

Conversation Series

Transnationalism and the Meaning of Citizenship in the 21st Century

Executive Summary

This Metropolis Conversation took place on December 11, 2007 at the request of the Citizenship Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Its intent was to bring together a range of views on the relationship between transnationalism and citizenship policy in Canada. Participants included policy-makers, researchers, NGO leaders, and media representatives.

Transnationalism refers to the ties linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. As the country having the second highest proportion of foreign-born residents in the world, and with an estimated 9% of its population residing overseas (Zhang, 2006), Canada is no stranger to transnational migrants.

Participants noted that transnationalism is not only inevitable but by and large a positive phenomenon – for both migrants and their host societies. Transnationalism is not a deterrent to immigrants’ integration in Canada. Maintaining links with their countries of origin does not preclude transnationals from developing loyalty, attachment and belonging and other aspects of civic identity and practice in Canada. On the other hand, crossing the limits of acceptable transnational politics was identified as the major negative impact of transnationalism.

Participants agreed that the realities of transnationalism do not require changes to the Citizenship Act. However, they pointed out that legal status by itself does not ensure the development of broader citizenship through civic identity and practice – which is in turn crucial to immigrants’ integration in Canada. Given the large number of transnational Canadians, there is a need to supplement citizenship as legal status with strategies to foster civic identity and practice, and to facilitate the ability of transnationals to fully participate in Canadian life and institutions. In particular, participants supported the development of policies and programs to ensure the economic integration and social inclusion of immigrants and minorities. Finally, participants were unanimous on the need for better civic education for all Canadians.

A number of areas for further research were also identified, including an analysis of the various streams of transnational activities over the life course of migrants. As well, research is needed to assess the economic impact of transnationalism on Canada - in terms of the use of social benefits by non-resident Canadians, and the loss of human capital. In conclusion, it was agreed that Canada and Canadians would benefit from an expanded view of citizenship, which would in turn help to achieve the objectives of immigrant integration.

Metropolis Conversation Series

The Metropolis Conversation Series brings together researchers, public servants, policymakers and community leaders to identify and explore current public policy debates. Conversations are closed-door and highly-focused to promote candid exchanges. The gatherings are small and include carefully selected people who share common interests, but varying perspectives. For more information, please visit www.metroopolis.net.

Context

This Metropolis Conversation looked at the relation between transnationalism and citizenship policy. It was organized at the request of the Citizenship Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and included participants from the research, policy, NGO, and media sectors. The Conversation was conducted according to the Chatham House Rule, which allows for reporting on the discussion, but prevents the identification of participants and the attribution of comments. This report provides highlights of the discussions, with particular emphasis on the possibilities for future policy development. Please note that the views expressed in this report are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of Metropolis or Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The Conversation took place against a backdrop of the Government of Canada's immigration and citizenship policies. One of the objectives of these policies is to promote the successful integration of permanent residents into Canada, recognizing that this process involves reciprocal obligations for new immigrants and Canadian society. As Canada becomes increasingly diverse, effective citizenship policies could play a key role in a long-term strategy for successful integration. The 2006 evacuation of Lebanese-Canadians from war-torn areas of Lebanon was mentioned as a significant event – one that launched the discourse of transnationalism and citizenship into the public realm. Since this event, debates have emerged in the media and elsewhere regarding the “meaning” attached to Canadian citizenship, especially in the context of transnational communities.

The Conversation was structured around three sets of framing questions including, among others: Which aspects and practices of transnationalism matter to our thinking about Canadian citizenship? Does transnationalism enhance or threaten meaningful Canadian citizenship? What can governments realistically expect of their citizens, especially those who are members of transnational communities? What are some policy responses that can be effective and feasible in a democracy such as Canada's?

More specifically, participants were asked to consider the policy represented by the Citizenship Act. Given the realities of transnationalism is the Act fundamentally sound and should it therefore be left in place with the occasional fine tuning? Or does the Citizenship Act – now more than 30 years old - need to be modernized?

Transnationalism

At the outset, it was noted that although the issue of transnationalism and the meaning of citizenship has captured the imagination of many in Canada, the issue is neither new, nor well-studied. The Conversation began with a definition of transnationalism and some examples of transnational behaviour. Simply put, transnationalism refers to the ties linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. A transnational migrant maintains contacts within both the society s/he has moved to and the society from which s/he has moved. Linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states, transnationalism can be measured, for example, as flows of capital, people, information, and images. Advances in technology, especially the internet and telecommunications, have greatly affected transnational practices.

Transnationalism has resulted in the ability of individuals and communities – including immigrants - to retain strong ties with more than one country. Complex and wide-ranging, transnational practices

may or may not involve the physical movement of people between regions. Locally, transnationalism can be nurtured through immigrants' "homeland" or "country of origin" practices in their host country. At the same time, the expansion of media capabilities, including satellite TV, allows transnational Canadians to "live" in their countries of origin but be physically present on Canadian soil. Transnationalism also involves frequent movement of people and capital between countries. Examples of such practices include dual citizenship, return and circular migration, remittances, as well as immigrants' business activities, contacts with family and friends, and political and civic participation in their countries of origin.

Transnationalism is not simply about individuals and families, but also about transnational communities and neighbourhoods where there is a high concentration of a particular ethnic group, referred to by some as 'transnational enclaves'. Examples in Canada include Brampton and Markham in the Greater Toronto Area, and the Chinatowns in Vancouver. Such transnational enclaves, which have received quite a bit of attention over the past 20 years, have implications for citizenship, and more specifically the integration of transnational communities. Alejandro Portes (1999) asks the question: Will the newcomer integrate into the societal mainstream or into an enclave? Some researchers are concerned that transnational activities will slow down integration – especially with respect to identity, sense of belonging, and loyalty.

Transnationalism may involve but is much more than dual citizenship. As pointed out by another participant, the many forms of transnationalism can be better understood by studying the life course of transnational families. Transnational practices are often understood to be expressions of cultural identity and economic interests. But they also include economic strategies to maintain family well-being and to advance the education of children, as in the case of Hong Kong migrants, who are possibly Canada's largest group of transnationals. Included in this group are an estimated 250,000 Canadian citizens who live in Hong Kong, many of whom were born and/or educated in Canada, but left because they could not find good jobs here.

Many transnationals who were born and/or educated in Canada maintain strong ties with Canada while living overseas. Some move back to Canada in their retirement. There also exists a significant community of retirees who, after having spent their productive years in Canada, move to other parts of the world, but remain actively engaged with Canadian culture and politics.

The inevitability of transnationalism – a *fait accompli* of the global society we live in - was a point of consensus. Increasing levels of globalization and migration, combined with the current ways in which citizenship can be acquired – by birth in a nation, or by birth to a parent of a particular nationality – result in the increase of transnational practices like dual citizenship. But while there was agreement on the inevitability of transnationalism, opinions were divided on its impacts.

Positive Impacts

Transnationalism results in a number of positive impacts, not just for transnational migrants, but also for their host societies. Participants described a number of examples, including positive influences on cross-cultural understanding, trade, and the integration of immigrants.

Based on interactions with thousands of university students, many of whom are transnationals, one of the participants suggested that their transnational activities give them an enlarged and enriched

understanding of the world, which in turn increases their sense of belonging in Canada. This point was supported by another participant who said that the presence of large transnational communities in Canada affords Canadians an invaluable source of information and a fine-grained understanding of international affairs – the Lebanon situation being a case in point.

Some assume that Canada would benefit from transnationals in terms of trade, but according to one participant this is not the case. Research shows that trade between Canada and Asian countries from which we receive a significant number of immigrants (notably India), actually decreased from 1972 and 1993 (Globerman, 1995). Another participant mentioned the issue of remittances to home countries. The examples of India and El Salvador – who have taken an aggressive stand on using their diaspora to further trade and economic agendas – were put forth. According to a research paper, the government of El Salvador funds the refugee claims of its people in the United States so that they can receive legal status there and send remittances back to the home country.

Citing recent American research, another participant asserted that transnationalism and integration are not mutually exclusive and often go hand in hand. Latin American and West Indian immigrants who are politically active in their home country are equally engaged in the U.S. Over time, however, transnational activity can taper off. The literature shows that with the exception of the Mexican community, the American-born second generation does not hold active transnational ties. In fact, researchers like Alejandro Portes see enclaves as being overwhelmingly positive, in that they protect ethnic communities from the ‘evils’ of American society.

Negative Impacts

But it is the negative effects that are of highest concern. The public discourse around transnationalism often includes a number of aspects that are perceived to be a ‘risk’. These include a lack of mainstream integration, problems of loyalty, a lack of interaction between native-born Canadians and ethnocultural communities (as well as among various ethnocultural communities), and problems of social cohesion.

The participants of the Conversation were asked whether they consider transnationalism to pose a threat to Canada. There was all round agreement that there are limits to acceptable transnational politics, and that interference in Canadian politics by governments of other countries through their diaspora, is the biggest threat of transnationalism. If there are threats posed by transnationalism, then it is the job of government to recognize these and to intervene.

Numerous examples were cited. The Mexican government has encouraged its nationals to move to the U.S. and become citizens to influence American policy. During the several recent wars in the Balkans, Canadian citizens fought on both sides of the conflict. The debate on whether Canada should recognize Macedonia seemed to be based on some Canadians’ ties with their home countries, rather than the best interests of Canada. A threat exists when transnationalism enters the political arena in emerging democracies. Canadian foreign policy should be informed by, but not cater to, the diaspora of any country.

Another participant described the discomfort within the Canadian political class at having representation of Canadian dual citizens in foreign governments (for example, Italy) and at these representatives lobbying the Canadian government. In the absence of legal provisions, there is need for a debate on the various activities associated with conducting elections – including campaigning

and voting - for foreign governments on Canadian soil. For example, with talk of Iraqi elections being held and allowing Iraqis in Canada to vote from here, a number of security and administrative issues arise, and ad hoc responses are likely to be inadequate.

Others were not convinced that such activities pose a serious threat. One participant maintained that the evidence shows that very few transnationals actually vote in the elections in their home countries. The transnationals who vote usually comprise a highly educated and affluent minority, especially in the U.S. Another participant responded that it is the less educated transnationals who are a cause for concern, because in some cases, they are manipulated by extremists.

Dual Citizenship and Canadian Citizens Living Abroad

While dual citizenship is considered to be an important form of political transnationalism, the public debate that took place about the Lebanon evacuation was not a discussion about single or dual citizenship. The debate was about the perceived fairness of government consular services enjoyed by Canadians who have been non-resident for a protracted time. The issue is important, given that an estimated 9% of Canadian citizens (2.7 million people) live overseas (Zhang, 2006).

Participants considered a number of aspects. Today, the cost of a Canadian passport includes a \$25 fee for consular services, but what is not well known is that consular fees provide only conditional rights to Canadian citizens overseas. There may be a number of situations in which the Canadian government may not be able to assist its non-resident citizens. It was suggested that Canada, like some countries, should consider introducing consular insurance.

How much obligation does the Canadian government have to its citizens who spend most of their lives abroad, but return to Canada to retire? That such individuals do not pay income tax in Canada, but enjoy services like healthcare upon their return, is the cause of cynicism on the part of some critics of transnationalism. This was disputed by another participant, who commented that free healthcare is not the motivation for all returnees. In the case of Hong Kong, where healthcare is also free, transnationals return to Canada to be with their family, for the environment and quality of life, and because they are Canadian.

Participants concluded that much research is needed on the perceived 'exploitation' of social benefits by non-resident Canadian citizens. A full economic analysis over the life course (stages of education, working and retirement) across all segments of Canadian society, would do a lot to allay negative public perceptions about transnationals.

Citizenship as Civic Identity and Civic Practice

The conversation then turned to civic identity and civic practice – the other two components of citizenship - among transnationals in particular and Canadians in general. Civic identity refers to the relationship of individuals with the public sphere (the state and civil society). Civic practice is individuals' engagement with and participation in the public sphere. Related to civic identity and practice are concepts of loyalty, attachment and belonging, and inclusion. In the context of immigration, there is a belief that the development of strong civic identity and practice is important for transnational migrants' integration in their host society.

Identity

Because transnational migrants maintain links with two (or more) countries, they are likely to have multiple identities. An underlying assumption exists that if an immigrant identifies exclusively with his/her country of origin rather than with the host country, s/he will not be able to integrate into the host society. The discussion revolved around this aspect of transnational identities and whether such identities change in successive generations of immigrants.

One participant said that it is not uncommon for third and fourth generations of immigrants to maintain very strong links with their countries of origin. However, the reasons for maintaining a transnational identity vary between generations. For older generations it may be more personal and emotional. Young people, on the other hand, may see themselves more often as global citizens. Their motivations for transnationalism are more economic than romantic. Today's youth are far more mobile and many self-select to live outside Canada, because of careers or simply for the excitement.

Does the acquisition of a Canadian identity by immigrants necessitate the definition and promotion of a Canadian or national identity? Again, opinions were divided. In a globalized world where media is pervasive and choice is unlimited, identities are becoming fragmented. People with multiple identities may not see the relevance of national citizenship anymore. One participant disagreed, maintaining that multiple identities are not possible with regard to religious identity – and this should be the case with nationality as well.

Those that supported the public promotion of a Canadian identity pointed out that the governments of sending countries (especially those that want to influence their diaspora) may have a clear idea of their national identity. Using the various venues and opportunities to promote democratic values abroad, they urged that the Canadian government showcase Canadian culture and values, so that when immigrants arrive here, they know what to expect.

Others did not agree. Given its history, Canada is united because the issue of a national identity is not officially pursued. A certain amount of “fuzziness” about identity is desirable. Finally, how we feel is less important than what we do. In other words, the focus should be on Canadians' participation in local institutions and life. Instead of policies to develop a sense of Canadian identity, there is a need for policies to make newcomers and minorities feel included in Canadian society.

Loyalty

Since most transnationals are assumed to have multiple identities and links with two or more nations, the issue arises of their loyalty to multiple nation-states.

But is loyalty to the nation-state still in currency? Participants agreed that while the concept is still valid, the role of the nation-state is becoming less clear. In a globalized world, the state is in competition for loyalty and citizenship. Some felt that loyalty to the nation-state does not have meaning for younger generations, especially those who are transnationals. One participant expressed the need for newcomers to prove their loyalty to Canada to counter public perceptions to the contrary. Another participant objected, saying that immigrants should not be singled out in such matters – loyalty and citizenship are matters concerning *all* Canadians.

Participants were unanimous that loyalty matters in transnational politics – especially when states are in conflict. Some also mentioned their concern about Canadian nationals who rise to positions of power as citizens of other countries and subsequently become involved in criminal activities.

What should the role of the state be with respect to loyalty? Some said that unlike rights, loyalties cannot be legislated. Others countered that while loyalties cannot be legislated, they can be nurtured. One participant suggested the need to better communicate core Canadian values to new Canadians to ensure that some sense of identity and loyalty is gained by them. Giving the example of work being done by the Institute of Canadian Citizenship, the idea of implementing a Citizenship Credo was suggested. Another participant took this idea further by suggesting that all new citizens be required to take an oath of exclusive allegiance to Canada. Others disagreed, saying that the government should not engage in “codifying what cannot be codified.”

From a policy perspective, loyalty was also linked with legal prohibition. In other words, citizens could be legally required to do or not to do a number of things. One participant suggested that Canadian citizens be required to demonstrate exclusive loyalty to Canada with respect to voting, not serving in a foreign military organization and not to engage in extremist behaviour.

Attachment and Belonging

Modern technology permits transnational Canadians to “live” in their countries of origin but be physically present on Canadian soil. Transnationals’ links with their countries of origin raises questions about their ability to develop attachment and a sense of belonging to Canada – and ultimately, to integrate.

Participants acknowledged that the Government of Canada has in place a number of policies and programs to foster a sense of belonging to Canada. They were asked their views on creating a sense of belonging to Canada *and nowhere else*. Most of them agreed that Canada’s strength is the ability of Canadians to say that they belong here *and elsewhere*.

A sense of belonging is conditioned by how people are treated by others. Further, attachment to Canada is not developed through altruism; one will feel attached if one’s needs are fulfilled. That many Canadians are not able to fully participate in the Canadian labour market because of racism and other forms of discrimination is a great loss of human capital. The research on ex-pat Hong Kong Canadians shows the extent to which a sense of belonging among immigrants is related to their economic position.

Another participant mentioned a recent analysis of the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) suggesting that there is no significant relationship between transnationalism and sense of belonging to Canada.¹ This analysis used a ‘transnationalism scale’ comprised of three variables: citizenship status, family in country of birth, and travel to country of origin. In terms of ethnic groups, two stand out in terms of having a low sense of belonging to Canada – Southeast Asians (especially the Chinese) and the French. What these findings demonstrate is that contrary to popular perception, links with another country (or countries) do not necessarily impede transnationals from developing a sense of belonging to Canada. Those who do not feel they belong to Canada might do so for other reasons.

¹ This analysis is part of a paper that had been accepted for publication by an international journal at the time of writing this report.

One participant questioned why a sense of attachment is considered a good thing or is even necessary. In today's world, we might think that abiding by laws, paying taxes, and fulfilling other such minimum requirements to be sufficient. Others disagreed, saying that attachment goes beyond such minimalism and is translated into active engagement in civic life. And in the case of transnational migrants, participation in civic life is considered as an impetus to integration.

Engagement

A strong sense of belonging and attachment are assumed to lead to engagement and active participation in civic life – which assumes importance in the context of transnational migrants' integration into their host societies. Participants agreed that engagement of all Canadians in civic and political institutions is a desirable thing, but there was less clarity on how to achieve it. They were asked their views on whether the government should be in the business of fostering engagement or whether it should just focus on eliminating barriers to engagement.

To show that nurturing engagement is not easy, one participant cited the example of parental engagement in schools. It was said that in Ontario, the Minister of Education has taken an aggressive approach to engage parents from diverse backgrounds, with little success. In the absence of engagement on the part of immigrant parents, developing such attitudes and behaviours becomes critical for the second generation (especially the 18 - 25 years group).

Others suggested providing incentives for engagement. The government should provide mechanisms for people to participate and let them decide whether they would like to engage or not. An effective democracy requires people to participate critically, and this requires an informed public discourse. It was argued that people are really not well informed by the media and by the educational system.

Inclusion

As legal status, citizenship confers the same set of rights to all citizens, but some participants were concerned that many Canadians - including transnational migrants - are treated as second-class citizens. Barriers such as racism and discrimination prevent many newcomers and minorities from fully participating in the Canadian labour market and other institutions. Supporting this view, another participant cited more results from the EDS analysis, which showed that transnationals were 66% more likely to face ethnic/racial discrimination than non-transnationals. The analysis does not reveal, however, whether discrimination propels people to engage in transnational behaviour. Participants agreed that the elimination of such discrimination would be an important step in making the host society conducive to immigrants' integration.

Another participant disagreed, saying that Canada has simply brought in more immigrants than it needs. On the whole Canada has a very welcoming policy to immigrants, but admitting immigrants who do not have the language skills and qualifications will only cause problems. Yet another participant pointed out that the challenge is the difference between a welcoming policy and a welcoming society. Canada has welcoming policies, but we need to make these more effective in society-at-large. Research by Krishna and Ravi Pendakur shows that 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generation visible minorities do not earn an income commensurate with their educational attainment. They are still experiencing the effect of their racial characteristics.

Notwithstanding the inevitability and positive impacts of transnationalism, participants agreed that civic identity and practice can be reinforced by facilitating the inclusion of all Canadians in day to day life. As an arena of citizenship interaction, the local is as important as the global. The significance of the local community and its institutions – schools, libraries, hockey clubs, the workplace – was underscored as an effective site of integration. To quote one participant: “Loyalties are built up over day-to-day interactions. Integration happens when you’re doing other things.”

Citizenship as Legal Status

The Conversation then turned to citizenship as legal status. An individual’s right to acquire, maintain and transmit citizenship is determined by the Citizenship Act. Transnational migrants often hold dual or multiple citizenships, thus giving them citizenship rights in two or more nation-states. Participants were asked to consider Canada’s Citizenship Act in the context of transnationalism and the issues raised in earlier parts of the discussion. Is the policy represented by the Citizenship Act fundamentally sound given our concerns about transnationalism? Should it therefore be left in place with the occasional fine tune? Or does the Act need to be reviewed in a more fundamental way? What other policy interventions should be considered when talking of citizenship in an age of transnationalism?

Acquiring, maintaining and transmitting citizenship

A number of commentators have pointed out the ease with which Canadian citizenship can be acquired, maintained and transmitted (to future generations) by transnationals, even in the absence of meaningful links – including residence – with Canada. Since the 2006 Lebanon evacuation, citizenship policies have been further critiqued as creating “Canadians of convenience”.

At 85%, Canada has one of the highest rates of naturalization among immigrant-receiving countries. Some participants felt that it is too easy to acquire citizenship and that the waiting period for Permanent Residents to apply for citizenship should be raised from 3 years to 5 years (what it was earlier). All other countries, except New Zealand and Israel, have a longer waiting period. In Canada, immigrants from developing countries have a higher rate of naturalization than those from the U.S. or the U.K. One person also expressed concern about people who come to Canada for the birth of their children so that the latter can acquire Canadian citizenship as a result of birth on Canadian soil.

Others disagreed, saying that Canada should leverage the Citizenship Act and a high rate of naturalization to reinforce trends favouring Canada’s long-term well-being. Supporting this view, one participant said that the perceived benefits attached with Canadian citizenship - mobility, voting, safety (compared with certain regions of the world), high-quality universal healthcare, family sponsorships, and access to federal jobs - presents an opportunity to create policy to foster attachment and belonging to Canada. There was consensus on the need for further research on this topic, including a cost-benefit analysis of the naturalization rate that Canada has achieved.

Some suggested that the maintenance of Canadian citizenship could be determined on the basis of how you define a meaningful relationship with Canada. Instead of making citizenship permanent, it could be linked to a residence period in Canada. Others disagreed, citing concerns about potential loss of human capital. Others wondered whether such a policy could have a positive effect by actually preventing people from leaving. Other criteria were discussed. Some wondered about the

efficacy of denying voting rights to citizens after more than 5 years of residence outside Canada – given that so few people vote anyway. Others suggested that rights be phased out as the residence period outside Canada increases. Finally, some suggested that involvement in heinous crimes in Canada and elsewhere be considered as grounds for the revocation of Canadian citizenship.

On the topic of the transmission of citizenship, Bill C-37, which proposes amendments to the Citizenship Act to restore citizenship to ‘lost Canadians’, was mentioned. (At the time of the Conversation, this Bill had just been introduced in Parliament.) It also proposes limits on the transmission of Canadian citizenship to those born outside Canada. The present law says that a Canadian parent can pass on citizenship to his/her children who were born outside Canada for unlimited generations. Bill C-37 proposes to limit transmission to the first generation born outside Canada. Successive generations born abroad may apply for citizenship through the immigration process. The objective of this amendment is to promote the principle of attachment to Canada.

A Minimalist Approach

Participants were asked to share their views on a hypothetical minimalist approach to citizenship. At the bare minimum, what kind of rights would need to be attached to Canadian citizenship to make it worthwhile? Some participants agreed that the right to a passport, the right to return to Canada, the right to vote and the right to have one’s children educated in a school in Canada in the province of one’s choice would constitute such a minimum package of citizenship rights. Beyond this core package, other services, including healthcare, could be linked to residence in Canada and determined on a case-to-case basis, as in the case of pensions. Many expressed the need to supplement a core package of citizenship rights with policies and programs to foster civic identity and practice.

Other participants expressed their reservations about such minimalism. As an unintended consequence, such a citizenship policy might encourage instrumentalism – a purely pragmatic motivation to acquiring Canadian citizenship as a means to other ends – and the creation of “Canadians of convenience”. Canadian citizenship would be sought and held by transnationals simply as a ‘safety back-up’. Others wondered about the enforceability of such a policy, and whether its implementation would lead to legal and public relations challenges.

Meaningful Citizenship: Beyond Legal Status

As legal status, citizenship confers upon Canadians – including transnational migrants – a number of basic rights. However, legal status by itself does not bring about the behaviours and attitudes we associate with civic identity and practice – which is in turn crucial to immigrants’ integration in Canada. In other words, successful integration of immigrants was said to hinge on a much wider view of citizenship. To make citizenship meaningful for all Canadians, there is a need to put into practice the links between legal status on one hand and civic identity and practice on the other.

Overall, participants agreed that the Citizenship Act needs no fundamental changes in the context of transnationalism. However, the Act needs to be supported by other policies and programs to foster civic identity and practice among all Canadians, including transnational migrants. Specifically, participants discussed the need for more effective intervention in two policy/program areas: (1) civic education and (2) the integration of immigrants and minorities in the labour market.

Participants were unanimous about the need for better civic education for all Canadians. There was less agreement, however, on what the government's role should be in developing and imparting civic education. Some felt that the government should clearly define what it means to be a Canadian citizen, because in the absence of an explicit description of the expectations of Canadian citizenship, "people make them up". Others supported this view, saying that we need to set values at a threshold without being elitist, and that citizenship has to mean something more substantial than individuals' emotions. Some supported the need to define and encourage 'good citizenship', but felt that that this is not the federal government's role. The downside of defining 'good citizenship', however, is that there will be people who are outside of this population.

All participants agreed that schools are the best site for civic education. There are many weaknesses in the current system of civic education that result in a wasted opportunity. A number of reasons for the current state were cited. The new focus on literacy and numeracy (especially math and science) has resulted in a shift away from social studies and other 'soft' subjects. Participants lamented the way that Canadian history is being taught in schools. Citing the example of the environmental movement, one participant said that schools and children need to be used as ambassadors to educate parents. Another barrier to imparting adequate civic and multicultural education is the relationship between the federal and provincial governments on education policy.

Finally, most participants agreed on the need for more effective policies and programs to ensure the full participation of immigrants and minorities in the Canadian labour market. It was reiterated that effective economic integration is likely to have positive impacts on the development of attachment and belonging, inclusion and loyalty. In other words, intervention in certain policy areas outside the Citizenship Act is likely to have a positive impact on Canadian citizenship, in the broadest sense of the term.

Conclusion

This Conversation brought together a diverse set of views and interests, including those of policy-makers, researchers, NGO leaders and other stakeholders, on the relationship between transnationalism and citizenship policy in Canada. Overall, participants agreed that not only is transnationalism inevitable in the context of globalization and migration policies, it is by and large a positive phenomenon. Contrary to popular belief, transnationalism is not, in itself, a deterrent to immigrants' integration. Integration and transnationalism can, and often do, go hand in hand.

Participants were unanimous about the limits of transnational politics. Loyalty becomes an issue when there are political conflicts between two or more states and Canadian citizens are involved. In such cases, the government is expected to intervene. As one participant put it: "As far as loyalty goes the end game is a stable polity – a safe, secure country that functions well as a democracy."

Generally, it was also agreed that the realities of transnationalism do not require changes to the Citizenship Act. Having said that, participants also agreed that legal status by itself does not ensure the development of broader citizenship through civic identity and practice – which is in turn crucial to immigrants' integration in Canada. Given the large number of transnational Canadians, there is a need to supplement citizenship as legal status with strategies to foster civic identity and practice. In particular, there was agreement that policies and programs to ensure economic integration and social inclusion – including the removal of barriers like racism - would have a positive impact on

immigrants' and minorities' loyalty, attachment and belonging and engagement with Canada. Further, Canada's high rates of naturalization should be seized upon as an opportunity to expand our approach towards citizenship policy and legislation. Finally, there was broad consensus on the need for better civic education for all Canadians.

Given the complexity of the subject matter, participants also noted the need for more research. In particular, some suggested an analysis of the various streams of transnational activities over the life course, as well as the economic impact of transnationalism in terms of the use of social benefits – especially by non-resident Canadians. Such research would not only assist in policy development, but would also be useful for a more informed public discourse.

Some of these research questions might include:

- What are the various groups of Canadian transnationals and transnational activities over the life course (education, working life, retirement) and what is their impact on the Canadian economy?
- What is the economic impact of transnationalism in terms of social benefits enjoyed by Canadians who live outside Canada for much of their life?
- What is the nature and extent of Canadian citizens' participation in transnational politics?
- What are the costs and benefits of Canada's current rate of naturalization?

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