





its elected representatives that people can hope to have some control over their destiny. And even the decisions that do have to be considered at a broader, international level can only come close to being democratic because they are made between governments that are so elected.

The state is something absolutely essential. In a period of rapid growth and intense global competition, the state has a tremendously important role to play because it is the only tool citizens have to help ensure that their society is well positioned in the international market. If we are talking about globalization in terms of the market, these state governments are the ones that are going to determine the level of education of our populations. Federal and provincial governments very often determine how research and development are conducted. They help to foster entrepreneurship, and in all sorts of ways work constructively with this entrepreneurship according to an immense variety of formulae which we see being tested in the world today. And it is unfortunate that people so often talk about these government-entrepreneur formulae as though there were only one proper formula for all time, or they think that if a formula works for a while and then fails to work later, then it must always have been the wrong approach.

On the contrary, perhaps all it shows is that in the future we have to think about revising our formulae more effectively as situations change. We have the necessity of maintaining states that are big enough to have some purchase in these matters while being small enough to be responsible. And that dilemma, that tension, that pull in two directions is what makes federalism so important for the future. I think this is a formula - or rather a family of formulae - that is going to have more and more play in the world. We are not witnessing the end of federalism; we're at the very beginning of it.

**Inside the State, Inside the Citizen**

The inner conditions of these democratic states are of great interest right now because the older forms the state used to maintain unity are coming under new pressures. In addition to the various aspects of globalization, there is also the inner diversification produced by migration and other phenomena, and we have this creation of transboundary spaces, the diasporic identities we touched on above. Those who are fascinated by postmodernism as a language say that we can have a new postmodern state to replace the rather intolerant unity of the old state; we can have instead an infinite multiplication of differences. In many ways this is a very attractive scenario. But I believe such a model is not feasible, because the democratic state needs a certain very strong kind of unity, but no longer the same one it traditionally has sought to foster.

I would say we need a certain unity of common understanding in a democratic state -



And so very rapidly it became evident that it would not be enough to try to rally people around this universal umbrella based on democratic principles, citizens' rights, and the rule of law. A second part had to be added: a notion that public institutions must also express and defend the society's particular cultural history and traditions. And today, the modern answer in democratic countries usually has some mix of these two facets - one in terms of universal principle, rule of law, and rights; another in terms of what you might call historical, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious identities.

So we have this great phenomenon of the modern world, the answer to the citizen's question - My does my participation in this regime represent my freedom? At their best, modern regimes try to do justice to this complex duality. Of course deviant forms have appeared on the scene since the early days of the nineteenth century, regimes that dropped altogether the universal moral principles. We think of the Nazis, and we think of recent history in the Balkans and elsewhere, where the equilibrium between these two aspects has been broken. But when

to make a true nation with one national language. But even if one possessed that kind of ruthlessness, this is no longer an option today, because the differences in our societies are multiplying at such a pace that they will be impossible to steamroll.

These differences are galloping along on more than one level and in more than one way.







of a distinct culture or the development of a language, religion, or whatever is very important - so important that no political society that pushes these matters to secondary significance will be able to win the allegiance of these people.

Anyone who argues that our Canadian society's purpose has little to do with the survival of the French language will quickly lose six million listeners. Similarly, when we try to go back to the original ideals of our democratic forebears, we will find that our diverse present-day citizenry does not have the same attachment to the once- hallowed archetype. Recent arrivals to a democratic society want to be part of a process whose real history is in the future, not the past. The desire for "equality" is something that can sound very sensible and admirable when repeated over and over to a worried public; but in this context, equality equals uniformity. I think this runs against the reality of our world at the end of the twentieth century: we are living in multinational societies, and they will only become more multinational. No one can seriously argue that the Quebec polity's *raison d'etre* has nothing to do with the preservation of the French language. The defence of this language is a crucial part of our political existence. Of course it is very important to see that this is done in a way which is morally defensible and which does not undercut the other extremely important facets of our identity. By and large, I think this has been the case, despite a few deviations brought about by our extreme nationalists. But to suggest that this part of public policy is unnecessary, irrelevant - this is simply a non-starter for the people of Quebec.

Now if you take such a political entity, like Quebec, and make it a part of a larger polity where the cultural priority is not recognized, you are in for incredible strains. And we have seen Quebec's own Jacobins, who feel that the Quebecois could never share a real concern for the French language with people in Medicine Hat or Vancouver, and so we must have two separate countries. That is the road to disaster in the twenty-first century, not just for us but for the world



And the root of this problem is that there is not yet a recognition of the multinational nature of Canada outside Quebec. There is a fear of recognizing Quebec as a people, as a nation, because this is seen as a step toward disunity. But this would not be a step toward disintegration; it would be a step toward ending all talk of separation. We are talking about a people who will always be a people; they cannot stop being a people and will never cease to see themselves as a people. It would make a tremendous difference to Quebec, and to the future of this whole country, if the rest of Canada could recognize them simply for what they are. Every time we find a constitutional word for it - "distinct society" or whatever - it is shot down. Perhaps one day we will come up with a word that we will all be able to pronounce without choking.

## **Conclusion**

If we, as a society, can find a way to resolve this dilemma, I think we will be doing the world a great service, because the problems Canada is wrestling with are the same ones that are troubling nation-states all over the globe.

In this country we have been so close to a solution for such a long time now; it is as if we are at the end of a very long journey but cannot bring ourselves to take that last step. And if we are not careful, we will indeed become a great example to the world, of a society that was unable to cross the threshold and become a nation-state for the new millennium.

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