

CANADA AND QUEBEC: TWO NATIONALISMS IN THE GLOBAL AGE

Michael Keating

BACK TO THE CONSTITUTION (AGAIN)

In September 1994, the Parti Québécois (PQ) came back to power in the Quebec provincial elections, promising a referendum on 'sovereignty' within a year. This followed the breakthrough of October 1993 when the Bloc Québécois, the first Quebec nationalist party to contest federal elections, swept the province and, with the collapse of the governing Conservatives, became the official opposition in Ottawa. Canada's constitutional saga, temporarily put to rest after the failure of the 1992 referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, began anew. Many Canadians see this as an irritating distraction from the pressing issues of the economy and government budget deficits. Others welcome the opportunity to settle the issue clearly once and for all, with Quebec either in or out. The latter are likely to be disappointed. Quebec's relationship with its anglophone neighbours has been an issue for over two hundred years and, whatever the outcome of the referendum, will be subject to constant negotiation over a wide range of matters. Sovereignty, a difficult concept at any time, has become almost impossible to define in the modern world, with its interdependence and permeable borders and in which the state is giving up powers to the market, to civil society and to supranational and subnational actors. Nor does the Quebec election give a clear idea as to what the province's people really want. While the PQ gained a large parliamentary majority, they were virtually tied in the popular vote

Michael Keating is Professor of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario and Visiting Professor of Government at the University of Strathclyde. He is the author of many books and articles on nationalism and urban and regional politics. He is currently completing a comparative study of nationalism in Scotland, Quebec and Catalonia.

Scottish Affairs

with the provincial Liberals. The balance in the popular vote was held by the fledgling Parti Action Démocratique du Québec, whose policy is to seek a third way between the existing federal system and independence (table 1). Opinion polls showed that, even while voting for the PQ, most Québécois rejected independence. They merely wanted a change of government, after nine years of Liberal rule.

Table 1

Quebec election 12 September 1994

	%	seats	candidates
PQ	44.7	77	125
Liberals	44.3	47	125
Parti Action Démocratique du Québec	6.5	1	80

Ambivalence is not a new feature in Quebec politics. It runs through the entire history of Quebec's position within Canada, as a distinct people within a larger federation. In the last twenty years, however, the issue has taken a new form as a movement has developed for Quebec independence, and the old mechanisms for managing the relationship have broken down. Quebec and the rest of Canada are both seeking a formula for asserting their national identity in a changing and interdependent world. These nation-building projects are increasingly in conflict.

THE TWO FOUNDING PEOPLES

Canada traditionally sustained a doctrine of 'two founding peoples', the French and the anglophone community, the latter rooted culturally in the British Isles (English, Scots, Welsh and Irish are, for Canadian census and other purposes, treated as a single ethnic group). There were brief attempts at assimilation after the conquest of Quebec in 1763 and again in the mid-

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

nineteenth century, but for most of Canada's history the Quebec issue was managed by a combination of devolution and consociational accommodation. Under confederation from 1867 Quebec had its own government with extensive powers in cultural and social matters. It retained its educational system, its religious settlement, its language and its own civil code. At federal level, Quebec politicians occupied prominent positions in the main Canadian parties.

The two founding peoples in practice were anything but equal. Anglophones soon outnumbered francophones and as the Canadian nation was built from sea to sea during the late nineteenth century the west came to be largely an anglophone preserve. Francophone rights were infringed in the Manitoba school legislation of 1890, and in Ontario the Orange Order gained influence with a militantly anti-French and anti-Catholic stance (McNaught 1988). Within Quebec, there was a cultural division of labour. The main sectors of the economy and the financial centre in Montreal were controlled by an anglophone bourgeoisie; francophones, although in the majority, were concentrated in lower status occupations. Politics, the small provincial bureaucracy and the legal profession were francophone domains. From mid-nineteenth century, immense power was wielded by the ultramontane wing of the Catholic Church, which resisted modernization, industrialization and urbanization as a threat to traditional values and francophone culture. It was the Church which controlled the education system and social services. Their philosophy was that of *survivance*, the need for the francophone minority to survive, by drawing in on itself and resisting outside influence. This was a form of ethnic particularism but which cannot be called nationalism, since it did not make demands for constitutional change. Under the regime of Maurice Duplessis and his Union Nationale (1936-39 and 1944-60), this strategy was carried into the modern era. Closely allied to the Church, Duplessis resisted social modernization and liberalisation and suppressed trade unions, while making deals on favourable terms with anglophone and US corporations to invest in Quebec. Intrusions of the federal government into Quebec's affairs were resisted, even to the point of refusing federal funds tied to new programmes.

The system broke down in the 1960s with the Quiet Revolution, a programme of economic, social and political modernization associated with the Liberal government of Jean Lesage (1960-66), and with the reforms of successive Liberal and PQ governments in the 1970s. Modernization did not, despite the fears of the traditionalists and the theories of the diffusionist school of social science, entail a loss of Quebec's francophone identity.

Scottish Affairs

Rather, this identity was itself updated and recast, and used as an instrument of modernization. The slogan of the Quiet Revolution, *maîtres chez nous* (masters in our own house) signalled the desire of the repressed ethnic group to improve its socio-economic status. The main instrument for this was an expanded, revitalized and secularized Quebec state. A Ministry of Education was set up to take control of instruction out of the hands of the Church. A Ministry of Culture was established. Selective nationalization was used to take control of key enterprises and open up opportunities for francophones. Quebec established its own pension scheme, separate from the rest of Canada, and used it to fund the *Caisse de dépôt et de placement*, an investment agency with a brief to develop Quebec-owned industry. With this and other instruments, a francophone business class was brought into being and the balance of control in the economy shifted markedly. A series of language laws in the 1970s sought to promote French and open opportunities for francophones in the business world. The main provisions were: a requirement for firms to use French in their business activities; a restriction on the ability of parents to send their children to English schools, with a view to ensuring the assimilation of immigrants into the French culture; a restriction on the use of languages other than French in commercial advertising.

This all brought into being a new type of nationalism in Quebec (Balthazar 1986; Langlois 1991; Gagnon and Rocher 1992; Latouche 1993), based less on ethnic particularism than on the territory of Quebec and the society which it sustains. It is outward-looking and self-confident, open to change rather than resistant. It is concerned with the promotion of Quebec rather than francophones in the Canadian context. *Canadiens*, who in the nineteenth century, came to identify themselves as French-Canadians, now see themselves as *Québécois*. Surveys have shown that the percentage of francophones identifying themselves as Québécois increased between 1970 and 1990 from 21 to 59, while the proportion identifying themselves as Canadians fell from 34 per cent to 9 per cent (Pinard 1992). The meaning of this shift can be gauged from comparing the definitions given by the traditionalist Tremblay Commission of 1954 with that of the National Assembly Commission on sovereignty in 1992. According to Tremblay:

The French Canadians are almost all of the Catholic faith...The French Canadians are of French origin and culture...the French Canadians are the only group whose religious and cultural particularism almost exactly coincide. Only French Canada, as a homogeneous group, presents the

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

double differentiating factor of religion and culture (Tremblay 1973, p.6).

By contrast, the 1992 commission defined Quebec as:

a modern, multi-ethnic community, founded on shared common values, a normal language of communication, and participation in collective life.

Rather than being a mere ethnicity, Quebec is becoming what is known in French as a *société globale*, a complete nation containing within it a diversity of interests and identities (Langlois 1991). Many Quebec intellectuals see this as the only way in which Québec can integrate itself as a society while projecting itself in the world (Gagnon 1992; Balthazar 1993; Latouche 1993).

Some claim that Quebec has made the transition from ethnic particularism to civic nationalism; others, noting that nationalism is still almost entirely confined to the francophone community, merely hope that this may become the case. A narrowly-based ethnic nationalism would risk depriving the nation-building project of both internal and external legitimacy. Civic nationalism, while continuing to promote a French-speaking Québec, could welcome other ethnic groups into the community and allow cultural pluralism. Yet, while such a comprehensive notion of national identity might take the edges off ethnic conflict within Quebec, it might make the accommodation of Quebec within Canada more difficult since it makes Quebec the primary unit of identity and legitimizes the government of Quebec's claim to general powers of social and economic regulation, not reducible to pre-defined constitutional competences.

Quebec nationalism has in any case only partly made the transition from ethnic to civic. Political parties in Quebec now include non-Francophones within their conception of the society and the Parti Québécois parades candidates of non-French origin. Yet the PQ programme of 1991 defines Québécois as Francophones (PQ 1991) and PQ leader Jacques Parizeau has declared that independence is possible merely with the support of the old stock Québécois (*Québécois de souche*) (**La Presse** 24 Jan 1993). The collective rights which are invoked by nationalists are in practice those of the Francophone community. Support for Quebec nationalism of any sort is almost entirely confined to Francophones. There is a sharp antagonism between Quebec nationalists and native peoples, particularly the Cree in the north and the Mohawks in the south. Native leaders have made it clear that

Scottish Affairs

they will not recognize the authority of an independent Quebec. The PQ, while supporting native self-government, denies the aboriginal peoples the right of sovereignty or the right to secede from Quebec.

Another doctrinal shift was from a closed, inward-looking and protectionist nationalism to a continental and global outlook. From the time of the Quiet Revolution, Quebec governments had sought an opening to the world and a counterbalance to Ottawa (Québec 1991). In the 1980s, both main Québec parties became ardent supporters of free trade with the United States and later Mexico. This was both a political and an economic strategy, intended to weaken the influence of the Canadian federal government while promoting the modernization and restructuring of the Quebec economy on liberal market lines. The nationalist agenda no longer focuses merely on Quebec's relationship with the rest of Canada. It is concerned with how Quebec, as a collectivity and society, fits into the new international trading and political order. Particular emphasis is placed on Quebec's position as a small, French-speaking society within North America. English Canadian nationalists, especially on the left, are vehemently opposed to free trade with the United States, which they see as a threat to Canada's independence, its welfare state and its distinct model of society. Left wing nationalists in English Canada, who had previously sympathised with Quebec's aspirations, broke with them on this issue (Resnick 1990; Latouche 1990).

Modern Quebec nationalism, having broken with the Catholic traditionalism of the Duplessis era, has contained two strands, a liberal, modernizing strand, and a social democratic one. During the 1960s and 1970s there was a common interest between the two strands in the use of government in social and economic modernization. By the early 1980s, the gap between the social democratic and liberal conceptions of Quebec nationalism was more in evidence as the PQ government adopted much of the agenda of the new right, with fiscal austerity, public sector wage cuts, cutbacks in social services and privatization. By the early 1990s both main parties in Quebec were committed to the neo-liberal agenda of privatization and deregulation and the insertion of Quebec into the mainstream of North American advanced capitalism. This too, however, took a distinctively Québécois form, geared to the interests of the local business class (Balthazar 1991).

Meanwhile during the 1960s and 1970s a rival, and very different nation-building process was taking place in Canada as a whole. In 1966 Canada acquired its own flag, with its maple leaf design. Under Pierre Trudeau, a vision was developed of a united Canadian nation, which could

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

accommodate francophone-anglophone differences, immigrant cultures and individual rights. The national policy of bilingualism enshrined in the Official Languages Act of 1969 was intended to make francophones feel at home anywhere in Canada, rather than cleaving to Quebec nationalism. The policy of multiculturalism was intended to forge a Canadian identity which, unlike the US melting pot, could recognize and cultivate cultural identities. The Charter of Rights finally incorporated in the Constitution Act of 1982 was intended to provide protection of individual rights from coast to coast, as a badge of civic equality and citizenship. These visions clashed with the emerging national self-image of Quebec. Canadian bilingualism was seen as a way of weakening French predominance in Quebec and the consequential protection of francophones elsewhere in Canada was now of little concern. Multiculturalism was seen as a way of reducing francophones to just one of a multiplicity of ethnic groups rather than a co-founding people. Quebec's own territorial nationalism, like that of France itself, emphasises the need to integrate immigrants linguistically and culturally in order to incorporate them into the national society. The Charter of Rights was seen as emphasizing individualist rights, in the fashion of the USA, rather than collectivist values which are more important in Quebec (as in European) society. This conflict became very intense when provisions of Quebec's language laws were struck down in the 1980s as conflicting with the Charter.

Quebec nationalist intellectuals insist that these nation-building projects are incompatible (Langlois 1991a,b; Gagnon 1992; Laforest 1992). While the rest of North America supports an individualist liberalism in which the role of government is confined to regulation of relations among individuals and corporations, Quebec retains a larger view of the public domain in which society as a whole may adopt goals and promote its version of the desirable life (Taylor 1993). This produces a form of debate more familiar in continental Europe than in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, one in which entire rival projects for society are counterposed and the agenda of politics is extended. Nationalists of all stripes in Quebec insist that this emphasis on collective goals and rights is a defining feature of their society. The Bélanger-Campeau commission (1991) insisted that Quebec could not accept the 1982 Canadian constitution and charter of rights because it entrenched the equality of all Canadians on the same basis, thus denying Quebec's distinct society; its provisions for multiculturalism reduced the Québécois to one ethnic group among many; and the equality of provinces deprived Quebec of the means for promoting its distinct society. In this vision, Quebec is not defined as an ethnic group, but nor is it a society of atomized individuals, brought together for mere convenience. Rather it is a territorial

Scottish Affairs

collectivity bound together by common values, with a dominant language, but containing a variety of minority ethnic communities.

There is a certain irony here in that it is precisely these characteristics which are invoked in slightly different terms by anglophone Canadians to distinguish their society from the United States. The irony is compounded by the conflicting views on close relationships with the United States held by English Canadian and Quebec nationalists. Canadian nationalists, especially on the left, have resisted the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement as a threat to national sovereignty. Quebec nationalists (except for the trade unions) support it as an opportunity to gain national independence. There is a further paradox that, as Quebec has become economically and socially more like the rest of Canada (and North America generally) its identity has been strengthened. This is more of a paradox to observers outwith Quebec who tend to judge modernization from their own standpoint than to those within, to whom it seems perfectly natural. One could make a very similar argument about Scotland (as I do in my forthcoming book).

We are confronted, then, with a clash of two 'global societies' (Langlois 1991a,b). Both Quebec and Canada claim to be the basic frame of reference for identity, and for political decision-making and legitimacy. Nationalists insist that the only way out of this is national independence. Yet at the same time there is a keen awareness of mutual dependence and the need for cooperation. Most Québécois are fearful of the costs and disruption of independence and would like to resolve the question without risking these.

THE MEANING OF NATIONALISM IN QUEBEC

The meaning of nationalism and independence in Quebec has always been ambiguous. The first important separatist party, the Parti Québécois (PQ), was formed in 1968 under René Lévesque, a former Liberal minister. Lévesque won the 1976 provincial elections on 'sovereignty-association', proposing a referendum to obtain a mandate to negotiate a new relationship with Canada. This would have left the economic union intact, while making Quebec into a sovereign state. The referendum was lost by a substantial margin in 1980 but the PQ government was easily re-elected the following year. In its second mandate, it split on the constitutional question. Lévesque and the majority virtually abandoned independence and took the *beau risque* of negotiating with the Conservative federal government of Brian Mulroney,

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

elected in 1984 with the support of some prominent Quebec nationalists. A quarter of the Quebec cabinet, including Jacques Parizeau, resigned in protest and, following the defeat of the PQ government in 1985, seized control of the party and turned it in a more radical direction. In 1988 Parizeau was elected leader and the party committed itself to a policy of outright independence.

The hard line did not survive the PQ's defeat at the provincial elections of 1989. By the early 1990s, it was once again following a very ambivalent line. The cumbersome phrase 'sovereignty association' was discredited by the referendum of 1980, and replaced by the simple idea of 'sovereignty'. Yet in time this has been subject to interpretation which makes the final outcome little different. The PQ's official policy is to win a referendum on sovereignty, after which Quebec will become an independent state. Yet at the same time, they wish to retain the economic union with Canada, use the Canadian currency, maintain dual citizenship and allow free movement of labour. There would be joint commissions to handle matters of common interest (Parti Québécois 1993). Lucien Bouchard, leader of the Bloc Québécois in the federal parliament, has even mused about the possibility of joint institutions on the lines of the European Parliament. This might look very much like sovereignty-association all over again but there is an important difference in procedure. In 1980 Lévesque asked for a mandate to negotiate a new deal with Canada. In 1995 Parizeau proposes to ask for a mandate for sovereignty and then, as a sovereign state, to negotiate with Canada. At least so it appeared until November 1994 when Parizeau, aware that many Québécois would not take the risk, started to argue that even non-separatists could vote Yes and then press for a confederal rather than independent arrangement in the aftermath.

The policy of limited sovereignty is given more credibility this time by the external context. The most important factor is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which would ensure the maintenance of economic links with the rest of Canada and beyond. NAFTA is invoked frequently as a new framework for a sovereign Quebec and one which will ensure that Canadian influence is balanced by that of the United States. More widely, the PQ also promises to adhere to all Canada's existing international institutions, including the Francophonie, the Organization of American States, NATO, the GATT, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and even the (British) Commonwealth (Parti Québécois 1993). Defence issues are not widely discussed but there is a general understanding that American pressure will ensure that these are little changed and that, in any case, the United States would have a strong interest in keeping intruders

Scottish Affairs

out of Quebec (Jockel 1992). The PQ has thus transformed the meaning of national independence but in a manner which arguably is in tune with the modern world of limited sovereignty.

If the PQ have proposed retaining much of the infrastructure of Canadian federalism, the non-separatist parties have insisted on radical transfers of powers and have been prepared to flirt with sovereignty. Daniel Johnson, Union Nationale premier in the late 1960s, demanded 'equality or independence'. Provincial Liberal governments in the early 1960s pressed for additional powers and contemplated independence. Robert Bourassa, Liberal premier before and after the PQ governments of 1976-85, was a master of ambiguity. Starting and ending his long career as a committed federalist, he toyed in between with a multiplicity of themes. He talked of 'profitable federalism' and refused to sign onto the Canadian constitution without additional powers for Quebec. When the Meech Lake accord collapsed in 1988 (see below), he unleashed the nationalist wing of his party. The Allaire report, which was briefly party policy, proposed such a radical transfer of powers to Quebec as to rival the PQ programme. He set up a parliamentary committee of inquiry to examine the practicalities of sovereignty and promised a referendum on sovereignty if a suitable offer were not received from the rest of Canada within a specific time frame. Bourassa even mused that, given the consensus on Quebec's right to self-determination, it was really 'sovereign' already.

THE SUPPORT BASE OF NATIONALISM

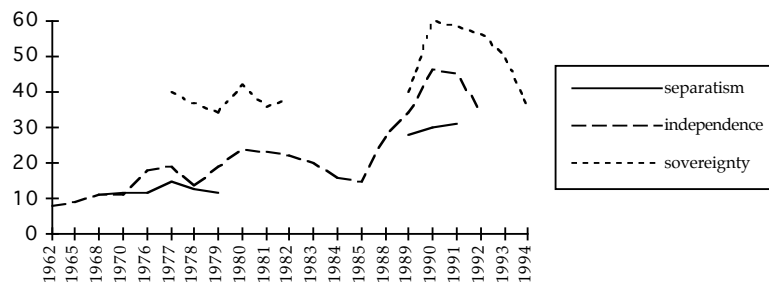
Gauging popular support for Quebec nationalism is made difficult by the variations and ambiguities in the nationalist project. Public opinion has been highly unstable, with support for nationalism increasing at times of constitutional crisis such as the aftermath of the 1988 Supreme Court ruling on the language laws and the crisis over the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990-1. Support for the status quo tends to rise in periods of economic recession. Figure 1 shows support for the various options in rather fragmentary form, using available data. There is more support for 'softer' nationalist options, allowing for continued association with Canada, than for 'harder' ones which suggest complete separation. Polls in the 1970s and 1980s showed more support for sovereignty-association than for unqualified sovereignty but by the 1990s the difference had largely disappeared (Cloutier et al 1992), probably because the PQ had ceased to use the phrase sovereignty-association while incorporating much of its meaning into the

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

new sovereignty formula. Support for the strongest status quo position, which is that Quebec should have the same status as other provinces, stood at 72 per cent in 1975 then fell away, though rising again to over 50 per cent in 1983-85, following the economic recession and the backtracking of the PQ on the independence issue (Cloutier et al 1992). In the figure, the sovereignty percentages until 1990 refer to the sovereignty-association option, since then to sovereignty. It shows considerable fluctuations but support has never fallen below 30 per cent and, at times of particular excitement, has risen above 50 per cent. This appears to be the range of support for serious nationalist positions in Quebec.

Most Québécois believe that the softer question about sovereignty does mean something substantively different from independence, more akin to the sovereignty-association formula of the 1970s. A March 1994 poll indicated that 58 per cent thought that sovereignty and separation were not the same thing (Léger and Léger, **Globe and Mail**, 10 March 1994). One in June 1994 showed 49 per cent believing that sovereignty implied a formal economic association with Canada (Angus Reid, 9.6, June 1994). Of those inclined to vote for independence, only 40 per cent envisaged complete independence ('like France or Britain') while 57 per cent interpreted it as including an economic association with Canada. It is clear that the assumption that sovereignty means something less than separatism allows it to score more highly in public opinion.

Figure 1 Support for nationalist options in Quebec, 1962-94



Sources: Angus Reid; Gallup Report; Pinard (1992); Guay et. al. (1992); Globe and Mail.

Scottish Affairs

There is some evidence about what Québécois mean by sovereignty and more powers (Blais and Naideau 1992). Most want Quebec to have full powers in the area of culture and language, including education. Few want it to be responsible for defence and foreign affairs. A majority favour Quebec having sole responsibility in social policy, but want joint arrangements in economic matters. So they are concerned to protect their cultural and national identity and believe that they can maintain the social balance, but recognize the interdependence of economic policy and have little interest in the classic state functions of defence and diplomacy. A 1991 poll showed that three quarters of Québécois believed that an independent Quebec should have an economic association with Canada, more than a third supported dual citizenship and more than half favoured a joint department of defence (Angus Reid, 7.2, 1992).

One might reasonably conclude that most Québécois want a system in which the government of Quebec is the primary focus of their national allegiance but in which powers are shared with the rest of Canada where appropriate. They are fearful of the risks of separatism and want to retain existing economic relationships. This might be characterized as a confederal arrangement, or as something on the lines of the European Union. The problem is that this sort of arrangement is not on offer, either from Quebec elites or from the rest of Canada.

NEGOTIATING A SOLUTION

There have been many attempts over the years to accommodate Quebec within the Canadian confederation. The focus of these efforts was the patriation of the Canadian constitution which, until 1982, consisted of the British North America Act, amendable only by the British Parliament. In the 1960s the Fulton and Favreau formulas were rejected by Quebec as not giving the province enough power. Under Pierre Trudeau the federal government sought to build a Canadian identity in which the provinces would all be equal, there would be identical rights throughout the country, bilingualism would accommodate the needs of francophones, and multiculturalism would satisfy the aspirations of minority populations. There would be an amending formula which would not allow any one province to block constitutional changes. The federal government could extend the welfare state by spending in areas of provincial jurisdiction. This collided with the view of both major parties in Quebec. They insisted that Quebec's distinct status should be recognized, especially in cultural and linguistic

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

matters, that Quebec should have a veto on future constitutional changes, and that the federal spending power in matters of provincial jurisdiction be limited. In 1971 Robert Bourassa, Liberal premier of Quebec, accepted the Victoria formula for constitutional repatriation but had to reject it following pressure at home. After the failure of the Quebec referendum in 1980, the Lévesque government re-entered talks with Ottawa and the other provinces but failed to agree. The constitution was patriated without Quebec's consent, including a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. At the insistence of western premiers, the latter included a 'notwithstanding clause' allowing a federal or provincial government to over-ride court decisions to strike down laws in certain instances. The notwithstanding clause was then used extensively by the PQ government of Quebec in effect to opt out of the charter.

In 1985 the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney re-opened the dossier. Mulroney had assembled a rather precarious coalition of Quebec nationalists and disaffected westerners. His vision of Canada was very different from Trudeau's and his style of government relied heavily on the making of deals rather than the pursuit of general principles. Three measures were of particular importance in breaking from the Trudeau form of Canadian nationalism. The National Energy Policy, which had forced the western provinces to sell their oil cheaply to the industrialized east, was repealed. A free trade agreement was negotiated with the United States, though opposed by Canadian nationalists who feared that economic integration would entail the loss of political independence. To accommodate Quebec, Mulroney negotiated the Meech Lake accord of 1987, agreed by all ten provinces and the federal government. This provided for the recognition of Quebec as a 'distinct society', for a Quebec veto on constitutional change, and for the appointment of Quebec judges to the Supreme Court of Canada, and it gave Quebec a role in selecting immigrants to the provinces. Although agreed by all the province, Meech Lake was unpopular in English Canada, where it was seen as giving too much to Quebec. Interminable debates took place on the meaning of the 'distinct society' clause, presented in Quebec as a substantial concession to their identity, and in English Canada as a mere form of words. Three years were given for all provinces to ratify Meech Lake, by which time several had changed their governing majorities so that, when the deadline approached, Manitoba had failed to ratify and Newfoundland had rescinded its ratification resolution. One of the key factors in destroying support for Meech Lake outside Quebec was the reaction of the Bourassa government to a 1988 supreme court decision to strike down the provision of the Quebec language law that all commercial signs should be in French. Bourassa invoked the notwithstanding clause to

Scottish Affairs

protect a characteristic compromise in which bilingual signs would be allowed indoors but French only outdoors. Another element was the rising demands from other groups that, if Quebec were to be accommodated in the constitution, then their demands must also be recognized. The most important were the western provinces, demanding an elected Senate with equal representation from all provinces, a demand known as the Triple E Senate (equal, elected and effective), and native peoples who sought constitutional guarantees for their status.

Reaction in Quebec to the failure of Meech Lake was a rise in nationalist feeling. Bourassa withdrew from intergovernmental talks and put a resolution through the national assembly providing for a referendum on sovereignty in 1992 if new offers were not received from the rest of Canada. The Bélanger-Campeau commission was set up to examine the constitutional future of Quebec and two parliamentary committees established, one to consider the mechanics of the transition to sovereignty, and the other to consider offers from the rest of Canada. During 1992, the temperature cooled sufficiently for Bourassa to return to the negotiating table for another marathon session, which produced the Charlottetown Accord. This was intended to give Quebec the substance of Meech Lake, while also satisfying the demands of the west and the native peoples and pan-Canadian nationalists. It started with a general declaration of principles, the Canada clause, into which was inserted the Quebec 'distinct society' clause, together with clauses about aboriginal peoples, racial and gender equality and the rights of the provinces and the government of Canada. The 'inherent right' of aboriginal self-government was recognised. There was provision for a new Senate with equal representation from the provinces, with the mode of election left to provincial laws. The Senate would have co-equal legislative powers with the House of Commons, except for money bills; conflicts would be resolved in joint sittings. Provinces were given a role in nominating justices of the Supreme Court, with reserved positions for Quebec. There was a clarification of exclusive provincial jurisdiction in several fields and a provision for provinces to opt out of federally-funded programmes, as long as they were pursuing programmes compatible with the objectives of these. There was a complicated clause on responsibility for labour market development and training. The federal government had tried to insist on a commitment to a Canadian common market, with the dismantling of the extensive trade barriers between the provinces. Social advocates had sought guarantees for a nation-wide health care system, education and social services. All that was achieved was a vague clause of economic and social union, which explicitly did not alter the powers of any level of government.

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

At 51 pages of legal draft, Charlottetown represented the apogee of efforts to constitutionalise the problems of Canadian diversity and resolve them with forms of words. The referendum campaign was marked by minute exegeses of the meaning of the various clauses and their compatibility. Quebec nationalists objected to their concerns being put on a plane with those of the west and the aboriginal peoples and to the distinct society clause being incorporated in the Canada clause. Some anglophone feminist groups (though not those in Quebec) continued to argue that the distinct society clause was a threat to gender equality. The western-based Reform Party complained that the Triple E Senate had not been achieved. Left-wing and labour groups complained about the internal free trade clause, weak though this was. Anglophones complained that the deal gave too much to Quebec, Quebec nationalists that it gave too little. Supported by all three federal parties, the governments of all the provinces and territories and the leadership of the Assembly of First Nations, Charlottetown could still be attacked as an elite accord, done over the heads of the people. It was also brought home that the accord contained so many loose ends that it did not provide a final solution to the constitutional conundrum. The battle would merely move to the courts where the accord would be interpreted; and further rounds of negotiation would be needed to fill in the details. As the campaign progressed, support unraveled and the accord went down to defeat both in Quebec and in English Canada.

The demise of Meech Lake and of the elaborate Charlottetown Accord indicate that a comprehensive, constitutionalised solution incorporating the Quebec issue is simply not possible. Quebec will not be satisfied with the mere status of a province like the others. Anglophone Canada will not concede it more. The 'distinct society' clause was an effort to paper over the cracks, presented in Quebec as a substantive power and in the rest of Canada as a mere declaratory statement. To be acceptable in Quebec, any solution requires a recognition of Quebec's national identity and the implications which this has for its government as the primary reference point for Québécois. Such a recognition is not in prospect. A solution acceptable in Quebec would also require an asymmetry in powers, with Quebec enjoying powers and a status which the other provinces do not want. This too is unacceptable. Canada has its own version of the West Lothian Question and the other provinces would not tolerate a Quebec with substantially greater powers having the same representation in the House of Commons. On the other hand, it could be argued in Canada as in the UK that there is already considerable asymmetry. Each province came into confederation on different terms. Representation in the House of Commons is biased heavily to the

Scottish Affairs

smaller provinces, and the government of Quebec has a domestic and international status which is rather different from those of the other provinces. Meech Lake and Charlottetown also showed that a constitutional settlement for Quebec alone is not acceptable to other groups who have entered the constitutional game. Yet an overall settlement involves too many actors, too many decision points and too many veto options to be viable.

Canadian and Quebec nationalism face very similar problems in the new global age. Nationalism has traditionally been sustained by ethnic identity, the state, and the institutions, traditions and practices of civil society. As it shifted from its basis in ethnic particularism, the state became more important as the expression of identity. Yet as the state retreats in the face of neo-liberal ideology and continental integration, it is less able to sustain this role. More of a burden then falls on civil society to maintain national identity in the face of weakened ethnic identity and a retreating state. This is true of Canada as much as for Quebec.

An asymmetrical federalism which recognizes the ambiguity of sovereignty, divided loyalty and multiple identity is the preferred solution of most Québécois, to judge from the opinion polls. They would like to negotiate with the rest of Canada on a bilateral basis rather than being one of ten provinces. This is not on offer. Instead Québécois are to be asked about their second choice, between status quo federalism, or independence, categories which are of ever less relevance in the contemporary world. What is certain is that, whether the vote is Yes or No, this will not be the end of the matter. Anglophone Canadians and Québécois did not believe that the Charlottetown accord would settle the matter once and for all, and this explained much of the No vote then. The relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada will continue to evolve and will always be the subject of negotiation. It is just part of normal politics.

REFERENCES

- Angus Reid, **The Reid Report**, monthly, Angus Reid, Toronto.
- Assemblée Nationale (1992a), Commission d'étude des questions afférentes à l'accession du Québec à la souveraineté, **Projet de Rapport**. Québec: Assemblée Nationale.
- Balthazar, L. (1990), **Bilan du nationalisme au Québec**. Montreal: l'Hexagone.

Canada and Quebec: Two Nationalisms in the Global Age

- Balthazar, L. (1991), 'Conscience nationale et contexte internationale', in L. Balthazar, G. Laforest and V. Lemieux, **Le Québec et la restructuration du Canada 1980-1992**. Saint-Laurent: Septentrion.
- Balthazar, L. (1992), 'L'émancipation internationale d'un Etat fédéré (1960-1990)', in Rocher, F. (ed.), **Bilan québécois du fédéralisme canadien**. Montreal: vlb.
- Balthazar, L. (1993), 'L'évolution du nationalisme québécois', in G. Daigle and G. Rocher, **Le Québec en jeu. Comprendre les grands défis**. Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Bélanger-Campeau (1991), **Rapport de la commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec**. co-chairs, M. Bélanger and J. Campeau Québec: author.
- Blais, A. and Nadeau, R. (1992), 'To Be or Not to Be Sovereignist: Quebecers' Perennial Dilemma', **Canadian Public Policy**, XVIII:1, pp. 89-103.
- Cloutier, E., Guay, J.H. and Latouche, D., **Le virage. l'évolution de l'opinion publique au Québec depuis 1960, ou comment le Québec est devenu souverainiste**. Montreal: Québec/Amérique.
- Dion, L. (1975), **Nationalismes et politique au Québec**. Montreal: Hurtubise.
- Gagnon, A-G. and Rocher, F. (1992), 'Faire l'histoire au lieu de la subir', in A-G. Gagnon and F. Rocher, **Réplique aux détracteurs de la souveraineté du Québec**. Montreal: vlb.
- Gagnon, A-G. and Montcalm, M.B. (1992), **Québec: au delà de la Révolution tranquille**. Montreal: vlb.
- Jockel, J.T. (1992), 'Armée, sécurité du territoire et souveraineté', in A-G. Gagnon and F. Rocher, **Réplique aux détracteurs de la souveraineté du Québec**. Montreal: vlb.
- Laforest, G. (1992), 'La Charte canadienne des droits et libertés au Québec: nationalist, injuste et illégitime', in Rocher, F. (ed.), **Bilan québécois du fédéralisme canadien**. Montreal: vlb.
- Langlois, S. (1991a), 'Le choc des deux sociétés globales', in L. Balthazar, G. Laforest and V. Lemieux, **Le Québec et la restructuration du Canada 1980-1992**. Saint-Laurent: Septentrion.
- Langlois, S. (1991b), 'Une société distincte à reconnaître et une identité collective à consolider', Commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec (Bélanger-Campeau Commission), **Document de travail**, 4, pp.569-95. Québec: Commission.
- Latouche, D. (1990), in Resnick, P., **Letters to a Québécois friend, with a reply by Daniel Latouche**. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Scottish Affairs

- Latouche, D. (1993), "Québec, See Canada": Québec Nationalism in the New Global Age', in A-G.Gagnon (ed.), **Québec. State and Society**, 2nd edition. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson.
- McNaught, K. (1988). **The Penguin History of Canada**. Penguin.
- Parti Québécois (1993), **Le Québec dans un monde nouveau**. Montreal: vlb.
- Pinard, M. (1992), 'The Quebec Independence Movement. A Dramatic Reemergence', **McGill Working Papers in Social Behaviour**, 92-06. Montreal: Department of Sociology, McGill University.
- Québec (1991), **Le Québec et l'interdépendance. Le monde pour l'horizon**. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère des Affaires internationales.
- Québec (1993), **Ministère des Affaires internationales**. Rapport annuel 1992-3. Québec: author.
- Resnick, P., **Letters to a Québécois friend, with a reply by Daniel Latouche**. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Taylor, C. (1993), 'The Deep Challenge of Dualism', A-G.Gagnon (ed.), **Québec. State and Society**, 2nd edition. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson.
- Tremblay, A. (1973), **Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Constitutional Problems**, edited by David Kwavnick. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

January 1995