PERSPECTIVES
ON SOCIAL
INCLUSION

# *Social Inclusion, Anti-Racism and Democratic Citizenship*

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# About the Laidlaw Foundation

The Laidlaw Foundation is a private, public-interest foundation that uses its human and financial resources in innovative ways to strengthen civic engagement and social cohesion. The Foundation uses its capital to better the environments and fulfill the capacities of children and youth, to enhance the opportunities for human development and creativity and to sustain healthy communities and ecosystems.

The Foundation supports a diverse portfolio of innovative and often unconventional projects in three program areas: in the arts, in the environment and improving the life prospects for children, youth and families.

Working for social inclusion is a theme that underlies much of the Foundation's activities. The key words in the Foundation's mission — human development, sustainable communities and ecosystems — imply that achievement will rely on the enhancement of capacity and capability. Not only is social inclusion being developed as an emerging funding stream, it is an embedded Laidlaw Foundation value, both structurally and programmatically.

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# *Foreword:*

## The Laidlaw Foundation's Perspective on Social Inclusion

## The context for social inclusion

Children have risen to the top of government agendas at various times over the past decade, only to fall again whenever there is an economic downturn, a budget deficit, a federal-provincial relations crisis or, most recently, a concern over terrorism and national security. While there have been important achievements in public policy in the past 5 to 10 years, there has not been a sustained government commitment to children nor a significant improvement in the well-being of children and families. In fact, in many areas, children and families have lost ground and social exclusion is emerging as a major issue in Canada. Examples abound and include these facts.

- the over-representation of racial minority families and children among those living in poverty in large cities, and the denial of access to many services by immigrant and refugee families;

- the 43% increase in the number of children in poverty in Canada since 1989, the 130% increase in the number of children in homeless shelters in Toronto, as well as the persistence of one of the highest youth incarceration rates among Commonwealth countries;

- the exclusion of children with disabilities from public policy frameworks (e.g. the National Children's Agenda), from definitions of 'healthy' child development and, all too often, from community life.

These situations provide the context for the Laidlaw Foundation's interest in social inclusion. The Foundation's Children's Agenda program first began exploring social inclusion in 2000 as a way to re-focus child and family policy by:

- re-framing the debate about poverty, vulnerability and the well-being of children in order to highlight the social dimensions of poverty (i.e. the inability to participate fully in the community)

- linking poverty and economic vulnerability with other sources of exclusion such as racism, disability, rejection of difference and historic oppression

- finding common ground among those concerned about the well-being of families with children to help generate greater public and political will to act.

The Foundation commissioned a series of working papers to examine social inclusion from a number of perspectives. Although the authors approach the topic from different starting points and emphasize different aspects of exclusion and inclusion, there are important common threads and conclusions. The working papers draw attention to the new realities and new understandings that must be brought to bear on the development of social policy and the creation of a just and healthy society.

These are:

- Whether the source of exclusion is poverty, racism, fear of differences or lack of political clout, the consequences are the same: a lack of recognition and acceptance; powerlessness and 'voicelessness'; economic vulnerability; and, diminished life experiences and limited life prospects. For society as a whole, the social exclusion of individuals and groups can become a major threat to social cohesion and economic prosperity.

- A rights-based approach is inadequate to address the personal and systemic exclusions experienced by children and adults. People with disabilities are leading the way in calling for approaches based on social inclusion and valued recognition to deliver what human rights claims alone cannot.

- Diversity and difference, whether on the basis of race, disability, religion, culture or gender, must be recognized and valued.

The 'one size fits all approach' is no longer acceptable and has never been effective in advancing the well-being of children and families.

- Public policy must be more closely linked to the lived experiences of children and families, both in terms of the actual programs and in terms of the process for arriving at those policies and programs. This is one of the reasons for the growing focus on cities and communities, as places where inclusion and exclusion happen.

- Universal programs and policies that serve all children and families generally provide a stronger foundation for improving well-being than residual, targeted or segregated approaches. The research and anecdotal evidence for this claim is mounting from the education, child development and population health sectors.

## Understanding social inclusion

Social exclusion emerged as an important policy concept in Europe in the 1980s in response to the growing social divides that resulted from new labour market conditions and the inadequacy of existing social welfare provisions to meet the changing needs of more diverse populations. Social inclusion is not, however, just a response to exclusion.

Although many of the working papers use social exclusion as the starting point for their discussions, they share with us the view that social inclusion has value on its own as both a process and a goal. Social inclusion is about making sure that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and

contributing members of society. It is, therefore, a normative (value based) concept - a way of raising the bar and understanding where we want to be and how to get there.

Social inclusion reflects a proactive, human development approach to social well-being that calls for more than the removal of barriers or risks. It requires investments and action to bring about the conditions for inclusion, as the population health and international human development movements have taught us.

Recognizing the importance of difference and diversity has become central to new under-

standings of identity at both a national and community level. Social inclusion goes one step further: it calls for a validation and recognition of diversity as well as a recognition of the commonality of lived experiences and the shared aspirations among people, particularly evident among families with children.

This strongly suggests that social inclusion extends beyond bringing the 'outsiders' in, or notions of the periphery versus the centre. It is about closing physical, social and economic distances separating people, rather than only about eliminating boundaries or barriers between *us* and *them.*

# The cornerstones of social inclusion

The working papers process revealed that social inclusion is a complex and challenging concept that cannot be reduced to only one dimension or meaning. The working papers, together with several other initiatives the Foundation sponsored as part of its exploration of social inclusion , have helped us to identify five critical dimensions, or cornerstones, of social inclusion:

**Valued recognition–** Conferring recognition and respect on individuals and groups. This includes recognizing the differences in children's development and, therefore, not equating disability with pathology; supporting community schools that are sensitive to cultural and gender differences; and extending the notion to recognizing common worth through universal programs such as health care.

**Human development –** Nurturing the talents, skills, capacities and choices of children and adults to live a life they value and to make a contribution both they and others find worthwhile. Examples include: learning and developmental opportunities for all children and adults; community child care and recreation programs for children that are growth-promoting and challenging rather than merely custodial.

**Involvement and engagement –** Having the right and the necessary support to make/be involved in decisions affecting oneself, family and community, and to be engaged in community life. Examples include: youth engagement and control of services for youth; parental input into school curriculum or placement decisions affecting their child; citizen engagement in municipal policy decisions; and political participation.

**Proximity –** Sharing physical and social spaces to provide opportunities for interactions, if desired, and to reduce social distances between people. This includes shared public spaces such as parks and libraries; mixed income neighbourhoods and housing; and integrated schools and classrooms.

**Material well being –** Having the material resources to allow children and their parents to participate fully in community life. This includes being safely and securely housed and having an adequate income.

## Next steps: Building inclusive cities and communities

Over the next three years, the Children's Agenda program of the Laidlaw Foundation will focus on *Building inclusive cities and communities.* The importance of cities and communities is becoming increasingly recognized because the well-being of children and families is closely tied to where they live, the quality of their neighbourhoods and cities, and the 'social commons' where people interact and share experiences.

The Laidlaw Foundation's vision of a socially inclusive society is grounded in an international movement that aims to advance the well-being of people by improving the health of cities and communities. Realizing this vision is a long-term project to ensure that all members of society participate as equally valued and respected citizens. It is an agenda based on the premise that for our society to be just, healthy and secure, it requires the inclusion of all.

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## Acknowledgements

*This series is dedicated to the memory of
Dr. Jennifer Keck who died on June 12, 2002
after a long battle with cancer.*

*Jennifer was a key member of the editorial committee,
an insightful and passionate reviewer of the working papers,
and an unwavering advocate for
social justice and the social inclusion of all people.*

# Social Inclusion, Anti-Racism and Democratic Citizenship

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## Introduction

The utility of the concept social inclusion will depend on the extent and degree to which it successfully deals with social exclusion and the extent to which it promotes social cohesion in a society that is fractured along numerous fault lines. John Veit-Wilson distinguishes between weak versions of the social exclusion discourse which focus on changing the excluded and integrating them into society, and stronger versions of the discourse which focus on power relations between the excluded and those doing the excluding (Veit-Wilson 1998, 45). Similarly it is important to distinguish between weak and strong versions of the social inclusion discourse. The former focus simply on integration of the excluded (via a state commitment to multiculturalism), while the latter take a structural approach that focuses on historical processes that continually reproduce oppression, discrimination and exclusion. Strong approaches to the social inclusion discourse therefore are intimately concerned with rights, citizenship and restructured relations between racialized communities and the institutions of the dominant society. The focus is on valued recognition and valued participation by those excluded from full participation in society and the benefits of society.

Those who recognize the salience of social exclusion as an explanatory tool need to be cognizant of one possible unintended consequence of the analysis – the re-victimization and marginalization of the excluded. Individuals and groups who are excluded on the basis of race (or other socially constructed criteria) need to be included both in the discussions about their social conditions of existence and in the debate about the eradication of exclusion. The various manifestations of racism as important expressions of social exclusion need to be tabled before there can be a meaningful and constructive discussion of social inclusion. Thus for social inclusion to matter, for it to resonate, it must provide space for a discussion of oppression and discrimination. Social inclusion has to take its rightful place not along a continuum (from exclusion to inclusion), but as emerging out of a thorough analysis of exclusion. It has to simultaneously transcend the limits of essentialism,[1] critique hierarchies of oppression and promote a transformative agenda that links together the various, often disparate struggles against oppression, inequality and injustice. And the glue that would bind these social movements together is a kind of inclusion that would lead to the creation of a more just and equitable society. In this conceptualization, social inclusion can provide a coherent critique of the multiple forms of social injustices and the concomitant institutional policies and practices. The first section of this paper will explore the relationship between social exclusion and racial exclusion and identify and locate racism as a form of social exclusion. The second section of the paper will assess state responses to racism

in the form of multiculturalism and identify the limits and shortcomings of multiculturalism as public policy using the lens of social inclusion and the notion of democratic citizenship. The third section of the paper will argue that a discourse on social inclusion is more compelling than one on exclusion precisely because it posits a radical alternative to racial

exclusion and is a viable political and public policy response to the multiple manifestations of exclusion. This section will also identify both the public policy implications of a commitment to anti-racist social inclusion and the building blocks necessary to creating an inclusive society from an anti-racist perspective.

## Racism as Social Exclusion

In this section the following argument will be constructed: simply put, racism is a form of social exclusion, and racial discrimination in all its forms and manifestations is the process by which that exclusion occurs.[2] In order to fully unpack this argument, it is necessary to first analyze how the term "social exclusion" is used in contemporary discourse and then link it to a broader discussion of racism, racial discrimination and racialized poverty.

Walker and Walker define *social exclusion* as "… a comprehensive formulation, which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society. Social exclusion may therefore be seen as the denial (non-realization) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship" (Walker and Walker 1997, 8).  Gore notes that social exclusion has come to refer to the "process of social disintegration", a "rupture" in the relationship between the individual and society which resulted from structural changes in the economy and seriously impeded the mobility and integration into the labour market of younger workers and created long-term unemployment for unskilled workers and immigrant workers. This in turn has resulted in increased social problems and a tearing of the social fabric – increased homelessness,

increased social tensions and periodic violence. Social exclusion as rupture is linked to Silver's solidarity paradigm – one of three paradigms she uses to link exclusion, citizenship and social integration (Silver 1995, 62).

For many, including Walker and Walker, the opposite of exclusion is integration - into the labour market or more generally into a broader conception of citizenship with an interlocking set of reciprocal rights and obligations (Byrne 1999, 2; Gore 1995, 2). By 1989, the *European Economic Community* (EEC) began to link social exclusion with inadequate realization of social rights. In 1990 the *European Observatory on National Policies for Combating Social Exclusion* was established to look at "the basic rights of citizenship to a basic standard of living and to participation in major social and economic opportunities in society" (Room as cited in Gore 1995, 2). Room notes that while poverty is focused on "distributional issues", notions of social exclusion "… focus primarily on relational issues, in other words inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power" (Room 1995, 5). The link between social exclusion and citizenship then hinges for example, on the degree to which individuals from racialized and marginalized communities encounter structural and systemic barriers and are denied or restricted from participating in society. Duffy similarly notes that social exclu-

sion refers to "the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life, and, in some characterizations, alienation and distance from the mainstream society" (Duffy, cited by Barry 1998, 2).

This concept of social exclusion is highly compelling because it speaks the language of oppression and enables the marginalized and the victimized to give voice and expression to the way in which they experience globalization, the way in which they experience market forces and the way in which they experience liberal democratic society. The concept of social exclusion resonates with many including those who (i) are denied access to the valued goods and services in society because of their race, gender, religion, disability, etc.; (ii) lack adequate resources to be effective, contributing members of society; and (iii) are not recognized as full and equal participants in society. The roots of exclusion are deep, historical and indeed are continually reproduced in both old and new ways in contemporary society (Freiler 2001, 13). David Byrne argues that in the post-industrial developed world, "exclusion is a crucial contemporary form of exploitation, and … indeed there is nothing new about it" (Byrne 1999, 57). For him the battle against exclusion is a "battle against exploitation" (Byrne 1999, 57). This is reductionist for it asserts the primacy of class without looking at other forms of oppression and the related forms of exclusions and marginalization.  The struggle against class exploitation is not coterminous with the struggles against racial oppression and racial discrimination. What is required is a subtle, more nuanced approach that understands the specificity of racism as a form of social exclusion and does not subsume it under the guise of exploitation.

Without undertaking an analysis of the "political economy of exclusion", the attraction of the current discourse is that it focuses attention on social exclusion as failure to integrate into the labour market. But the contemporary discourse on social exclusion is too narrowly focused on poverty and integration into the paid labour market, and it potentially obscures a bigger debate about exploitation and the extent to which racism creates a dual labour market that leads to the super-exploitation of workers of colour. Within the European arena this could include a more systematic analysis of the super-exploitation of "guest workers" and the concomitant denial of certain rights. In the North American arena this could include an analysis of the way in which formal accreditation processes restrict access to certain trades and professions for newcomers to Canada. It could also include an analysis of the way in which the delays associated with seeking asylum in Canada create an underground economy in which asylum seekers end up working at low-paid, marginalized and insecure jobs. Broadening out the analysis of social exclusion to include the discourse on racism and conversely broadening out the concept of social inclusion to embrace an anti-racism discourse then both requires an analysis of race and racism in contemporary society.

Race is usually associated with somatic differences (such as skin colour) that distinguish the various groups which comprise the human species.[3]  The concept of race is a social construct that has no empirical grounding and no scientific merit (Cox 1948; Banton 1979; Anderson and Freideres 1981: Dreidger 1989). Racism is both an ideology and a set of practices. As an ideology racism seeks to both legitimate the inequality faced by racialized groups and proclaim the superiority of the racial group that constitutes the status quo.[4]  Racism also consists of a set of mechanisms to ensure socio-political domination over a racial group (or groups). And racism involves discriminatory practices which work to constantly exclude, marginalize and disadvantage the subordinate racialized groups and reproduce the power,

privilege and domination of the superordinate racialized group (Elliott and Fleras 1992, 335; Saloojee 1996, 2). Here it is also important to identify another term that is used in this paper – "racialization" which refers to the process of attributing meaning to somatic differences.[5] The process of attaching meaning or signification leads to policies and practices of exclusion and inclusion whereby "…collective identities are produced and social inequalities are structured" (Kalbach and Kalbach 2000, 29).

The United Nations has provided an exceptionally well thought out, all-encompassing definition of racial discrimination:

> *1. In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life* (United Nations, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, Article 1).

From this vantage point, racial discrimination is undoubtedly a form of social exclusion, albeit one that has race as a social construct, at the heart of exclusion. Its roots and manifestations however are different when compared to other forms of exclusion. Racism is unequal access to rights, it is unequal assess to the valued goods and services in society, it is about unequal access to the labour market and it extends to all fields of public life. It is about incomplete citizenship, undervalued rights, undervalued recognition and undervalued participation. The study of structured racial inequality, discrimination, rights and privileges hinges on a recognition that in Canadian society, women, racialized individuals and commu-

nities, persons with disabilities and First Nations Aboriginal people who enter the labour market, enter the educational system, and seek goods and services (among other things) will face a structure of opportunities that are mediated by their race, gender, disability, etc. Precisely because of the existence of discrimination and barriers, all people in Canadian society do not start from the same spot, and do not compete on an equal footing with each other.

The study of racial inequality and racial discrimination is a study of racialization – how human differences are structured, imbued with meaning, continually reproduced and used to deny people access to the valued goods and services in society. *Structured racial exclusion is the process by which individuals from the dominant white racialized group in society are better positioned (than are individuals from subordinate racialized and marginalized minority groups) to secure a greater share of society's valued goods, services, rewards and privileges and to use these benefits to reinforce their control over rights opportunities and privileges in society*. Through this process. racial inequality and unequal access to the valued goods and services in society are structured and continually reproduced.

Racial inequality and discrimination are both the product and the confirmation of power imbalances in society; as well, they are a function of structural constraints that are rooted in the fabric of society. These structural constraints operate in such a way as to disadvantage members of racialized minority communities as they access the labour market and as they seek to advance within organizations. Race, ethnic and gender differences and inequalities persist in spite of the widely held assumption that the operation of market forces is blind to these differences between and among humans. The market has been unable to equitably distribute resources, goods and

services in a society where inequality and discrimination are structurally embedded. Equality in society as well as in the workplace has proved to be very difficult to achieve.

Racial discrimination is manifested at the individual, institutional, structural and systemic levels. It can result from ill will or evil motive; it can be blatant and result from deliberate differential treatment or denial of access, or it can result from apparently neutral policies and practices that, regardless of intent, have adverse impacts on racialized individuals and communities. This latter concept of systemic discrimination has been repeatedly tested in human rights cases in Canada. Justice Bertha Wilson while on the Supreme Court of Canada wrote: "I would say then that the discrimination may be described as a distinction, whether intentional or not but based on grounds relating to personal characteristics of the individual or group, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on such individual or group not imposed upon others, or which withholds or limits access to organizations, benefits, and advantages available to other members of society" (Cited by Agocs et al. 1992, 118).

She went on to clarify:

*In determining whether there is discrimination on grounds relating to the personal characteristics of the individual or group, it is important to look not only at the impugned legislation which has created a distinction that violates the right to equality but also to the larger social, political and legal context. McIntyre J. emphasized in Andrews:*

*"For as has been said, a bad law will not be saved merely because it operates equally upon those to whom it has application. Nor will a law necessarily be bad because it makes distinctions."*

*Accordingly, it is only by examining the larger context that a court can determine whether differential treatment results in inequality or whether, contrariwise, it would be identical treatment which would in the particular context result in inequality or foster disadvantage. A finding that there is discrimination will, I think, in most but perhaps not all cases necessarily entail a search for disadvantage that exists apart from and independent of the particular legal distinction being challenged (Cited by Agocs et al. 1992, 118).*

Given the multidimensionality of racism and the multiple manifestations of racial discrimination, providing precise measures of and explicitly quantifying racism has proved problematic (Henry et al. 1995, 49). The indicators of racism and the measures of racism are important as they have significant policy and practice implications. These measures are also complicated by the importance many researchers have rightly attached to the intersection of race, gender, class, disability, etc. Over the years there has developed an extensive body of research which has documented the extent and pervasiveness of racial discrimination in Canadian society. This research seeks to measure racism through a variety of mechanisms, including a study of attitudinal polls, analyzing human rights commission reports, assessing the relationship between race and economic variables (rates of employment, rates of unemployment, distribution across occupational categories, distribution across income categories, etc.), the intersection of race and poverty and race and educational attainment. The challenge of measuring racial discrimination is that it is extremely difficult to measure intentionality, thus the earlier distinctions between intention and effects are critical. Measures of racial discrimination invariably focus on the effects of the discriminatory actions not on the intentions of the perpetra-

tors. While this paper is not about detailing the research on the multiple forms of racism as exclusion, it will nonetheless very briefly summarize recent research that looks at racism and labour participation and racism and poverty. The measures of racism as it is manifested in labour force participation include measuring:

- Rates of employment;

- Rates of unemployment;

- Income differentials;

- Employment segregation.

One of the most pervasive myths is that since members of racialized groups are found in the workforce there is no widespread discrimination to their entry into the labour force. Once they enter the labour force, the argument goes, they encounter the "glass ceiling", an invisible barrier which prohibits their upward mobility within the workplace\organizational hierarchy. It is argued that members of racialized groups progress only up to a certain point beyond which advancement is difficult. Since they encounter a "glass ceiling", they can see the upper echelons of the hierarchy but cannot detect the barriers which prevent their attaining those positions. The assumptions embedded in the "glass ceiling theory" are (i) that members of racialized groups do gain entry to the active labour force, they are hired, they do have a foot in the door; (ii) once hired there is movement up the hierarchy to a certain point; (iii) their retention rate is not a significant human resources problem.

Contrary to these assumptions, the prevalence of prejudice and discrimination in society at large guarantees that many members of racialized minority groups encounter the "steel door" before the glass ceiling. It is the gatekeepers of the steel doors who bar or facilitate entry to employment. Members of racialized minority groups first encounter prejudice and discrimination in the pre-employment stage

and then once in, face other forms of discrimination at the workplace itself. Thus it is important to separate the two levels of discrimination and disadvantage that they face – the first level is in access to employment opportunities and the second level is within organizations after they have secured employment. At the first level, access to employment disadvantage is manifested in a number of areas – differential unemployment and labour force participation rates compared to white able-bodied males, and occupational ghettoization. For those who do secure employment the indices of disadvantage would include, income levels, occupational clustering and ghettoization, upward mobility and promotion rates, distribution across the organizational employment hierarchy, rates of retention (staff turnover rates) and experiences of harassment.[6]

While members of racialized minority groups experience disadvantage and barriers in seeking employment as well as after securing employment, it is important to recognize that these disadvantages are the result of both direct intentional discrimination, and systemic discrimination. When the so-called gatekeepers exercise power to reinforce their prejudices and stereotypical views to the disadvantage of designated group members, then discrimination has occurred. When people are denied access to employment or employment opportunities, when they work in a poisoned work environment, when their advancement within the organization is hindered because of their status as members of racialized groups, then it is clear they are excluded and disadvantaged, and that discrimination has occurred. Recent reports suggest that members of racialized minority groups experience lower rates of employment – 66 per cent compared to 75 per cent for non-racialized minorities (CRRF 2000, 18; Grace-Edward Galabuzi 2000). Concomitantly they experience higher rates of unemployment – based on the 1996 Census data, men in racial-

ized groups had a 13.2 per cent unemployment rate compared to 9.9 per cent for men in general, while women in racialized groups had an unemployment rate of 15.3 per cent compared to 9.4 per cent for other women (CRRF 2000, 19). There is also strong evidence of a labour market, which is split into two primary segments. One is well paying, has a wide distribution of occupations, relatively high rates of unionization and reasonably good working conditions and high rates of employment. The other is characterized by less favourable rates of pay, types of work and working conditions, little job security and low rates of unionization and higher rates of unemployment. This split intersects with race to create a split labour market that is highly stratified by race and by gender. This is a situation where workers from racialized groups are over-represented in low-end jobs and under- represented in highly paid employment. [7]

The split labour market along with other factors translates into significant income disparities between racialized group members and other Canadians. In 1998 racialized Canadians earned an average of $14,507 compared to $20,517 for non-racialized Canadians. This was tantamount to a 28 per cent gap in median income before taxes and a 25 per cent gap in median income after taxes. Andrew Jackson made an important distinction between racialized Canadians born in Canada and those who were foreign born. Analyzing Statistics Canada data from 1995, Jackson found that members of racialized groups who were immigrants and who were fully employed for over a year were earning $32,000 per year compared to $38,000 for their Canadian counterparts (Jackson 2001, 7). More recently Jeffrey Reitz assessed 1996 Census data and concluded that immigrant workers in Canada lost $15 billion in earnings because of a "brain waste" – the discounting and undervaluing of both the education, professional training and the experience

of immigrants prior to coming to Canada. Underutilizing the skills of skilled immigrants cost them $2.4 billion in lost wages, while undervaluing their skills (by paying them less than their Canadian born counterparts) cost immigrant workers $12.6 billion. Also, white immigrants reported less pay inequities than immigrants of colour (Gorrie 2002, A23).

Just over ten years ago, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship released its report on the need for employment equity in Ontario. In assessing the data at that point, the Ministry concluded that entrants to the labour force from racialized groups faced a number of barriers to employment including:

- Blatantly overt discriminatory hiring policies;

- Job requirements that have nothing to do with what is needed to perform the job;

- An unfair assessment of qualifications and work experience from abroad;

- Invisible barriers such as biases, stereotyping and discrimination based on a person's colour, rather than an assessment of a person based on his/her actual skills or performance;

- The vicious cycle of lower expectations leading to lower achievement;

- A hostile/poisoned work environment caused by racial jokes, abusive slurs and, on occasion, physical abuse (Office of the Employment Equity Commissioner, Ministry of Citizenship 1991, 9).

The barriers which create unequal access to the labour market, the glass ceiling which significantly inhibits promotion to higher skilled better paying jobs and the reality of a split labour market over-determined by race all contribute to another significant phenomenon – the racialization of poverty. The data are very stark: [8]

- The 1996 Census revealed an overall poverty rate in Canada of 21per cent (pre- tax LICO measure). For members of racialized groups (70 per cent of whom were foreign born) the poverty rate was 38 per cent. For those who immigrated to Canada prior to 1986 the rate was less than 20 per cent, for the post-1986 to 1990 group the rate was 35 per cent and for those who arrived between 1991 and 1996 the poverty rate was 52 per cent.

- Family poverty rates demonstrate a similar pattern – 19 per cent for racialized groups and 10.4 per cent for non-racialized groups.

- Poverty among children from racialized groups is 45 per cent compared to 26 per cent for all children living in Canada.

- In Canada's urban centres as a whole racialized group members account for 21 per cent of the population and 33 per cent of the urban poor. The Canadian Council on Social Development found that in Vancouver, Markham, Richmond Hill, Toronto and Mississauga over 50 per cent of the poor are racialized group members.

- The Ornstein Report on Ethno-Racial Inequality in Toronto found that "African, Black and Caribbean ethno-racial groups" experience much more poverty and have family incomes significantly below the Toronto average. The percentages of families with incomes below the LICO is 47.6 per cent, 48.7 per cent and 40.5 per cent respectively. For groups from Africa, the situation is much more devastating. The figures for Ethiopians, Ghanaians, Somalis and "other African nations" are 69.7 per cent, 87.3 per cent, 62.7 per cent and 52.2 per cent. Ornstein also found that 28.7 per

cent of Indian families and over 50 per cent of the Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Tamil families were below the poverty line. For Central Americans and South Americans the figures were 51.6 per cent and 40.2 per cent respectively (Ornstein 2000, 112-115).

- Approximately 40 per cent of foreign born members of racialized groups who had less than a high school education were among the poorest 20 per cent of Canadians.

- Twenty per cent of foreign born members of racialized groups with a university education were also found in the group of the poorest 20 per cent of Canadians.

- The Canadian Council on Social Development found that despite the economic recovery of the 1990s poverty among recent immigrants as a group (75 per cent of whom are members of racialized minorities), was 27 per cent in 1998 compared to 13 per cent among the rest of the Canadian population. "Unfortunately, the situation of recent immigrants compared to other Canadians has worsened considerably" the report concluded (Carey 2002, A1).

Just being in the labour force and seeking employment therefore is not enough for members of racialized groups. Often they encounter prejudice and discrimination which deny them employment opportunities or deny them access to skilled and more highly valued employment. The results of these attitudes and structural barriers are that they face the prospect of higher unemployment rates, occupational ghettoization, lower earning power, higher rates of impoverishment and if they repeatedly encounter discriminatory barriers they eventually give up seeking employment entirely. Thus, the intersection of race and poverty

requires a systematic discussion of "racialized poverty". The intersection of labour market exclusion and race requires a systematic discussion of racial exclusion which exacerbates the general effects of exclusion. Labour market inclusion therefore is not the only answer to poverty eradication, nor is it the only answer to labour market exclusion which results from racial discrimination.

Clearly, exclusion in general and racial exclusion in particular, result in economic, social, political and cultural disadvantage. Those who are included have access to valued goods and services in society while those who are excluded do not. In turn, those who are disadvantaged, marginalized and "othered" in society do not have access to valued goods and services and are consequently excluded. There is therefore a mutually reinforcing relationship between exclusion and disadvantage and it is necessary to both unpack that relationship and to address each of its multiple manifestations in order to break what I would call the "vicious cycle of exclusion and disadvantage". The answer to this lies within a political struggle which embraces an inclusionary solidarity movement.

# Social Inclusion and Democratic Citizenship: Understanding the Limits of Multiculturalism

Identity formation and social cohesion of racialized communities and immigrant communities is a complex response to many factors. Their respective citizenship claims are intimately linked to making equality claims and to ensuring their rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter are not eroded. In a country like Canada, these citizenship claims are in no small measure mediated by the histories of immigrants in the sending countries, the state in the host country and its multicultural practices, and they are also mediated by the reality of discrimination and exclusion. Discrimination undermines citizenship and erodes a person's ability to develop his/her talents and capacities. This dual mediation is reflected in the two phases of multiculturalism in Canada. Through an official policy of multiculturalism, the state in Canada has attempted to deal with racial discrimination and significantly determine the nature of state/minority relations within a liberal tradition that promotes equality and encourages group social cohesion and social inclusion.

In the narrow sense, citizenship is exclusionary. It is about who is a citizen of a nation state and what bundle of rights that citizen can exercise. It is about what that citizen is entitled to as a member of the nation state. In the realm of formal equality, the laws, the constitutions and the human rights codes proclaim the equality of all citizens. In this realm, it is just that citizens should be equally entitled to certain rights typically associated with a democracy – the right to vote, to freedom of association, freedom of religion, etc.

Social inclusion forces the discourse beyond the realm of formal equality and into the realm of substantive equality which is characterized by challenges to discrimination, exclusion and inequality. Social inclusion begins from the premise that it is democratic citizenship that is at risk when a society fails to develop the talents and capacities of all its members. The move to social inclusion is eroded when the rights of minorities are not respected and accommodated and minorities feel "othered". For social inclusion, there is no

contradiction between democratic citizenship and differentiated citizenship (where people can hold dual and even multiple loyalties). Democratic citizenship is about valued participation, valued recognition and belonging. At a minimum, it is characterized by:

- All the political rights associated with formal equality;

- A right to equality and a right to be free from discrimination;

- An intimate relationship between the individual and the community;

- Reciprocal relationship of rights and obligations;

- Barrier free access, a sense of belonging and not being "othered" and marginalized;

- A commitment on the part of the state to ensure that all members of society have equal access to developing their talents and capacities; and

- Providing all members of society with the resources to exercise democratic citizenship.

It was the Abella report that advanced the notion that equality does not mean sameness and that equality means that we have to treat differences differently. This is the necessary minimum precondition for achieving social inclusion. The Supreme Court of Canada has noted that minority rights do not erode democratic citizenship, rather "the accommodation of differences is the essence of true equality" (Cited by Kymlicka and Norman 1999, 33).

Accommodating differences and eliminating barriers to equality of opportunity are the hallmarks of social inclusion. The latter, however, ought not to be confused with social cohesion because multiple forms of exclusion

can exist in a socially cohesive society. Nonetheless, important questions persist: cohesion around what vision and inclusion to what? Are we talking about assimilation? Is this a new way of managing state minority relations? Is this "Anglo conformity" or even "multiculturalism" in a new guise? As Kymlicka and Norman point out there have been major disputes both about the legitimacy of assimilation as a way of eliminating differences, and about multiculturalism as the official recognition of differences (Kymlicka and Norman 1999, 14-16).

In Canada, the first phase of multiculturalism was a response to the recommendations of the 1970 final report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau called this phase "multicultural in a bilingual framework" (*Statement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons*, 8 October 1971). In this phase, the state encouraged ethnic groups to preserve their distinct ethnic cultures by funding a range of initiatives to preserve their language and culture. In this phase multiculturalism was not seen in strictly political terms, it was a reflexive response to the growing ethnic diversity of Canadian cities. In the second phase multiculturalism was accorded a protected place in the Canadian Constitution and as such it began to inform the discourse on national identity in a new way.

In the first phase, the Canadian state through its multicultural policies encouraged group social cohesion (preservation of culture and language). Retention of cultural, linguistic and religious differences in a multicultural society is important in celebrating differences. However this iteration of the discourse quickly reached its limit. It was becoming readily apparent to many marginalized communities in Canada that while they were developing internal social cohesion they were, at a broader

level, consigned to the margins and excluded from the centres of decision making. Minority culture was not seen as part of the mainstream culture. Further, a backlash against celebrating difference was appearing on the political horizon. The dominant discourse was being framed around issues of national unity and whether unity could be forged through promoting differences. It was not being framed around the challenges of social inclusion.

The recognition of the absence of social inclusion, coupled with the reality of exclusion and discrimination, prompted a reflexive, or what Castells calls a "defensive" assertion of identity, among these marginalized communities (Castells 1997). The assertion of an identity against discrimination and exclusion in turn creates a politics of inclusion and social cohesion that is no longer rooted simply in the desire to hold on to that which is unique. Rather, the politics of inclusion cuts across inter-group and intra-group identity and builds a movement of solidarity capable of challenging the dominant discourse. This is similar to Giddens' notion of "dialogic democracy" based on a mutual respect, a shared understanding of the effects of exclusion and marginalization and the emergence of solidarity: "Dialogic democracy…concerns furthering of cultural cosmopolitanism and is a prime building block of that connection of autonomy and solidarity…dialogic democracy encourages the democratization of democracy within the sphere of the liberal-democratic polity" (Giddens 1994, 112). The growth of the multicultural society, therefore, is producing the conditions for the emergence of a new sense of social inclusion, what David Held calls a "cosmopolitan democracy" that recognizes differences, respects differences and which argues for substantive equality and not just formal equality (Held 1995, 226-231).

The old policy of multiculturalism was simply incapable of responding to a set of issues which were now intensely political. In Canada, ethno-racial communities were shifting their focus from "song and dance" to an assessment of their rightful place in a democratic society that espoused the ideals of equality. In the highest law of the land, the constitution, gave constitutional recognition to the value of multiculturalism. By 1987, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Multiculturalism stated that the old policy was "floundering" and needed "clear direction" (Government of Canada, Standing Committee on Multiculturalism 1987).

The core issues that preoccupied racialized communities now included issues of power, access, equity, participation, removal of discriminatory barriers, institutional accommodation and anti-racism. The clear direction that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Multiculturalism called for came in the form of the *Multiculturalism Act* of 1988. With the passage of the legislation, multiculturalism came to occupy a position of considerable significance in the debate on Canada's national identity. This position of importance was first openly acknowledged in the Canadian constitution, where in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, multiculturalism is constitutionally entrenched. According to Section 27 of the Charter, "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians". The continued politicization of multiculturalism with the passage of the *Multiculturalism Act* elevated multiculturalism from a celebration of diversity to the heart of Canada's nation building project. The federal government sought to delicately balance a number of critical issues, namely, diversity and social cohesion, minority rights and majority rights, cultural identity and citizenship and cultural pluralism, inclusion and equality. The government developed a public policy on multiculturalism that committed it to three pri-

mary activities. First, recognizing and promoting the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. Second, eliminating barriers to full and equitable participation faced by members of minority communities in all spheres of Canadian society. Third, ensuring that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection of the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity.

Advocates within minority communities argue that minority rights are a natural extension of and perfectly consistent with liberal democratic rights. On the other hand, critics argue that the promotion of minority rights detracts from building "common citizenship" and goes a considerable distance in eroding what Kymlicka and Norman call "democratic citizenship" (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 10). Bibby, a critic of multiculturalism, argues that the policy has not led to increased tolerance; rather it has led to increased fragmentation, hyphenation and insularity. Multiculturalism, he notes, has resulted in the production of "individual mosaic fragments" (Bibby 1990, 14-15). For Glazer, the politicization of minority rights elevates ethnicity as a defining variable in public life and is inherently divisive (Glazer 1983, 227-228). Kymlicka and Norman summarize the arguments of the critics as follows:

> *"A more moderate (and more plausible) version states that while minority rights may not lead to civil war, they will erode the ability of citizens to fulfil their responsibilities as democratic citizens - e.g. by weakening citizens' ability to communicate, trust, and feel solidarity across group differences. As so, even if a particular minority rights policy is not itself unjust, examined in isolation, the trend towards, increased salience of ethnicity will erode the norms and practices of responsible citizenship, and so reduce the*

*overall functioning of the state" (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 10).*

They go on to suggest that the argument about whether multiculturalism, which promotes a heightened "salience of ethnicity", is fundamentally divisive because it detracts from democratic citizenship and erodes social cohesion has to be assessed in specific contexts and cannot be assessed in the abstract. For them, these arguments turn on four ideas: citizenship status, citizenship identity, citizenship activity and citizenship cohesion (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 31).

What the critics of multiculturalism, anti-racism and employment equity policies fail to appreciate is the significant power and privilege enjoyed by the majority and denied others because of their race, disability or gender. Weinfeld concludes that "…the ideals behind the rhetoric of multiculturalism have not been attained…Canadian native people and other non-whites continue to be victimized, a fact reflected in economic inequality or in patterns of social exclusion, abuse, and degradation" (Weinfeld 1981, 69). It is the pervasiveness of prejudice directed at disadvantaged groups and the widespread existence of discrimination that have contributed to the fragmentation, hyphenation and insularity in the urban environment.

The two iterations of multiculturalism in Canada also point to the failure of state sponsored actions to deal with social inclusion. Day is more critical: "I would suggest that integration within multiculturalism in a bilingual framework is best seen as a creative reproduction of the colonial method of strategic simulation of assimilation to the Other, and not as an overcoming or breaking with this past" (Day 2000, 197). The modern nation-state, Day notes, *"simulated its unity and dissimulated its multiplicity".* The post-modern multicultural Canadian state however *"dissimulates its unity*

*and simulates a multiplicity"* (Day 2000, 205).

The multicultural society is now the site where ethno-racial communities are contesting the ideas of identity, citizenship and cohesion and inclusion. They are struggling to have their identities recognized alongside the dominant culture. Charles Taylor argues that the refusal to recognize minority rights can be seen as a "form of repression" and he points to the importance of the "links between recognition and identity" (Taylor 1992, 50). The struggle for recognition is inherently a political struggle against the dominant discourse. It is the state and the dominant discourse that is in the position of conferring "recognition" and thereby affirming both their legitimacy and their positions of pre-eminence. The current policy of multiculturalism is one where "… the state does not recognize the value or equality of 'communities' rather it merely recognizes their *'existence'* (Day 2000, 198).

Multiculturalism, even in its second iteration as recognition, has not lead to "valued recognition", "valued participation" and increased equality for minority groups. It has not overturned the pre-eminent position of the English and the French in Canadian society. Rather, it preserves national and linguistic duality and the "… Other Ethnic Groups [are] arranged in a complex ever changing hierarchy" (Day 2000, 198). It has not promoted social inclusion and thus what is required is a more proactive policy that accommodates the needs of minority communities and creates conditions under which they can develop their talents and capacities and in which they can become valued and respected and contributing members of society. Such a proactive policy can only enhance their attachment to a common identity. Rather than being corrosive it can be binding. Kymlicka and Norman however are less definitive: "In sum, whether we are concerned with citizenship status, virtue or cohesion, the relationship between minority

rights and citizenship is more complicated than it might initially appear. We see legitimate worries about the potential impact on citizenship, but also countervailing arguments showing that some minority rights can actually enhance citizenship" (Kymlicka and Norman 2000, 40).

Has decades of state commitment to multiculturalism enhanced citizenship and led to social inclusion in Canada's most multicultural and multiracial city? In 1999 the City of Toronto, released a report that suggested that identity formation and social cohesion in the city was being eroded by the exclusion and marginalization experienced by many immigrant groups. "If the situation [of under-representation in decision making] is not addressed, as well as the incidents of hate activity and discriminatory practices and prejudicial attitudes that unfortunately continue to plague our city it can only lead to a growing sense of frustration (City of Toronto 1998). Discrimination, prejudice, exclusion, marginalization in an ostensibly multicultural, multiracial city forms the context in which the search for identity and social cohesion is experienced. *Representation and participation are public institutions and civic life is critical to the development of social cohesion but they constitute only one important indicator of social inclusion.*

Unlike multiculturalism which stagnates at incomplete and highly contested integration, social inclusion is precisely about the democratization of democracy. By developing a new way of approaching old problems, by positing a radically different conception of citizenship and community, by arguing for new measures of accountability, by providing the impetus for the emergence of new modes of evaluations of public policies, by arguing for increased representation and participation by marginalized groups and above all by encouraging the development of skills, talents and capacities of all, social inclusion will democra-

tize democracy. The growth of the multicultural, multiracial nation therefore is producing the conditions for the emergence of a new sense of social inclusion that recognizes differences, respects differences and that argues for substantive equality and not just formal equality.

# Public Policy Approaches That Make Social Inclusion Real

The structural processes of racial exclusion engendered among racialized communities the struggle for legitimacy and "place claiming". This is the dawn of a new type of politics. For example, the struggle by racialized communities for the redistribution of power and resources takes a non-class specific dimension. And herein lays the political value of social inclusion. It posits the radical alternative to exclusion and is a viable political response to exclusion. The value of social inclusion is that it is fully capable of meeting the greatest challenges posed by diversity - to build on the traditions of equality espoused in liberalism and to move to the incorporation of the ideals of anti-racism and anti-discrimination as core ideals exemplifying national values. Social inclusion is capable of this because it is about respect for differences and it is about the removal of barriers to effective and equitable participation in all spheres of public life. And it is about more than this, it is about engaging in inclusive practices, it is about continuous evaluations of institutions, laws, policies and practices to ensure that they promote social inclusion. Thus it is about evaluation for the purpose of public accountability.

The politics of social inclusion is about an inclusive democracy that places issues of social justice at the heart of the urban question. Democracy is the locus of citizenship and it is essential to recognize that the very definition of the public sphere and citizenship in the urban environment is contested by racialized minority groups. There is no single public sphere, no single acceptable notion of citizenship and no single notion of social cohesion. There are instead multiple spheres and spaces in which historically marginalized groups develop their own sense of cohesion to contest oppression, discrimination and exclusion – where they posit a different understanding of space, citizenship and social cohesion. In positing this different and alternate understanding, they are challenging the dominant discourse and accentuating the politics of difference that puts issues of inequality and social justice at the heart of a reclaimed social inclusion. When historically marginalized groups contest notions of rights and conceptions of citizenship they are simultaneously seeking an alternative. And the alternative is about much more than simply the removal of barriers to their participation as equals free from discrimination. The alternative is about inclusion as valued participants in a society that is committed to the eradication of discrimination and disadvantage in all its forms and manifestations.

Benick and Saloojee defined an inclusive learning environment as one that "fosters the full personal, academic and professional development of all students. It is one that is free of harassment and discrimination … it is about respecting students and valuing them as partners…" (Benick and Saloojee 1996, 2). Despite its narrow focus, this definition comes close to Freiler's notion of social inclusion as a process that encourages the development of talents, skills and capacities necessary for children and youth to participate in the social and economic mainstream of community life (Freiler 2001, 8-10). What makes a discourse on social inclusion more compelling than one on exclusion is the following:

- Social inclusion is the political response to racial exclusion. Most analyses of racism for example, focus on the removal of systemic barriers to effective participation and focus on equality of opportunity. Social inclusion is about more than the removal of barriers, it is about a comprehensive vision that includes all. It is about valued recognition and valued participation in the struggle for an inclusive society.

- Social inclusion is proactive. It is about anti-discrimination. It is not about the passive protection of rights; rather, it is about the active intervention to promote rights. It confers responsibility on the state to adopt and enforce policies that will ensure social inclusion of all members of society (not just formal citizens, or consumers, or taxpayers, or clients). It also demands that the agencies of the state be proactive in advancing an anti-racist, inclusive vision of society.

- Social inclusion promotes solidarity. Individuals, organizations and communities from diverse backgrounds can come together on the basis of a common purpose and engage in an inclusionary politics, directed at the creation of inclusive communities, cities and an inclusive society.

- Social inclusion, by virtue of the fact that it is both a process and an outcome, can hold governments and institutions accountable for their policies. The yardstick by which to measure good government therefore becomes the extent to which it advances the well-being of the most vulnerable and the most marginalized in society.

- Social inclusion is about advocacy and transformation. It is about the political struggle and the political will to remove barriers to full and equitable participation in society by all, and in particular by members of racialized communities. Furthermore, the vision of social inclusion is a positive vision that binds its proponents and adherents to action.

- Social inclusion is embracing. It posits a notion of democratic citizenship as opposed to formal citizenship. Democratic citizens possess rights and entitlements by virtue of their being a part of the polity, not by virtue of their formal status (as immigrants, refugees, or citizens).

Social inclusion is about social cohesion *plus*, it is about citizenship *plus*, it is about the removal of barriers plus, it is anti-essentialist *plus*, it is about rights and responsibilities *plus*, it is about accommodation of differences *plus*, it is about democracy *plus*, it is about a new way of thinking about the problems of injustice, inequalities and exclusion. It is the combination of the various pluses that make the discourse on social inclusion so incredibly exciting. Within this context a commitment to anti-racist social inclusion has a number of public policy implications.

First, there has to be a renewed commitment at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to employment equity. An employment creation strategy in the absence of a proactive policy to bring down barriers to employment and advancement for members of racialized minority communities is insufficient. An economic strategy that promotes economic growth and increased employment is a necessary but insufficient condition to promote inclusion. Strategies directed at labour market integration have to be accompanied by strategies to bring down barriers to labour market participation and advancement by members of racialized minority communities.

Second, the reach and scope of the employment equity policies have to extend beyond the public and para-public sectors and deep into the private sector. Concomitant with this reach there has to be greater enforcement of equity legislation and greater accountability by public and private organizations for their policies and practices. There are many important strategies that organizations can pursue to both eliminate barriers to effective participation by members of racialized communities and create inclusive anti-discrimination organizations.

Third, federal and provincial governments need to strengthen human rights commissions. These commissions play vital investigative and mediation functions. However, given their limited resources they do not vigorously pursue their public education functions. Human rights commissions need to be more proactive in promoting human rights and not simply be passive recipients of complaints which they then investigate.

Fourth, the federal government and provincial governments need to urgently develop a national strategy in concert with universities, colleges and professional accreditation bodies to deal with the issue of foreign credentials, foreign training and foreign experience. Studies are now commenting on the "brain waste" in Canada as a result of the significant underutilization of the skills and experience of foreign trained and educated professionals. Further, the systemic barriers associated with vetting the education, training and experience of foreign trained professionals (the vast majority of whom are from racialized minority communities) affects their employability, their earning capacity and their upward mobility.

Fifth, municipal governments as democratically elected governments, as employers, as service providers and as the most readily accessible level of government have very important roles to play including:

- *Making the representation of elected officials and the participation by diverse communities more inclusive and representative.*

- *Pursuing an employment equity policy, a contract compliance policy and an inclusive purchasing policy.*

- *Identifying and bringing down barriers faced by members of racialized communities seeking to access municipal services. Municipal governments can promote inclusive policies by enhancing communication with racialized minority communities, providing racially and culturally sensitive programs, addressing the funding imbalances between mainstream organizations and organizations representing the interests of racialized minority communities and engaging in meaningful consultation with members and organizations from racialized minority communities on the range of issues affecting their lives – not just on issues of equity and racism.*

- *Directly confronting the challenges associated with racialized poverty, and becoming a champion of the poor and the racialized poor. Municipal governments need to vociferously argue with the federal government and with provincial governments to drastically strengthen Canada's social safety net, increase social expenditure in education, child care and health care and increase the availability of affordable and accessible housing. As the Campaign 2000 report to the United Nations' special session on children noted, "Racialized families are over represented in poor neighbourhoods where the quality of living conditions and access to social programs including child care, health, education and recreation are compromised." The report concluded: "The erosion of Canada's social safety net has had*

*a particularly negative impact on those families that have historically experienced exclusion and disadvantage in society"* (Campaign 2000, 2002, 9).

Sixth, all levels of government need to promote and strengthen community organizations representing the interests of diverse communities. Promoting and strengthening organizations in civil society results in stronger political participation and a greater sense of belonging. Community involvement and engagement is an essential component of building inclusive communities and societies. These organizations become the eyes and ears of inclusion and they can monitor initiatives designed to eradicate racism and promote inclusion. These organizations need to be well funded and given a place of legitimacy in the policy process.

Seventh, all levels of government need to be proactive in promoting democratic citizenship, which as was noted above, is about valued participation, valued recognition and belonging. This entails providing all members of society with the resources to exercise democratic citizenship; actively promoting all the political rights associated with formal equality; promoting equality and freedom from discrimination; promoting barrier free access to employment and services and committing resources to ensure that all members of society have equal access to developing their talents and capacities. The latter requires governments to invest in social infrastructure, particularly in public education. Strengthening the bonds of civic engagement and democratic citizenship requires that society invest in children. It is through our publicly funded education system that we can collectively develop the talents and capacities of all. It is through the vehicle of public education that we can promote the virtue of respect and the appreciation of differences. A publicly funded education system that is strong, affordable and accessible is not only

essential to developing the talents and capacities of all, it an essential prerequisite for creating inclusive communities and cities.

Implementing these policy initiatives is one of the most important ways in which social inclusion can become real. Their implementation is essential to the realization of an inclusive society. From an anti-racist perspective then, an inclusive society is one that at a minimum:

- Develops the talents and capacities of all its members;

- Strives to close social distances and promote physical proximity;

- Eradicates all forms of poverty including racialized poverty;

- Promotes democratic citizenship;

- Promotes inclusive participation in all walks of public life by members of racialized communities;

- Strengthens organizations in civil society that represent the interests of historically disadvantaged communities, and meaningfully engages them in the public policy process;

- Is proactive about promoting equality rights and ensuring that members of racialized communities are not disadvantaged because of their race;

- Consciously eschews a hierarchy of oppression and rights;

- Actively combats individual and systemic racial discrimination;

- Actively promotes and accommodates ethno-racial diversity;

- Eradicates the racially split labour market;

- Eliminates barriers to labour market participation by members of racialized communities;

- Eliminates the glass ceiling that negatively impacts on the employment mobility of members of racialized communities;

- Actively promotes and achieves equitable hiring practices and "equal pay for work of equal value";

- Ensures that members of racialized communities are equitably represented in the decision making centres in the social, economic, political and all other walks of public life;

- Values the participation of and provides valued recognition to members of racialized communities.

The commitment to creating an inclusive society is essentially a political commitment to individual, institutional, organizational, legal and systemic change. It must begin with a recognition of the multiple forms of racial discrimination and it must be a political commitment to the eradication of racial discrimination. It has to be cognizant of the need for full participation (in decision making and in mobilization) by members and groups from racialized communities – participation that is equitable, recognized and valued. Progress towards anti-racist social inclusion can only be nourished by political will and the political mobilization of the broadest possible coalition of counter hegemonic forces.

# Conclusion

The intersection of an anti-oppression discourse with social inclusion as a process and an outcome is an incredibly powerful impetus to social change and political solidarity. It presents a radical alternative to the dominant discourse that is steeped in liberal notions of formal equality and its concomitant commitment to multiculturalism. In the context of accommodating differences and promoting heterogeneous social cohesion there is space for the state to intervene to ensure equality of opportunity. Social inclusion involves a societal commitment to equality of opportunity which ensures that all members of society are provided with the opportunity to develop their talents and capacities and secure valued goods and services free from discrimination. In the urban environment, this requires a fundamental movement from tolerating diverse cultures to recognizing and respecting them.

Social inclusion is fully capable of both recognizing the politics of difference and transcending its narrow confines precisely because it embraces an inclusive vision, which suggests that a common purpose and shared community can be achieved through inter-group solidarity. Coalition politics comprised of groups representing the interests of the historically disadvantaged is now producing the conditions for the vision of social inclusion to be embraced more readily. There has never been a better time to embrace the concept of social inclusion than now. September 11, 2001 has demonstrated to us the fragility of a nation built on tolerance. Canada will be a much stronger country if we embrace social inclusion as a transformative tool and as a normative ideal.

# Endnotes

1    Essentialism refers to the way in which the complex identities of groups of people are reduced to one primary characteristic and individual difference are either ignored or denied – for example, the signifier, the primary characteristic that defines individual members of racialized communities, is the colour of their skin (see as well notes 3-5).

2    The roots of exclusion are deep, historical and are continually reproduced in both old and new ways in contemporary society – see Freiler (2001) who has identified multiple and varied sources of exclusion.

3    There is considerable debate about the analytical status of the concept "race". Does the use of the term even as a social construct reinforce the very notion it seeks to debunk – namely that humans are divided into a number of "races" each of which can be characterized by certain physical features and cultural practices? Is it necessary then to jettison the concept entirely and speak of racialization as the process of signification that attaches meanings to somatic differences?

4    It is important to distinguish between racism on the one hand, and bias and prejudice on the other. Bias refers to an opinion; a preference arrived at subjectively and without reasonable scientific proof, it can be explicit or implicit, intentional or unintentional. Racial prejudice involves "racializing" groups of people and prejudging them based on a set of biases and stereotypes that are inaccurate and unscientific. It is attitudinal, and can lead to racial discrimination.

5    Members of racialized minority communities **are** individuals who because of the colour of their skin encounter barriers and discrimination resulting in social inequality and unequal access to valued goods and services.

6    For details on racial discrimination and labour market participation see Ontario Human Rights Commission 1983; Henry and Ginzberg 1985; Billingsley and Musynzski 1985; Canadian Civil Liberties, Toronto Star, 21 January 1991; Hou and Balakrishnan 1996; Frank 1997; Li 1998; The Canadian Race Relations Foundation 2000; Grace-Edward Galabuzi 2001.

7    See Ontario Human Rights Commission 1983; Henry and Ginzberg 1985; Billingingsley and Musynzski 1985; Canadian Civil Liberties, Toronto Star, 21 January 1991; Hou and Balakrishnan 1996; Frank 1997; Li 1998; The Canadian Race Relations Foundation 2000; Grace-Edward Galabuzi 2001; Ornstein 2000; Canadian Council on Social Development 2002.

8    As of the beginning of June 2002, data from the 2001 Census have not been made public and consequently have not been incorporated into the paper.

9    For more details, see Jackson 2001; Grace-Edward Galabuzi 2000; Ornstein 2000.

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