

SELLING OUT DIVERSITY IN AN AGE OF GLOBALIZATION
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WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY “SELLING DIVERSITY”{?}

THESIS: THE CURRENT “***MANAGING DIVERSITY MODEL***” IS BASED ON AN ECONOMIC RATIONALISM THAT HAS RENDERED A PROFOUNDLY NARROW VISION OF DIVERSITY.

PUBLIC POLICY AS IT RELATES TO MULTICULTURALISM, IMMIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY IN CANADA IS BASED ON A “***DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY***” WHERE THE WORKFORCE IS CONSTRUCTED AS A LEVER TO GLOBAL COMPETITION AND PEOPLE AS “TRADE-ENHANCING COMMODITIES” [COMMODIFYING PEOPLE] WHICH IS AN SUPERFICIAL AND NARROW READING OF DIVERSITY →

[ACTUALLY] THE ACCENTUATION OF BUSINESS AND TRADE – ***SELLING DIVERSITY*** – REPRESENTS A NEW VISION OF NATION-BUILDING, ONE THAT FOCUSSES ON THE BOTTOM LINE MORE THAT PREVIOUS ARTICULATIONS OF POLICY → IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THE COMMODIFICATION OF DIVERSITY CAN ADEQUATELY DEAL WITH THE ISSUE OF RACE, CLASS AND GENDER INEQUITIES AMONG CANADIANS OR FURTHER ADVANCE AN AGENDA BASE ON EQUITY.

RECENT POLICY CHANGES AND DEBATES IN THE INTERRELATED POLICY DOMAINS OF IMMIGRATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY HAVE BEEN UNDERPINNED BY A PARTICULAR READING OF GLOBALIZATION THAT STRESSES MEASURES INFORMED BY NEO-LIBERAL IDEALS (PP166).

RIGHTS-DETERIORATING TRENDS OF NEO-LIBERAL IDEALS

1. POLITICAL ORIENTATION WITH EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH

2. REJECTS POSITIVE GOV'T INTERVENTION
 3. FOCUS ON PROGRESS THROUGH FREE MARKET METHODS
 4. TRANSFORMS ALL FORMS OF STATE INTERVENTION INTO MARKET FUNCTIONS
 5. RETREAT FROM ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REGULATION IN CIVIC LIFE
 6. RETRENCHMENT OF SOCIAL RIGHTS → WATERING DOWN OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE PROTECTIONS
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- 1) THE VALUING OF SMALLER WELFARE STATE, WHEREBY GOVERNMENTS DO LESS, AND INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND VOLUNTEERS UNDERTAKE TO DO MORE IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL SERVICES
- 2) STRESS THE COMMODIFICATION OF SOCIAL GOODS (E.G., HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE SERVICES).
- 3) CANADIANS TREATED LESS AS CITIZENS AND MORE AS "INDIVIDUALS," "CLIENTS," OR "CUSTOMERS".
- 4) EMPHASIZE AND PRIVILEGE THE "FREE" MARKET, ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY, AND UNFETTERED COMPETITION.
- 5) *NEO-LIBERAL IDEALS CARRY A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS "PUBLIC" AND WHAT IS "PRIVATE," AND MANY SERVICES THAT WERE CONSIDERED PUBLIC WITH THE KEYNESIAN WELFARE STATE ARE UNDER THREAT OF BEING WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY PRIVATIZED.

RADICAL SHIFT → GROUPS SUCH AS WOMEN, RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AND THE POOR HAVE INCREASINGLY BEEN REPRESENTED AS "SPECIAL INTEREST" AND DIFFERENT FROM SO-CALLED "ORDINARY CANADIANS" → THE DEMANDS OF THESE GROUPS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY HAVE SOMETIMES EVEN BEEN TRANSFORMED IN POPULAR AND PARTISAN DEBATES INTO A THREAT TO THE COHESION AND UNITY OF THE CANADIAN POLITY.

EX: QUEBEC IDENTITY VS. *REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION* OF
IMMIGRANTS [THE 'OTHER']