanating from its environment, the opportunities that result from new administrative technologies, or developments within relevant knowledge itself. This is not to deny the crucial importance of investing in learning that constantly challenges the status quo. Rather, it is to state that in a world of uncertainty, the "rational" strategy is sometimes to be as experimental as possible in order not to overcommit to a less than certain but more radical transformation. In addition, a learning organization is also well managed when the organization acknowledges that "tacit" knowledge, based primarily on practical or subjective experience, but without a theoretical explanation to support its claims, can be every bit as important in a learning organization as "explicit" knowledge, based on quantitative or empirical foundations. (It should be noted that even in the physical or natural sciences and technology, there are elements of tacit knowledge; scientists or technologists can

apply knowledge in certain applications without an explicit explanation or causal theory in hand.)

Learning in a Learning Organization

In a learning organization, staff at all levels are engaged in learning precisely because it is staff who learn and apply learning. The reason is simple, at least in theory. Organizations do not learn independently of their members. Organizational structures, procedures and practices are at best enabling. An organization is not merely form; it is a living organism of its members interacting with one another in the context of their external environment. It is, in this sense, that we can speak of an organization as a learning organization: its basic processes, whereby the members do the work of the organization, either advance the learning capacity of the organization, and thus its collective knowledge, or they do not.

While some processes of an organization are more explicitly devoted to learning, as knowledge creation, acquisition and dissemination – such as research, investigation or study activities – the ultimate purpose of a learning organization that is responsible for practical affairs is to apply knowledge in practice; this is "knowledge-in-action." The public service is not an academy interested in knowledge for its own sake, however professional it may be in its values and however well educated its practitioners.

Yet the norms and procedures of science must prevail even in the generation, dissemination and application of knowledge to practical affairs if the ideal of a learning organization is to be promoted. The most important of these norms and procedures is that knowledge be subject to scrutiny, assessment and contestation; otherwise, those with organizational power, whether well informed or not, invariably prevail. This requires that a public service that seeks to function as a learning organization make space for knowledge to be public, that is, available and accessible (if only within the confines of its own organization), and thus subject to the broadest possible range of critical analysis, comment and discussion. This requirement is often not met to the degree demanded by the norms and procedures of science precisely because governance, and thus public management, is not merely an intellectual exercise of knowledge-in-action but is also the exercise of political power. The latter need not rule out the intellectual dimensions of governance and public management, but it must always attend to the demands of organized interests as well as accommodate the personal ambitions of partisan-political activists seeking to attain and retain political power (Jones and Thompson 1999).

Organizational Requirements

A learning organization requires an organization's commitment to learning that entails at least three things: the necessary resources, the appropriate systems, and learning networks.

The *resource* dimension is perhaps both the most straightforward and the most complex. It goes without saying that a learning organization must have a high level of resource investment in its professional staff. Weber recognized that a well-performing bureaucracy required the resources necessary to attract and retain the necessary complement of specialists to perform the technical functions of the organization, to motivate staff in pursuit of high performance, and to prevent corruption in its various forms. More recently, those who are not generally identified as supporters of public service "bureaucracy," such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, have come to accept that a professional public service is a necessary condition of good governance in pursuit of economic prosperity and social development. Even New Zealand, the paragon of the new public management movement, now acknowledges, as noted, that government must ensure that society's ownership interest in its public service as a national asset must be protected and developed over the long term. This trustee responsibility requires a level of resource investment necessary to ensure that the critical mass of qualified personnel to undertake the core functions of public administration, including learning, is secured.

Acceptance of this requirement is the straightforward part of the equation. The more complex part is how to assess just what level of resource investment is required to meet this requirement in any given jurisdiction. Nonetheless, we can say that there are two aspects of the resource question that need attention. The first concerns the need for a critical mass of staff in those support functions that serve to enhance learning. These include staff in both central agencies and line departments to conduct research, broadly defined to encompass both policy and service issues; to carry out performance monitoring and measurement; and, to conduct audits, reviews and evaluations. The second concerns the critical mass of staff in line functions sufficient to allow for the time necessary to engage in reflection, dialogue and deliberation as well as to perform the tasks of decision-making, coordination and control, supervision and the conduct of operations, and financial and human resource management.

At a time of expenditure restraint and downsizing, it has become increasingly difficult, to say the least, to justify the level of resources necessary to meet the above conditions. In many quarters, this is seen to constitute "bureaucratic overhead" and "organizational slack," even "redundancy," at a time when, it is argued, many, if not most, public service organizations do not even have the staff to carry out their "core" functions because they have to "do more with less." This is reinforced by the "just do it" mentality that views the traditional requirements of public service "administration" as "bureaucratic waste," even "barriers," to efficiency and effectiveness. The operative assumption here is that all that is required are front-line staff who

provide "services." According to this view, the staff requirements for organizational learning are regarded as "luxuries" that can no longer be afforded if "essential" work is to be done. This view is reinforced by some public servants who argue that one only "learns by doing" and that the time spent on discussion, dialogue, and deliberation with others, including support staff engaged in research, monitoring, measurement, audit, review or evaluation, is time wasted. Finally, it does not help that there is ignorance on the part of many politicians concerning best practices in the private sector with respect to organizational learning or knowledge management. Here, increasingly, are found major investments of resources in these very activities, given the highly competitive nature of the knowledge economy.

These are formidable obstacles to overcome if the public service wishes to function as a learning organization. The bottom line here is that the commitment of staff resources and staff time devoted to organizational learning must be seen as adding value in terms of improved policy advice, improved services and service delivery, and improved management. In the absence of competitive pressures from external organizations or of well-developed benchmarks or scorecards, the capacity to demonstrate value added is necessarily limited. In comparison to the private for-profit sector in a highly competitive market, the imperative of organizational learning in the public sector is less certain. This fact, of course, is one reason for the presumed superiority of the privatization and performance measurement paradigms over the professional public service paradigm. Here it is assumed that markets or performance measures can be used to force service providers, whether private or public, to "learn" whatever is necessary to meet the terms of their contracts and thus to survive. In some circumstances, these conditions can be met. All too often, however, the utility of these approaches is minimized by the full or partial absence of the required conditions. Markets are not sufficiently robust; performance measures are incomplete or subject to competing interpretations (Barzelay 1997; Pollitt 1995). In any event, there needs to be a residual capacity in the public service to manage these approaches, and thus to learn how best to utilize them.

At the same time, there is evidence that in the Canadian public service, as elsewhere, that staff resources and time are squandered to the detriment of its capacity to function as a learning organization. This is particularly the case with respect to resources committed to administering the excessively complex and rigid legislative and regulatory regimes that govern its financial, and especially, its human resources management systems (Canada, Auditor General 2000). Resources that could otherwise be devoted to enhancing the learning capacity and opportunities of the public service are thus expended on complying with the dictates of what many regard as outdated and unnecessarily cumbersome rules. Getting the appropriate management frameworks in place might well offer the opportunity to better align the distribution of support and line staff with the resource requirements of a learning organization.

The second dimension concerns the *systems* used in public management. These systems structure and direct the work of the public service as it attends to its core management functions. They serve to provide the incentives or disincentives for public servants at all levels to continuously and consciously learn in the context of their work in order to promote performance. They do so by giving form to the ways by which authority, responsibility and accountability within the public service are assigned and made part of the working environment. Systems, in this sense, are formal and explicit. In another sense, however, the ways by which these systems are actually managed, both corporately and within individual organizations, constitute the informal and implicit systems-in-practice. At issue is the extent to which these systems, formal and informal, contribute to fostering or impeding both a culture and a practice of continuous learning. Formal systems can be barriers, constraints or impediments or they can represent the values and standards that promote best practice.

Formal systems acknowledge the need for both hierarchy and specialization in the conduct of management. Hierarchy, in the sense of centralized management, or "command and control" as it is usually put, has virtually everywhere, whatever the ascendant paradigm, been subject to some devolution of authority and responsibility. This has taken the forms of streamlining central corporate controls, delegation of authority and delayering the hierarchy. Although this varies across different jurisdictions, and notwithstanding the contradictions found in some regimes, the emphasis has been on strengthening management by letting and/or making managers manage their resources and services (Borins 1998). In the process, there is a greater effort to effect best practice by asserting the primacy of corporate "values" and by requiring managers to manage to "results," defined as either outputs or outcomes, or both. The assumption here is that these changes to traditional hierarchical arrangements diminish an excessive focus on managing "inputs" and "processes" and enhance the focus on efficiency in the use of resources and on effectiveness in the quality of services and service delivery.

In several respects, these developments have constituted an effort to realign the roles and functions of functional specialists in management, such as those responsible for financial or human resource management. The effort here has been to ensure that the attention and priority given to these dimensions of management do not detract from the core missions of line organizations of government. Functional specialists attend to the corporate means of administration rather than the ends, or results, to be achieved by these line organizations in managing public services, directly or indirectly, in order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. To the degree that these specialists, either at the centre of government or in line departments themselves, are able to exert authority over the means of administration, the consequence is threefold. It fractures the authority of line managers, muddies the waters of responsibility, and makes accountability less transparent and thus more difficult to secure. In the process, the likelihood of efficiency and effectiveness is diminished.

The streamlining of central corporate controls, delegation of authority and delayering of management structures addresses important dimensions of administrative systems. In the politicization paradigm, these developments fit well with the preference for having the public service focus essentially on the delivery of services in ways that secure efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency is the major priority, however, because what constitutes effectiveness, that is, what is to be done, is primarily determined by the political leadership. Effectiveness for the public service thus amounts to no more than the technical dimensions of quality service delivery. In the privatization paradigm, these developments fit well for the same criteria apply, although in this case market competition is regarded as the mechanism to promote efficiency. Here as well, of course, the issues of effectiveness are determined primarily by the political leadership. In the performance measurement paradigm, these developments fit even better, given that more is expected of the public service in addressing the nexus of efficiency and effectiveness. More is expected for two reasons. First, surrogates for the market, such as benchmarking, must be used to measure performance. Second, there is a greater appreciation of the need to assess the extent to which the outputs, or services of an organization, actually contribute to, or secure, the desired outcomes that governments want. In the professional public service paradigm, these developments constitute an even greater recognition of the importance of the public service. They do so for three reasons. They acknowledge that the public service is trusted by the political leadership to exercise executive authority on its behalf. In doing so, public servants bring professional judgement to bear in exercising discretion in balancing the twin requirements of efficiency and effectiveness. Public servants necessarily must be centrally engaged in advising the political executive on effectiveness issues because governmental learning, in the broadest sense, is dependent on the capacity of the public service to learn by exercising authority and discretion.

The requirements of a learning organization for a professional public service in respect to its administrative systems assume a high degree of understanding of, and commitment to, corporate public service values (Canada, Task Force on Public Service Values and Ethics 1996, 2000). This is required precisely because of the extent to which authority is exercised by public servants in the absence of centralized command and control systems *and* because the accountability regime is not considered to be something that can be put on automatic pilot (Sutherland and Mitchell 1997). Concerns about the commitment, or at least adherence, to such values have been a major issue where the politicization, privatization and performance measurement paradigms have been dominant as in Australia, Britain and New Zealand. In these regimes, the corporate character of the public service has been diminished in various ways. The effort to secure public service accountability through contractual arrangements has been both costly in terms of its extensive reporting mechanisms and not nearly as effective as was hoped, given the inevitable tendency of managers to manage exclusively to their contracts (Schick 1996). In the Canadian case, the corporate perspective has been given a higher priority, as is to be expected in the professional public service paradigm. But extensive downsizing as well as

major delayering, combined with a measure of conflicting signals, have taken their toil on adherence to public service values in some quarters.

Second, collaborative working arrangements that secure effective linkages between central policy and management agencies and line operations, functional and line managers, and managers across line organizations are a prerequisite. These are required to enhance performance because it must be assumed that enhancing performance entails continuous change as a result of learning at several points in the organization, including government as a whole. But learning does not produce desired innovation unless it constitutes a collective enterprise sufficient to obtain agreement on required change from the vantage point of those with different bases of organizational authority, power and influence. The better integration of functional and line management in most regimes has been a positive development. In some cases, however, the devolution of authority for the management of financial and human resources to line organizations necessary to achieve this kind of integration, especially if based on tight contractual arrangements, has posed problems for the establishment of inter-organizational collaborative structures to provide integrated or seamless service delivery. The fragmentation of the British public service into executive agencies, for example, has put obstacles in the way of what is now seen as the need for "joined-up" service delivery mechanisms. The Australians have sought to avoid this problem by creating a massive service delivery agency, Centrelink, that provides, under contract, seamless service delivery for at least five major portfolios. In this jurisdiction, however, fragmentation also occurs due to the extensive reliance on contracting out. The New Zealand regime, with its significant devolution to line managers, has faced even greater obstacles in this regard primarily because its focus has been on the efficient production of services, as outputs. But this has meant much less attention given to the linkages between outputs and outcomes and thus to the effectiveness of outputs where effectiveness requires the coordination of services. The Canadian approach has been to place a primary focus on integrated service delivery, even extending to collaboration across levels of governments. This has required at least a *de facto* devolution of authority, and thus some concerns about accountability structures (Canada, Auditor General 1999), but the looser structures that are possible when tight contractual arrangements are not dominant has provided the necessary flexibility for innovation.

Third, there must be an appropriate capacity for central agencies to exercise leverage in the pursuit of enhanced performance throughout the entire government. The autonomy of line organizations to apply corporate values in ways that meet the requirements of their different purposes and tasks, and thus to experiment with different approaches in order to find the best practices in these respects, cannot be regarded as sufficient to ensure organizational learning. A balance is required not only because these line organizations are but parts of a larger enterprise, but also because organizational learning demands a context within which there is a continual monitoring, review and challenge function.

The use of the politicization paradigm in these respects is invariably one with little balance; the concentration of power, especially for issues of policy direction, simply imposes alternative policies. The use of the privatization paradigm approaches this requirement for continuous improvement primarily by ways of centrally imposed compulsory tendering or market-testing policies and mandatory contracting out of certain kinds of services. These approaches necessarily run counter to devolved management authority to line organizations, and have inevitably given rise to the charge that central agencies have instituted yet another way to micro-manage line managers. The performance measurement paradigm has resulted in an extensive reliance on service standards, benchmarking and best practice schemes. These schemes are much less intrusive, but only to the extent that the centre establishes a relevant universe of comparable organizations for service standards, benchmarking and best practice criteria, and engages in meaningful dialogue with line managers concerning the obstacles and possibilities of service improvements.

The professional public service paradigm gives primacy to this last requirement in recognition of the need for corporate and collaborative approaches to service improvement, including the service of policy advice to the political executive. This approach is thus necessarily hugely dependent on a management framework that continuously seeks to ascertain the extent to which and ways by which the exercise of central authority over administrative systems impedes or fosters continuous organizational learning. It acknowledges that central controls over line organizations can have perverse consequences. Yet it also acknowledges that central authority can support line management in the pursuit of organizational learning if it serves to promote those objectives that need to be secured through administrative designs and practices, including public service values that distinguish public administration as the implementation of law and public policy.

Public management under this paradigm requires two things. The first is the need to accept that "policy" and "administration" must ultimately be managed in a seamless way, whatever the practical division of roles and responsibilities required in complex organizations. The second, and more challenging, is the need to reframe the distinction between "central agencies" and "line organizations" from a corporate, or whole-of-government, public service perspective.

In doing so, the public service generally must come to a better understanding of the need for "control" in its various dimensions, and thus the need for control systems throughout the organizational structures of the public service, as a critical core requirement of good, not bad, public management (Barrett 1999). A major responsibility of central agencies is to ensure, and to provide assurance, that these systems are in place. This does not require that the centre impose them, let alone do so in a one-size-fits-all manner, but at times direct control will invariably be required to attend to deficiencies.

At the same time, the dialectics of accountability for performance requires that there be a greater recognition of the legitimate role and responsibility of the centre to challenge the performance of line organizations (Aucoin and Heintzman 2000). This challenge function is inherent in the professional public service paradigm. It assumes that all public servants, and not only those at the centre, have a corporate obligation to continuously improve public services and, furthermore, that the central means to foster adherence to this obligation is to be subject to challenge by one's peers in the profession. In Canada, this is increasingly acknowledged in the way that the performance of deputy ministers is subject to peer review. The challenge function of the centre is merely an extension of this logic. To accomplish this, the traditional perception of the dichotomy between central agencies and line organizations must be overcome. In order to extend this logic to the corporate management of the public service writ large, greater efforts to organize and operate the "centre" in ways that bring line managers, and not just deputies, into the central processes of public management are required. On a number of fronts, recent Canadian government experience demonstrates movement in this direction.

The third dimension concerns the use of *learning networks*. These are the organized means whereby public servants learn through their connections with other officials in their organization, in other organizations within their government, in other governments, in international organizations or with experts outside of government (Bakvis 2000). At times these networks are formal governmental learning undertakings, as in the case of committees or task forces to research and study corporate policy or administrative issues.

These kinds of networks serve critical learning purposes. They cut across organizational boundaries by joining officials from various programs and/or by bringing together officials from various functional specialties. They also connect officials at different levels in the organizational hierarchy. They enable officials to add value by addressing issues that are not the sole prerogative of a single organization or functional specialty. In these ways they are "virtual organizations"; they are real, and they do real work, but they belong outside the realm of official organizational charts and formal designs respecting official responsibilities.

Equally important from the perspective of learning are those networks that enable officials to learn from one another without necessarily having an immediate or direct connection to their official duties and tasks. These are the disciplinary, professional and specialist networks that officials "join" on a permanent or ad hoc basis in order to engage in intelligence gathering, discussion and dialogue respecting their experiences and those of others. Some of these are formal organizations; some are informal. Increasingly, networks are ad hoc and temporary. Whatever their status, they often have a character that makes them a critically important part of officials' participation in the profession of public management. They have become, to use the language of academe, the "invisible colleges" of the profession within which members engage in learning through the generation, dissemination and discussion of knowledge.

In the realm of professional public service, this increasingly means comparative learning, that is, learning from their counterparts in other parts of their government, other jurisdictions (domestic and foreign), or private sector organizations. These networks acknowledge the fact that learning with respect to practical affairs must always be in some sense "comparative"; one learns best by extending the universe of practical experience. For public servants, this means looking to the experiences of other organizations inside and outside their own location. The further the reach, the greater the possibility of finding a wide variety of experiences. In practical affairs, one cannot usually merely copy what has been done elsewhere, even in one's own government, let alone in other domestic or foreign governments or private organizations, given the wide variety of different contexts and cultures as well as variations in missions and priorities. However, the constancy of change increasingly means that the experiences of others that at one time may have seemed less relevant, or not relevant at all, may become relevant as changes are contemplated or forced on one's organization. Participation in networks, as learning opportunities, thus constitutes a crucial dimension of a professional public service that seeks to be abreast of practices and learning elsewhere in anticipation of change requiring innovation.

To the extent that a public service organization, or a public service as a whole, does not encourage and enable its members to participate in networks, broadly defined, it diminishes its learning capacity; it decreases its engagement in the "knowledge loop." At a time when organizations generally are undergoing extensive change, including a great deal of experimenting and exploration of new ways of doing things, organizations that are not in the knowledge loop place themselves in an obvious disadvantage in managing change. They then become subject to various learning dysfunctions, including mindlessly copying others, misreading or misunderstanding developments elsewhere, or reinventing the wheel but without the benefits of the knowledge generated by the experiences of others. And, of course, their members run down their knowledge capital.

Networks of various kinds abound. And, other things being equal, invariably some are of low, or lower, value than others in contributing to the ideal of a learning organization. Yet since time and resources are invested in them, organizations need to have a handle on the extent to which their investments are worthwhile and, as well, the extent to which their investments may not be sufficient. Fortunately, the Internet and other new communications technologies now diminish some of these costs, but not all of them. However, a learning organization will regard these costs as worthwhile investments in knowledge that is mission critical. Moreover, the more professional the organization, the more that decisions on investing time and resources must be partly decentralized.

Organizational Processes and Organizational Learning

The practice of public management in Canada has evolved considerably over the past several decades. Yet we have continued a tradition, begun most explicitly in the 1960s, of attempting to use systematic approaches that advance the capacity of the public service to provide policy advice, manage resources and administer public services in ways that develop and apply knowledge to the central tasks of government.

This evolution has been characterized, as noted, by fits and starts. To take but one example, the policy and budget decision-making process has gone from a "planning, programming and budgeting system" to a "policy and expenditure management system" and, most recently, to a "business planning" cum "expenditure management system." Throughout this evolution, a great deal actually remained constant, notwithstanding the variations in formalized procedures and the different emphases in each. And, as some would argue (Savoie 1999), the basic dynamics and conundrums remain essentially the same.

Perhaps this ought not to surprise us. And perhaps it does not matter very much. What matters is whether we have advanced the capacity of the public service to develop and bring knowledge to the planning process for policy formulation and budgeting. In this regard, what matters is whether there has been a sufficient commitment to learning and a sufficient willingness to advise on what has been learned. The fact that the political dynamics of policy and budget decision-making will not always conform to prescribed process, at least not on the insistence of the public service itself, is beside the point. To the degree that these processes are designed on the recommendations of the public service, on the other hand, there is the question of whether they are based on a solid foundation of knowledge respecting the likely behaviour of political decision-makers under certain conditions. Processes that ignore or downplay known political dynamics in public management are a recipe for failure and disappointment.

This is but one example. Similar accounts could be given for the other central processes of public management – organizational design, coordinating and controlling, financial and human resource management, contract management, program management, evaluation and audit, and reporting and accounting. In each of these areas there have been efforts to become more knowledgeable and to apply knowledge, even though the record here, as in the case above, is everywhere replete with twists and turns, starts and stops, progress and reversals.

The central issue is whether we have invested sufficiently in the capacity of the public service to perform its principal core administrative functions, each of which requires that it develop and apply knowledge if it is to perform as a professional public service, that is, as a learning organization. It is not that we do not know what these functions are; we do, even though they are sometimes described in slightly different ways. A corollary is whether we have the required resources, systems and networks in place to facilitate the effective deployment of this capacity in the ongoing processes of public management.

Recent experience is instructive here on both counts. For example, the Policy Research Initiative emerged as a result of a concern that the policy research capacity of the federal public service needed to be strengthened, even rebuilt. The Modern Comptrollership and Risk Management initiatives also sought to address capacity issues. The La Relève public service renewal program was similar in its intent. And, the Citizen Centred Service Delivery/Service Canada as well as the Improved Reporting to Parliament/Managing for Results initiatives are predicated on the assumption that there needs to be an enhanced capacity on the part of the public service to function as a learning organization. At the same time, the successful pursuit of these initiatives is a tall order for a public service that is under severe stress. In Canada, as elsewhere, governments have failed to attend to the health and vitality of their public services, as institutional assets for good governance. In their efforts to downsize, rationalize, reengineer and restructure the state apparatus in order to cope with the exigencies of fiscal imperatives, reassert the supremacy of elected political officials, and reinvent government to make it more responsive to political officials and/or citizens, a price has been paid. The recent trauma experienced by Human Resources Development Canada is but one illustration of the consequences that can arise when an organization is subject to almost all these developments in short order.

A number of scholars have warned about the prospects or realities of declining capacity (Weller, Bakvis and Rhodes 1997; Gow 1997). There is also an increasing number of government studies and surveys that help to identify the issues (for example, Duxbury, Dyke and Lam 1999; Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat 1999). In addition, there are several recent audits by the Auditor General of Canada that, at least in part, implicitly point to issues of capacity, especially respecting systems issues. Yet, more empirical research is required to tackle the imperative of enhancing the capacity of the public service as a learning organization. Interestingly, a similar conclusion is reached with respect to organizational learning in the private sector, notwithstanding the proliferation of literature on this subject (Easterby-Smith 1997).

A RESEARCH PROGRAM

There are at least three ways that the issue of maintaining the momentum of public service reform by focusing on the enhancement of the public service as a learning organization could be tackled. First, we could research a number of cases where organizational learning is deemed to have been undertaken in a search for lessons to be learned. Second, we could examine the basic processes of public management in an effort to ascertain the extent and how learning is promoted or impeded in the ways that public servants and their organizations do their work. Here the objective would be to identify those practices that promote learning and those that have either impeded progress in this respect or have failed to achieve this objective. Or, third, we could attempt to develop a management tool to enable organizations, as well as the government

as a whole, to assess and evaluate their record in seeking to perform as a learning organization. The objective would be to enable managers themselves to identify gaps, shortcomings and impediments as the empirical foundation for their taking steps to improve the performance of their organizations on whatever fronts are considered necessary.

Case Studies

The government has taken a number of initiatives in recent years to improve performance. Although it is not suggested that the list below is exhaustive, it is an attempt to identify cases of reform that might be researched to identify lessons learned in fostering reform and/or best practices. These cases are as follows:

> **!** the Policy Research Initiative;
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> **!** the Citizen-Centred Service Delivery Network/Service Canada initiatives;
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> **!** the Improved Reporting to Parliament/Managing for Results initiatives;
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> **!** the Modern Comprollership initiative;
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> **!** the Risk Management initiative;
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> **!** the Values and Ethics initiative;
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> **!** the La Relève initiative;
>
> **!** the Inclusive Public Service initiative; and,
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> **!** the Service Agencies initiative.

Each of these initiatives addresses one or more of the dimensions that have been identified as critical to the enhancement of the public service as a learning organization.

Case studies of these initiatives, focused on lessons learned and best practices identified, could constitute an empirical foundation for thinking about what actions are required to maintain the momentum of public service reform. Some, if not all of them, would overlap with the second approach, as outlined below. But, this approach would have the advantage of focusing explicitly on cases of planned or strategic organizational change where the objective of enhancing organizational learning was at least one important factor in change.

Process Studies

A second approach would be to examine the basic processes of public management on the assumption that progress will be achieved in promoting the ideal of learning organizations only to the extent that the ways that public servants do their work actually contributes to this ideal. As previously noted, this assumption rests on the premise that the requirements of a learning organization must be embedded in the central processes of public management, lest they be deemed to be simply add-ons unconnected to the "real" work of an organization. The processes that would be examined include the following:

- policy/program planning;
- business planning;
- financial management;
- human resource management;
- information management;
- program/service delivery management;
- contracting/partnership management; and,
- portfolio management.

By virtue of the fact that this approach would encompass a very broad spectrum of the work of the public service, to say the least, it would be necessary to utilize as much as possible the work already done or ongoing within the government. For this reason, we would need to consider using teams of specialists from within the public service, assisted by researchers, to assess the recent experience and the initiatives in place through the lens of a learning organization model.

A Management Tool

A third approach would be to work on the development of a management tool. The advantage of this approach is that it would force us to develop an explicit model of the learning organization in its several dimensions and in respect to the crucial issues of measuring these dimensions. It would also require us to get widespread agreement on the credibility of the model as the basis for a management tool. It could build on and perhaps link to other initiatives to develop management tools to assess and promote performance, such as the tools developed for citizen-centred service delivery and an inclusive public service. And, if we were to develop such a tool, it could be used for the dual purpose of helping managers to improve performance in their organizations, or parts thereof, and of holding managers accountable for progress towards improved performance. At the very least, such an exercise would require a disciplined process

for thinking through the logic of the ideal of a learning organization as a strategic objective of management that is coherent and feasible.

I propose that we adopt the third approach as the primary approach, for the two following reasons.

First, we need to develop a model of a learning organization if we are to continue to speak about the importance of this ideal as central to maintaining momentum for public service reform. A practical model need not (and presumably would or could not) constitute a full-fledged "theory" of the learning organization, or organizational learning, and in this sense would always be a work-in-progress. But, it is incumbent on us to make as explicit as possible what we consider to be the most critical factors that contribute to the ideal and which managers can be expected to act on in the normal course of managing their organizations, programs, people and resources. This would thus take us beyond what invariably might be merely implicit in the analyses and findings of case studies or process studies. Moreover, the attempt to develop such a model would be a useful exercise even if we proceeded with one or both of the other approaches. A model would give us both a greater sense of what needed to be the foci of these studies and perhaps even a set of benchmarks to use in these studies.

Second, the research program is best advanced as an action-oriented program when we put in place a research process that makes the best possible use of public servants. The CCMD research program on citizen-centred service delivery was a model in this regard and I propose that we emulate it as much as possible in this part of the research program. What we need, accordingly, is a network of interested public servants and academics as well as a research staff at CCMD to work on the development of a model and a management tool. To the extent possible, this should be supported by a few select studies focused on the experiences we can find that best illustrate or approximate a learning organization in action. What should be studied in this regard should be left to a subsequent time when an initial network has been established.

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