

# **Ethnonationalism in a Federal State: The Case of Canada**

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Relations

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## PREFACE

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This paper was written for, and is published as a chapter in, *Ethnoterritorial Politics, Policy, and the Western World*, edited by Joseph R. Rudolph and Robert J. Thompson. Copyright is held by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Reproduction as an Institute Research Paper is by permission of the Publisher, whose cooperation is gratefully acknowledged. Other chapters in that volume, in addition to introductory and concluding essays by Thompson and Rudolph, are on Britain, Spain, France, and Belgium; there is also an essay on referendums and ethnoterritorial movements.

I am grateful to Yvan Gagnon, Bill Irvine, and Denis Robert for comments on an earlier draft of the paper. I should like also to thank Patti Candido and Valerie Jarus at the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations for word processing and preparation of the text in camera-ready form.

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*Peter M. Leslie*

## SOMMAIRE

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L'ethnonationalisme, qui est vu d'un oeil favorable par certains, est toutefois considéré comme une menace par d'autres, qui, conséquemment, aimeraient voir une réduction de l'acuité du facteur ethnique dans la vie politique. Cela étant, il est raisonnable de se poser la question: quelles sont les réactions gouvernementales qui semblent affaiblir les organisations ethnonationales et le sentiment ethnonational? Si cela devient un but à atteindre, alors quelles sont les stratégies les plus efficaces: combattre le phénomène de l'ethnonationalisme; ou accommoder ses revendications. Ces questions sont au centre de ce travail, qui met l'accent sur le cas canadien de 1960 à 1987.

Trois types de réaction peuvent être formulés face à l'ethnonationalisme: l'établissement de "politiques favorables", c'est-à-dire répondre aux besoins particuliers d'une minorité ethnique, par exemple en fournissant des services publics dans la langue minoritaire; une "participation accrue", c'est-à-dire établir des politiques qui augmentent la présence et l'influence d'un groupe déterminé au sein du gouvernement; et la "décentralisation" des structures gouvernementales, qui confère une autonomie, ou un gouvernement autonome, à un groupe ethnique. Utilisant cette typologie, tout en reconnaissant également l'option d'un rejet catégorique de l'ethnonationalisme (du moins sous certains de ses aspects), ce travail analyse les différentes réactions du gouvernement fédéral face aux demandes politiques des Canadiens francophones. L'ethnonationalisme québécois, qui promeut les droits politiques de la majorité dans cette province, est ici différencié de l'ethnonationalisme des francophones hors Québec qui est basé sur la promotion de droits minoritaires. Tout au long de ce travail la perspective soutenue est que le nationalisme ethnique est un phénomène auquel les gouvernements doivent réagir, que ce soit par un rejet catégorique ou par certaines formes d'accommodation, et qu'il est en partie un phénomène résultant de, et déterminé par, l'action des gouvernements. En fait, il est à la fois une variable dépendante et indépendante.

La période étudiée au cours de ce travail va de la révolution tranquille du début des années 1960 à l'Accord du lac Meech de 1987. L'une de ses conclusions est que les résultats obtenus ne permettent pas d'affirmer si une réaction de rejet face au nationalisme ethnique est invariablement une réaction "appropriée", d'autant plus si l'objectif est la création ou le renforcement d'un Etat multinational. Un examen de la politique fédérale, notamment durant l'ère Trudeau, démontre qu'à un moment critique de l'histoire du Canada l'établissement de politiques favorables aux francophones, mais allant à l'encontre de l'ethnonationalisme québécois, s'est avéré un succès dramatique. Toutefois, ce qui importe maintenant c'est de décider si l'on doit continuer dans la même veine, ou, la crise s'étant atténuée, tenter de réparer les pots cassés.

## ABSTRACT

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Ethnonationalism, while viewed positively by some, appears threatening to others, who typically would wish to see a reduction in the salience of ethnicity in political life. Thus it is pertinent to ask: what governmental responses to ethnonationalism appear to weaken ethnonational organizations and ethnonational sentiment? If this is a goal, which is the more effective strategy: to fight ethnonationalism, or to accommodate it? These questions are the subject of this paper, which focusses on the Canadian case, mainly during the period 1960 to 1987.

Three forms of accommodative response to ethnonationalism are distinguished: "favourable policies" or taking action to meet the particular needs of an ethnic minority, for example by providing public services in a minority language; "enhanced participation" or the implementation of policies to strengthen a group's presence and influence in government; and "decentralization" of governmental structures, to confer autonomy or self-government upon an ethnic group. With reference to these categories, and noting also the option of forthright rejection of ethnonationalism (or some of its forms), the paper analyzes various federal government responses to the political demands of Canadian francophones. Quebec-centred ethnonationalism, affirming the political rights of the majority in that province, is distinguished from a minority-rights form of ethnonationalism extant among francophones in other provinces. Throughout, the perspective of the paper is that ethnonationalism is partly a phenomenon to which governments have to respond, whether by rejection or by some form of accommodation, and partly a phenomenon arising from or conditioned by government action; it is simultaneously an *independent* and *dependent* variable.

The period covered by the paper runs from the launching of Quebec's "Quiet Revolution" in the early 1960s, to the negotiation of the Meech Lake Accord in 1987. A conclusion is that the evidence does not permit one to say whether the rejectionist response to ethnonationalism is consistently the "right" response, if the aim is to create or strengthen a multinational state. A review of federal policy, notably during the Trudeau era, indicates that at a critical juncture in Canada's history the implementation of a policy favourable to francophones but confrontational in relation to Quebec-focussed ethnonationalism was dramatically successful. However, what is at issue now is whether to continue to apply basically the same formula, or, the crisis having subsided, to attempt to patch up the quarrel.

## ETHNONATIONALISM IN A FEDERAL STATE: THE CASE OF CANADA

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### I — INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Nationalism is, as the many books on the subject attest, a complex phenomenon; the term itself is rich in its connotations. In some contexts "nationalism" is virtually impossible to distinguish from patriotism, or attachment to country or homeland; in this usage, its meaning has nothing to do with racial origin or ancestry, or with such obvious cultural attributes as language or religion. In other contexts, nationalism is a form of group solidarity or community feeling *based on ethnicity rather than territory*; it refers to subjective attachments that demarcate one particular group from other groups within a total population. Here common ancestry (even if mythical), shared historical memory, and a shared cultural heritage—"culture" in this context encompasses artistic attainment, means and styles of self-expression, and the entire social/religious value-system that defines a community—may all contribute to the formation of a distinct society co-existing with others within the boundaries of a single state. This is ethnonationalism.

Within an ethnic minority, particularly a disadvantaged one, the rise of ethnonational sentiment may be a positive phenomenon, contributing to its members' sense of self-worth and to their personal development, which cannot occur other than within a social context. Thus ethnonationalism may fill a need for the individual, supplying an indispensable collective dimension to personal growth or self-fulfillment.

Not everyone, however, views ethnonationalism positively, particularly if it develops into a political movement in which the group demands self-rule. To those having a stake in the existing order, the political mobilization of an ethnic group may be a threatening phenomenon, in view of its potential for causing disruption or division (disorder, secession), or for infringing upon the rights, status, or privileges of other groups. Thus opposition to ethnonationalism, or at least nervousness about it, may be found equally among members of a dominant ethnic majority and among other, relatively small minorities having only slight power and/or prestige. Indeed, anti-nationalism *in the ethnic sense* may also be found within the ethnic group itself, because ethnonationalism may be as-

1 I am grateful to Yvan Gagnon and Denis Robert for insightful and constructive comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

sociated with intolerance; also, in its more radical forms it may threaten the privileges and prestige of traditional élites, whose past compromises with a dominant ethnic group easily become a target of attack. Thus there are many whose interest lies in undermining ethnonational organizations and weakening ethnonational sentiment, and who would like to reduce the salience of ethnicity in political life.

These thoughts on ethnonationalism and attitudes toward it explain the choice of subject-matter for this chapter. It addresses a straightforward question: What governmental responses to ethnonationalism appear to weaken ethnonational organizations and ethnonational sentiment? Or, conversely: what responses tend to stimulate and reinforce them? One ought not to expect a categorical answer, partly because not enough is known about ethnonationalism and the factors giving rise to it, and partly because conditions obviously vary from place to place, and from time to time. Conceivably, a policy that dampens ethnonationalism in one context may heighten it in another. Nonetheless, a study of historical experience can be illuminating. Potentially at least, a good case study may offer insight on the question whether, for opponents of ethnonationalism, the best strategy is to fight it or to accommodate it.

Among "soft" or accommodative responses to ethnonationalism one may distinguish:

1. a "*favourable policies*" response, which involves conferral of benefits both economic and cultural (for example, providing public services in a minority language);
2. an "*enhanced participation*" response, which involves taking measures to strengthen the group's presence and influence within the central government—for example, apportioning offices by ethnicity, and making institutional changes to give the group a veto over potentially damaging decisions, or else a direct input into governmental decisions; and
3. a "*decentralist*" response, which involves conceding a measure of autonomy or self-government, usually on a territorial basis; such decentralization runs the gamut from devolution of administrative powers and the transfer of fiscal resources, to far-reaching constitutional reform (e.g. creating a federation, or extending the powers of state/provincial governments within an existing federation).

With respect to the decentralist response, an interesting question arises: if it appears that some degree of decentralization strengthens the polity, reducing tension among ethnic groups, is there nonetheless some point at which decentralization may become excessive, leading eventually to the break-up of the country?



The case examined is Canada 1960 to 1987 (some earlier background material is also provided). After 1960, a Quebec-centred, French-language nationalism grew rapidly in strength, but appeared to subside sharply after the idea of sovereignty was rejected by Quebecers in a referendum (1980). In 1982, over vehement denunciations by Quebec provincial politicians from all political parties, but with all-party support in the Canadian Parliament (including the Quebec members), major changes were made in the Canadian constitution. Five years later (June 1987) the federal government and all ten provincial governments reached agreement on the text of further constitutional amendments making it possible for Quebec to recognize the legitimacy as well as the legal force of the constitution. These amendments must be endorsed by the federal parliament and by all provincial legislatures before going into effect; and it is quite possible that legislative unanimity will not be achieved. Even if it is, the underlying issues, as raised by ethnonationalism, will not be resolved.

Before proceeding with our case study, however, one further remark of a conceptual character is needed. I would like to caution against the thought that one might appropriately adopt a one-dimensional classification of ethnonational movements, ranking them along a continuum from mild to extreme. I am thinking of a continuum where, at the "mild" end there are demands for favourable policy outputs; in the middle, demands for full integration into decision-making processes ("We want in!"); and at the "extreme" end, demands for autonomy or ultimately for independence ("We want out!"). Such a classification of ethnonational movements does map out the historical evolution of ethnonationalism in some countries, and it corresponds to the three types of response already noted (favourable policies, enhanced participation, and decentralization), so there is probably some temptation to see them as a progression. And if life were like this, it would certainly be convenient for the scholar-observer: one could posit a single dependent variable ("ethnonationalism"), its intensity waxing or waning as factors exogenous to the political system bear upon it, while another set of factors, these ones endogenous ("governmental responses"), reinforce or counteract the direction of movement. This conceptualization is tailor-made to the social scientist who would give policy advice to rulers seeking to counteract the dangers of secession and division. It might be assumed that some degree of accommodation is desirable (not too little, not too late); but the policy problem would be to know how much to concede, and when to stop.<sup>2</sup> Is there a point at

2 In this situation the social scientist would become like a pharmacologist who knows what drug to administer, but has to adapt the dosage to the individual patient (the patient's size, metabolism, etc., are relevant, as is the seriousness of the malady).

which making concessions simply encourages the formulation of more extreme demands?

These questions, less abstractly put, have been prominent in Canadian politics for a quarter of a century. They are less salient now, because the "separatist threat" in Quebec has receded, at least temporarily. But perhaps the questions were, throughout this period, wrongly put. The reason for thinking so is that they ignore qualitative differences in the types of demands advanced by various francophone<sup>3</sup> groups, and disregard corresponding qualitative differences in various types of policy response made by Canadian governments—the federal government, the Quebec government, and the governments of other provinces. As an ethnonational movement matures, or grows more militant, it will not necessarily progress from a stage in which favourable policies are demanded, to a stage of claiming enhanced participation, and eventually on to a further stage in which independence is the goal. On the contrary, at least in the Canadian case, francophone ethnonationalism has taken different forms in different parts of the country, revealing or reflecting quite different (indeed incompatible) strategic interests between "Quebec nationalists" and "French Canadian nationalists," most but not all of whom are found among the francophone minorities outside Quebec.

Much of what follows will elaborate these basic observations. Before getting to the main part of the argument, however, it will be necessary to set out a few facts, and to sketch in some of the historical background.

## II — ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE IN CANADA

Canada is a federation of ten provinces of unequal size and wealth, distinctive in their mix of manufacturing and resource production, and differing in ethnic and linguistic composition (see Table 1). In addition there are two sparsely-populated territories with a measure of self-government but (unlike the provinces) without constitutional protection of legislative powers.

As is revealed in Table 1, the francophone community in Canada (those for whom French is the language most frequently spoken in the home) is close to 6 million, or one quarter of the total population; of these, 5.3 million or 89 per

3 The terms "francophone" ("French-speaking") and "anglophone" ("English-speaking") are now common political and journalistic usage in Canada. Less common is "allophone," designating persons whose language most commonly used at home is neither English nor French.

Table 1  
CANADA: Population, Income, Ethnic Origins and Language by Province—  
1981

	Population (thousands)	Per Capita Income (index)	Ethnic Origins (%)			Home Language (%)		
			British	French	Other	English	French	Other
<b>Atlantic Region</b>								
Newfoundland	564	65.3	92	3	5	99.3	0.3	0.4
P.E.I.*	121	68.0	77	12	11	96.6	3.0	0.3
Nova Scotia	840	79.0	72	8	19	96.1	2.9	1.0
New Brunswick	689	71.8	54	36	10	68.0	31.4	0.6
<b>Sub-Total</b>	2214	72.5	72	16	12	88.2	11.1	0.7
<b>Central Region</b>								
Quebec	6369	92.5	8	80	12	12.7	82.5	4.8
Ontario	8534	107.5	53	8	40	86.0	3.9	10.1
<b>Sub-Total</b>	14903	101.1	33	39	28	54.7	37.5	7.8
<b>Western Region</b>								
Manitoba	1014	93.8	37	7	56	86.0	3.1	10.9
Saskatchewan	956	100.5	38	5	57	92.8	1.1	6.2
Alberta	2214	110.9	43	5	51	91.7	1.3	7.0
British Columbia	2714	108.8	51	3	46	91.7	0.6	7.8
<b>Sub-Total</b>	6897	106.1	45	5	51	91.0	1.2	7.7
<b>Territories**</b>	68	102.4	30	4	66	74.5	1.2	24.2
<b>CANADA</b>	24083	100.0	40	27	33	68.2	24.6	7.2

\*Prince Edward Island

\*\*Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory

Sources: Per capita income: Statistics Canada: *System of National Accounts—National Income and Expenditure Accounts*, (13-201)—1967-1981, page 46, table 36

All others—1981 Census of Canada 93-925 to 93-934

cent reside in Quebec.<sup>4</sup> Quebec is the only province with a francophone majority (83 per cent).

The francophone minorities are spread through every province, but are concentrated in areas bordering on Quebec. To the east lies the province of New Brunswick, in parts of which French is the predominant language; 31 per cent of the provincial population is francophone. However, the total population of New Brunswick is less than 700,000; and thus, in absolute numbers, there are fewer francophones in New Brunswick than in Ontario, Canada's largest province (total population 8.5 million). The respective francophone minorities number 217,000 in New Brunswick and 330,000 in Ontario. While some communities in eastern and northern Ontario (the areas contiguous to Quebec) are mainly French-speaking, francophones make up only 3.9 per cent of the total provincial population—considerably less than the 10 per cent whose home language is neither English nor French ("allophones"). A similar pattern obtains in Manitoba, to the west of Ontario, where the 31,000 francophones make up 3.1 per cent of the provincial population but are outnumbered about 3 to 1 by the 111,000 allophones. In the remaining six provinces the francophone minorities are small both in numbers and in percentage terms; in all but Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island they are numerically less important than the allophone groups.

The snapshot provided in Table 1 is worth studying, but of course it conveys none of the historical background and none of the dynamics of a fairly rapidly changing linguistic situation. Canada's first European settlers were French; by the time of the British conquest of New France in 1760, they numbered approximately 60,000.<sup>5</sup> British colonial policy allowed them, more out of prudence than from generosity, to retain their own language, social institutions,

4 Canada Census, 1981.

5 The figure 60,000 represents the generally accepted estimate of colonists ("Canadiens," as they had already begun to call themselves) who remained in the land they had settled after the British conquest of New France (1760). This figure is obviously subject to challenge. The Government of Quebec's *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec* (Quebec: Editeur officiel, 1972, v. 3, p. 38) and Kalback and McVey's *The Demographic Bases of Canadian Society* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1971, p. 12) both list the total population of the colony in 1760 as 70,000. The 1871 *Census of Canada*, v. 4, lists the 1754 population of New France as 55,000 and the 1765 population as 69,810. The latter figure would, of course, include some non-francophones.

and religion. The influx of English and Scots, considerably augmented by "loyalists" fleeing the American revolution, was rapid enough that it soon made English the majority language,<sup>6</sup> as well as (by virtue of conquest) the economically, politically, and socially dominant one; however, the high birth rate among the *Canadiens* ensured that French remained the majority language in Lower Canada, later Quebec. The present-day francophone population of 5,257,000 consists overwhelmingly of the descendants of the 60,000 who remained after the British conquest.

That there are nearly six million francophones in Canada today is testimony not only to the fecundity of their ancestors, but to the French Canadians' determination to preserve their traditional culture and religion. However, it should be observed (again from Table 1) that those of French origin outnumber those who still speak French, implying a process of assimilation especially outside Quebec. Assimilationist pressures are great enough that it has been seriously questioned whether French is now a viable language anywhere but in Quebec and nearby areas in New Brunswick and Ontario, or indeed anywhere at all, including in Quebec itself.<sup>7</sup> As will be shown later in this chapter, differing judgments on this point have created conflicts within the francophone population of Canada, especially between Quebec nationalists and leaders of the francophone minorities in other provinces.

While many Canadians think of their country in terms of duality—emphasizing the existence of two cultural groupings, two societies, or two nations distinguished primarily by language—others stress instead the importance of Canada's multicultural heritage. According to the latter perspective, those of French origin are only one minority group within a nation in which there is in fact no longer any ethnic majority. This is literally correct. In 1981 the largest ethnic group, those tracing ancestry to the British Isles, constituted only 40 per cent of the population. In the four western provinces those who are of neither French nor British origin slightly outnumber the combined population of these two groups. Notwithstanding the establishment of communities with heavy concentrations of immigrants from continental Europe (besides from France), the British group has historically been the dominant one, and English has become the adoptive language of the overwhelming majority of immigrants, even in Quebec. Apart from the francophones there is no non-aboriginal minority large enough, or sufficiently compact territorially, to aspire to political inde-

6 Some of the Scots Catholics garrisoned in Canada, however, eventually married francophones and assimilated to French, suggesting that at the time religion was a more potent factor in acculturation than language.

7 Richard J. Joy: *Languages in Conflict* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972).

pendence or indeed to any substantial degree of autonomy. Nor does any other non-aboriginal group show any desire for separateness, if we except a few small agricultural communities of religious sects that have rejected all forms of modernization and have sought to withdraw, to the extent possible, from the rest of Canadian society, and certainly from its public life. On the other hand, various organizations of aboriginal peoples do seek self-governing status for their respective bands, communities, or ethnic nations. Though these groups comprise scarcely one per cent of the Canadian population, their claims have a moral force and in some cases a legal foundation (treaties and land claims) that make their situation unique. The aboriginal peoples are thus the only significant exception to an otherwise accurate generalization, that while some of the non-British, non-French minorities may wish to preserve ancestral languages or other aspects of their cultural heritage at the community level, they have chosen to integrate fully with Canadian society. They tend to see Canada as dominantly anglophone, and mainly they like it that way. When they resist the centralization of the Canadian state, as frequently they do, it is generally for economic reasons: their support for provincial autonomy is rooted in economic regionalism rather than in ethnonationalism.

Canadian history can be interpreted as supporting either conception of Canada: as *dualist* (all language groups tend to assimilate either to English or to French; francophones have special rights, even outside Quebec), or as *multicultural but dominantly anglophone* (even if particular ethnic groups, aboriginal and immigrant, retain ancestral languages for communication within the group).

The dualist conception sees Canada as a country whose political institutions have been shaped by two centuries of accommodation between distinct societies having their origins, respectively, in the French colony along the shores of the St. Lawrence valley, and in the British merchants and settlers who flowed in after the conquest in 1760. The first military governors of the new British colony adopted a conciliatory policy, to some extent contrary to royal edict; their actions were subsequently given official political sanction by the *Quebec Act* of 1774, which conceded to the French and Catholic population the right to their own institutions in most matters pertaining to the relationship between the individual and the state. Though commercial law and the criminal law were imported from Britain, the conquest in most respects did not affect the daily life of the *habitants*. The position of the Catholic Church was, if anything, strengthened relative to what it had been under the French regime. Although the conciliatory policy was challenged in 1839 by Lord Durham, who proposed the assimilation of the conquered people, and although the union of Lower and Upper Canada (two colonies corresponding to the southern parts of Quebec and Ontario today) was effected in 1840 precisely in order to bring about assimila-

tion—in the united colony, French would be a minority language and Catholicism a minority religion—the civil rights of the French/Catholic population continued to be respected under the Union. It operated to some extent under the principle of concurrent majorities, those of Canada East (Quebec) and Canada West (Ontario), a principle that eventually made governance of the united colony impossible and helped provide the impetus for Confederation—the creation, in 1867, of a four-province federation out of three British colonies (Canada, now split into Quebec and Ontario; Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick).

Whereas for the two Atlantic colonies Confederation meant partial absorption into a larger unit, for the *Canadiens*, the French/Catholic population of Canada East, it meant a return to a more autonomous status. It marked official abandonment of Durham's recommended policy of assimilation, since it established a province in which the *Canadiens* constituted a strong majority and consequently controlled the government. Exclusive jurisdiction over "property and civil rights" was vested in the provinces. This phrase was drawn from the *Quebec Act* of 1774, where it was used to cover, in the words of a distinguished present-day commentator, "all the law except English criminal law, and except the English public law that came to Quebec as necessary context for English colonial governmental institutions;" by virtue of this phrase, the *Quebec Act* had established that most of the pre-conquest law and custom were to prevail in the colony.<sup>8</sup> With Confederation, almost 100 years later, these rights were confirmed; although a number of enumerated federal powers had the combined effect of conferring a significant array of economic powers on the federal government, these were exceptions to the general rule that the provinces were to control property and civil rights. The significance of the general rule, however, was that the French/Catholic population was assured the means of maintaining its own institutions in all the respects then considered essential to the preservation of a distinct society and culture (or value-system).

After Confederation this constitutionally entrenched power was reinforced politically by a succession of Quebec governments which vigilantly protected their autonomy, and by the presence in the federal cabinet of a bloc of francophone ministers who likewise sought to ensure that Quebec's authority to order its internal affairs would not be violated. Under these arrangements, the distinctiveness of Quebec's institutions, and therefore of its culture, were preserved in one corner of an overwhelmingly English-speaking continent. The uniqueness of Quebec was evident not only in matters such as education and

8 William R. Lederman: "Unity and Diversity in Canadian Federalism: Ideals and Methods of Moderation," *Canadian Bar Review*, 53 (1975), 601.

marriage laws, but also in arrangements for social security, the legal authority of the father in relation to his children and his wife, land tenure and inheritance, and (later on) labour relations.

For the political leaders of the French/Catholic community, however, Confederation was far more than a device to set up a Quebec enclave in which an ancestral culture and inherited social arrangements could be preserved. Expansion was intended. Good land was already in short supply in Quebec, given the rapid rate of natural increase. Young men were moving to New England in order to take up industrial employment, generally with a view to returning home when they had acquired enough savings to buy a farm; but of course some stayed and were assimilated. Thus the community was subject to attrition, and its leaders hoped instead to reverse the pattern. Their aim was to redirect the surplus population westward into new French/Catholic prairie settlements. Indeed, the area that was to become the province of Manitoba in 1870 already contained roughly equal proportions of English/Protestant and French/Catholic settlers (many of the latter being Métis or Indian mixed-bloods). Confederation was to be an instrument for building upon this pattern, creating across the prairies a set of bilingual provinces with dual (Catholic and Protestant) school systems.

This aspiration was reflected in the Manitoba Act of 1870. However, the hoped-for immigration from Quebec did not materialize to any great extent, and the francophone population was quickly overwhelmed by the influx of English/Protestant settlers from Ontario. As the demographic balance changed, the linguistic and religious rights of the minority were extinguished. The powerlessness of the minority and the incapacity or unwillingness of the federal government to provide effective assistance were revealed during the 1890s, with the dismantling of Manitoba's separate (Catholic, but also in practice mainly French) school system. By the time Saskatchewan and Alberta were set up in 1905, it was evident that the hopes for the creation of a prairie west which was, in anything like the Quebec sense, "home" to French Canadians, were vain ones. Even so, an attempt was made to offer constitutional guarantees for a separate school system in the new provinces. The attempt failed, as it had done in Manitoba. In Ontario also, in 1912, the use of the French language as a medium of instruction (in distinction to its being a subject of study) was prohibited. Here the attack on "bilingual schools" was led by English-language Catholic bishops, who were concerned that a potential public outcry against instruction in French might be focussed indiscriminately against separate (Catholic) schools. Thus constitutional guarantees for Catholic education, which were expected also to protect the French language, turned out to be not only ineffectual in this respect but also arguably harmful toward francophone minorities.



While, then, a deliberate attempt was made to create an institutional structure that would foster the development of Canada as a dualist or bicomunal polity, demographic trends have worked against dualism, disappointing the early aspirations of French/Catholic political leaders. Quebecers did not migrate in large numbers to the west, as it was hoped they would; instead, the prairie region was settled mainly by migrants from Ontario and immigrants from Europe. It was alleged by some French Canadian nationalists that the federal government's aggressive immigration policy (especially around the turn of the century) was deliberately aimed at preventing the creation of a bicomunal west. Be that as it may, many settlements were established in which the largest linguistic minority, or in some cases the majority, was neither English nor French. Immigrant groups often formed communities of their own, or became the principal minority in areas where settlers of British origin predominated. As a result, across much of the West today, indeed perhaps throughout the region, most people probably consider that the only practical language policy is official unilingualism. There is also strong support for a policy of multiculturalism; for example, local school boards may sanction the teaching of ancestral languages or even employ them selectively as a medium of instruction. In most communities these languages are less likely to be French than they are to be German, Ukrainian, Icelandic, or Cree.

Among "multicultural groups" (a term generally used in Canada to designate the non-British, non-French, non-aboriginal population that is nonetheless conscious of its ethnic distinctiveness), the dualist conception of Canada is broadly rejected. To them, as to many who are either of British origin or have developed strong loyalties to Britain and often to the monarchy, dualism is inaccurate as description and undesirable—even threatening—as a political model. Many would like to see ethnicity and language become irrelevant to politics and policy, diminishing in salience over time, as religion has done; others support policies to preserve Canada's multicultural heritage, or ancestral customs and languages; and still others would like government to launch affirmative action programs to promote full economic equality among diverse ethnic groups, in other words, to eliminate all correlation between ethnicity and income, or ethnicity and status/occupation. These sets of attitudes or prescriptions overlap each other, but all are sharply distinguished from dualism, both as a principle for guiding policy and as a criterion for shaping political institutions and for the filling of public offices.

### III — FRENCH-CANADIAN AND QUEBEC NATIONALISM

The failure of post-Confederation attempts to build a bicomunal West, equally English/Protestant and French/Catholic, gave rise during the 1880s to an

enclave-creating French Canadian nationalism. The leaders of this movement, notably Honoré Mercier (premier of Quebec, 1887-91), took the view that the only effective protection for their religion, language, and culture was constantly to reaffirm the autonomous constitutional status of Quebec, fighting for the respect of "provincial rights" against federal intrusions. Political autonomy offered cultural protection, enabling those French Canadians who lived in Quebec to withdraw to a large extent from the mainstream of North American life, both the economy and the culture. Smaller enclaves could also be created in other provinces, and could be supported, to the modest extent possible, by the main body of francophones in Quebec.

Within Quebec the French Canadians could and did create a set of institutions that they controlled. Occupying the central position was the Roman Catholic Church, which performed many functions that elsewhere lay within the purview of government. Indeed, the Church was more pervasive socially and culturally than government, and in key respects was able to shape policy, especially in education, social affairs, and family law. The council of bishops set the curriculum of the public schools and supervised the hiring of teachers. The Church also set up a network of "classical colleges" (so named for the emphasis on Latin and Greek, and more generally on humanistic studies), many of which were directly administered and staffed by religious orders. Since the classical colleges were the unique gateway to all leadership positions, the Church enjoyed a monopoly on the selection and training of the entire élite of French Canadian society: its priests, lawyers, and doctors (engineers and corporation executives were notably rare among French Canadians). Hospitals, orphanages, and charitable institutions too were run by the Church; and, with the advent of the twentieth century, emerging organizations such as savings institutions, mutual insurance companies, and trades unions were established as confessional bodies, the activities of which were influenced if not controlled by a chaplain or religious adviser. The teaching of the Church stressed that agriculture was morally superior to industrialism, that French Canada had a "civilizing mission" within a secular and materialistic North America, and that the state was to be mistrusted, especially if democratic (i.e., claiming authority from the people rather than from God). The practice of weekly meetings between the archbishop of Quebec and the premier did not cease until the 1960s.

Obviously, the federal makeup of the country has offered very different opportunities for French Canadian nationalists, according to whether they have lived in Quebec or in other provinces. Quebec could become a far stronger enclave than could be created by francophones in other provinces, where it was not possible to set up a pervasive network of institutions consonant with and supportive of the culture. Nonetheless the overall character of French Canadian nationalism was the same outside Quebec as within it. Language and religion

were regarded as mutually supporting; indeed, to the extent that it is possible to make the distinction, one could probably say that Catholicism was the essence of the culture, and language a strategic supporting instrument—hence the famous declaration of the nationalist Henri Bourassa, 1910, that language was to be cherished as guardian of the faith.<sup>9</sup> The three dominant features of French Canadian thought, as identified by the historian Michel Brunet (1958)—agriculturalism, messianism (the "civilizing mission"), and anti-statism<sup>10</sup>—were shared by francophones in Quebec and in other provinces. And perhaps more significant in view of its contrast with the situation that was to develop after 1960, the strategic situation of Quebec and non-Quebec francophones did not diverge: it was a shared tenet of traditional French Canadian nationalism that the existence of a strong and autonomous Quebec was a precondition for upholding, to the extent possible, the rights of French Canadians elsewhere in the country.

It was logical, and to some degree remains so today, to regard the francophone minorities in other provinces as extensions of the main concentration of Canadian francophones, located in Quebec. A politically strong Quebec was in the interest of the smaller minorities, for two quite distinct reasons. First, their leaders, if not actually raised in Quebec, would necessarily be educated there (France was not only distant, but secular and even anti-clerical); cultural self-preservation demanded the maintenance of close ties between francophone élites in Quebec and the other provinces. Or to put the matter more simply, the non-Quebec francophones have never been strong enough to constitute self-contained societies, which francophone Quebec largely considered itself to be. Second, secure in their home province, and forming (as they have done almost consistently since 1867) a solid bloc within the ruling party in Ottawa, French Canadians could wield substantial power in federal politics. This was impor-

9 The speech is summarized in Mason Wade: *The French Canadians 1760-1945* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), 580-82. Cf. Henri Bourassa: "The French Language and the Future of Our Race" [1912]: "We believe that the preservation and development of the language is to us the human element that is most necessary to the preservation of our faith." Bourassa went on, in the same speech, to invoke the significance of the French language as a defence against "the infiltration of Americanism that creeps into all the phases of our [Canada's] national, political, and social life," and on this basis argued that it was in Canada's interest to extend and protect the rights of francophone minorities across the country. The speech is reprinted in Ramsay Cook, ed.: *French Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), 132-46.

10 Michel Brunet, "Trois dominantes de la pensée canadienne-française: l'agriculturalisme, l'anti-étatisme et le messianisme," in his *La présence anglaise et les Canadiens* (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1958), 113-66.

tant for Quebecers, but also for the minorities outside Quebec, for without a federal government in which the francophone presence was strong, the latter had no significant institutional or political basis of support, except perhaps in New Brunswick after 1960.

It must be acknowledged that the help given by the federal government to francophone minorities outside Quebec has been, until recently, extremely limited. In particular, the idea that Ottawa could make good on constitutional guarantees for minority schooling has been more of a hope than a reality. The constitution provides for federal remedial legislation if a province infringes established minority educational rights (Catholic or Protestant, rather than English or French). However, this clause has never been used. In 1896 the federal Conservative government of the day promised to invoke it to re-establish the separate school system that the province of Manitoba had disbanded, and fought an election campaign partly on this basis; but the Liberal Party (ironically, under its French Canadian leader Wilfrid Laurier) campaigned instead for the respect of provincial autonomy, and won. Laurier argued that a political compromise over the Manitoba schools question was preferable to an imposed solution, which in any case could not be administratively enforced short of establishing a network of federally-financed schools for the minority. While this incident suggests that the identity of interest between Quebec and non-Quebec francophones has been less than perfect, it is probably accurate to say that the French Canadian members of parliament from Quebec have acted to support, to the extent possible, the interests of non-Quebec francophones. Perhaps they made more compromises than they needed to; but for the most part the leaders of both groups worked together in the defence of French Canadian interests.

One feature of traditional French Canadian nationalism was its acceptance of unequal economic status of anglophone and francophone even within Quebec. While a few isolated voices preached the desirability of taking control of industrial development, the dominant theme of the nationalists was the moral superiority of the rural way of life and the special vocation of the French race in North America. This second theme was captured in its most lyrical form in a sermon by one Bishop Pâquet in 1902:

As for those of us who believe in God,... [we know] how, within the hierarchy of societies and empires, He has assigned to each one of these races a distinct role of its own.... We have the privilege of being entrusted with this social priesthood granted only to select peoples.... Our mission is less to handle capital than to stimu-

late ideas; less to light the furnaces of factories than to maintain and spread the glowing fires of religion and thought, and to help them cast their light into the distance.<sup>11</sup>

As this statement illustrates, French Canadian nationalism became a vehicle for a particular ideology that not only accepted economic inequality between the "English and French races" but extolled the economic subordination of the francophones as evidence that they had resisted the temptation (as, again, Bishop Pâquet put it) "to step down from the pedestal, where God has placed us, to walk commonly among those generations who thirst for gold and pleasure."<sup>12</sup> With such sentiments being inculcated by the leaders of French Canadian society, it was all the easier for the anglophones, whose economic dominance was established through the Conquest, to maintain a virtual monopoly over the key positions within the Quebec economy. Their economic power also conferred upon them political power and social privilege. Though their direct participation in Quebec provincial politics was extremely limited, anglophones took advantage of their strategic position as investors and employers, controlling the economic policies of the Quebec government and ensuring that they enjoyed rights in Quebec that francophones either never had or quickly lost elsewhere in Canada.

The dominant position of the anglophones had always been obvious insofar as English capital, whether of British, American, or Canadian origin, controlled commerce and industry. However, the extent of the economic subordination of French Canadians even within Quebec was not generally realized until it was devastatingly revealed in 1965 in a study written for a federal government inquiry. The findings, later summarized by one of the authors, demonstrated not only that French Canadians had lower incomes than any other listed group except those of Italian origin, but also that no factor other than ethnicity could be found to explain a substantial part of the differential. In other words, the correlation between income and ethnicity did not disappear if one adjusted for factors such as age and schooling; after doing so, the average French Canadian still had an income about 15 per cent lower than his counterpart of British descent,<sup>13</sup> and francophones were near the bottom of the hierarchy when one correlated income and ethnicity.

11 [Monseigneur] L.-A. Pâquet: "A Sermon on the Vocation of the French Race in America," [1902], in Cook, ed: *French Canadian Nationalism*, 153-4.

12 *Ibid.*, 158.

13 André Raynauld: "The Quebec Economy: A General Assessment," in Dale C. Thomson, ed: *Quebec Society and Politics: Views from the Inside* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 147-8.

The date of this study (1965), helps explain the widespread attention it received (there were banner headlines in the daily press). Quebec was already launched into a so-called "Quiet Revolution," a period of cultural turmoil, institutional change, and political innovation. The values that earlier had been extolled by the clergy and other elements in the traditional elite were cast aside; the Catholic trades unions became the "national" trades unions, and other organizations—the cooperatives, the principal farmers' organization, and the credit unions—also deconfessionalized; the public role of the Church was reduced and the role of the state expanded enormously. A controversial measure, accepted by the bishops but strongly contested by much of the traditional elite and by some of the clergy, was the creation of a Ministry of Education in 1964, a move which transferred control over curriculum to the state. It also paved the way for the building of a public secondary and post-secondary system of education emphasizing student choice and offering a wide variety of technical and vocational courses. Equally significant were reforms in the field of income support and social services; Quebec became (and remains) the province of Canada having the most highly developed welfare state, where previously it had probably ranked at or near the bottom (comparisons on this are difficult to make, because the welfare system was run by the church, not the state).

These changes were accompanied, and to a significant degree were guided, by a new form of ethnonationalism. During the late 1950s or early 1960s French Canadian nationalism was largely supplanted, within Quebec, by a new Quebec-centred nationalism. This new social movement emphasized the importance of equipping the francophone majority to fully enter the modern world. The complaint arose that francophones had obtained limited political rights, in the form of provincial autonomy in social and cultural affairs, at the price of ethnic stratification; traditionally, as a community they could control those matters that the economically dominant anglophones conceded were internal to their own group, but could not overstep this boundary. The new Quebec nationalists began to assert that francophones, though numerically a strong majority, had accepted *minority status* within their own province; it was also said that French Canada was an "incomplete" or "decapitated" society that functionally could exist only in symbiosis with anglophones, upon whose entrepreneurship francophones necessarily relied to create the material basis for the existence (and certainly for the standard of living) of French Canada.

A potent factor in bringing about this new perception of reality in Quebec was the realization that the old ideology and the behaviour that was both justified and shaped by the ideology, constituted a dead-end street. Observers complained that the ideology pretended Quebec was something other than it was, a rural society; government had encouraged, through deals made with anglophone capitalists, the industrialization of the province. Indeed it was es-

sential to do so, because without industrialization Quebec could not sustain its existing population, let alone experience demographic expansion. On the other hand, government had done nothing to equip the population to take their place in an industrial economy and society. The education system, in particular, was woefully outmoded. A sharp disjunction had arisen between how Quebecers lived and, on the other hand, the ideology that prescribed how they *should* live; and the institutional structure was adapted to the ideology rather than to reality. A Quebec commission of inquiry, 1956, analyzed the situation in this way:

Thanks to [provincial] autonomy, the French-Canadians have ... as a majority group, the political initiative of their cultural and social life and partly of their economic life.... [However], the advent of large-scale capitalism and the rapid expansion of industry brought them into the embrace of an economy whose control does not belong to them....

If the industrial revolution, in progress for half a century, has corrected certain consequences of the preceding century's economic and social policy --as, for example, emigration—it has, on the other hand, generalized the disharmony which that policy had already created between the French Canadian and his social structures.... The whole institutional system which, up to now, has been the broadest and most synthetic expression of French Canada's special culture, must be completely re-made along new lines. It was not a current of ideas ... drawn from abroad which modified the milieu of French Canadian culture.... Primarily it was the practice of economic and political institutions of British origin which resulted in the creation of an individualistic and liberal mentality among a people whose religious, intellectual and social traditions had within them nothing either individualistic or liberal.... Men think along certain lines, but they are induced to live along certain other lines, and they end up thinking as they live. It is not otherwise that assimilation proceeds.<sup>14</sup>

In short, the creation of an enclave or a policy of withdrawal, though intended to prevent assimilation, was not only incapable of preventing assimilation but in the long run was actually bringing it about. The idea caught hold, that the whole institutional system, including and perhaps especially the schools, must be remade along new lines. When the reactionary Premier Duplessis died in 1959, the floodgates opened and Quebec entered upon its Quiet Revolution. Traditional French Canadian nationalism, emphasizing cultural protection, was

14 David Kwavnick, ed: *The Tremblay Report, [Abridgement of the] Report of the [Quebec] Royal Commission of Inquiry on Constitutional Problems* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 43, 49-50

transformed into a more positive "social nationalism"<sup>15</sup> or a "nationalism of growth"<sup>16</sup> that demanded the extension of Quebec's policy responsibilities and fiscal resources. The new Quebec nationalism created turmoil within francophone Quebec society, but also had other profound effects: new tensions arose between anglophones and francophones, both within Quebec and across Canada, and the structure of the Canadian federal system was called into question.

The essence of the new Quebec nationalism, distinguishing it from French Canadian nationalism, was and is its desire to vest in the francophone community of Quebec, as fully as is possible for any people, full control of its own destiny. That is something very different from securing the extension of, and respect for, minority rights, permitting the building of an enclave within the larger society. The change in the definition of the situation was captured by the federal Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1965, when the commissioners wrote:

What is at stake [in this conflict between ethnic groups] is the very fact of Canada.... The chief protagonists, whether they are entirely conscious of it or not, are French-speaking Quebec and English-speaking Canada. And it seems to us to be no longer the traditional conflict between a majority and a minority. It is rather a conflict between two majorities: that which is a majority in all Canada, and that which is a majority in the entity of Quebec.<sup>17</sup>

Perceptive as this statement was, it should not be taken to mean that French Canadian nationalism had disappeared. It continues to exist in parallel with Quebec nationalism; indeed, while Quebec nationalism does have its sympathizers among francophones in other provinces, for the most part these minorities are wary about the expansion of Quebec's powers. They want dualism—of anglophone and francophone across Canada, not of Quebec and the other nine provinces. This point must be made at once, and it will be developed in the next part of the chapter; but for now it will be useful to focus on the burgeoning of the nationalist movement within Quebec.

The new Quebec nationalism defined the political goals of the Quiet Revolution, a cultural phenomenon of the early- to mid-1960s that saw the infusion among Quebecers of a new spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence, the open-

15 Jean-Marc Léger: "Aspects of French-Canadian Nationalism," in Douglas Grant, ed: *Quebec Today* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 310-29

16 Léon Dion: "The Origin and Character of the Nationalism of Growth," *Canadian Forum*, (January 1964), 229-33

17 Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: *Preliminary Report* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 135.



ing of mind toward outside currents of thought, a rejection of traditional authority (especially the authority of the Church), the flaunting acceptance of newly permissive sexual mores, the taking of giant strides toward the liberation of women, and the intense politicization of a society committed to building its own future by grasping the levers of political power. There was a complete inversion of the old attitude towards the state as an alien force, controlled by self-seeking politicians who made too many compromises with "les Anglais" or "les Américains:" René Lévesque, then Minister of Natural Resources in the Liberal government of Jean Lesage (1960-66) captured the new spirit when he declared: "The state is one of us, the best among us"—a silly statement in any other context, but redolent with meaning when seen against the backdrop of anti-statism that characterized traditional French Canadian thought.

With the Quiet Revolution, Quebec was launched upon a nation-building enterprise in which the existing federal structure appeared, to many, an unwelcome constraint. The government of Jean Lesage, which upon taking office in 1960 was at best ambivalent towards the forces of change (for it contained some of the most reactionary elements in Quebec, as well as the most progressive) eventually put together and launched a vast program of reforms. Those in the educational field have already been mentioned; others included the re-shaping of social assistance, the initiation of a scheme of public contributory old-age pensions (which incidentally gave the provincial government control over investment funds so vast that the agency responsible for managing them could operate, Lesage boasted, something like a central bank for Quebec), the implementation of a new labour code, the reshaping of municipal government, sweeping changes in administrative practices, and a new and active role for the provincial government in economic development. The last-mentioned aspect of government activity involved a huge program of road construction, the nationalization of private electric utilities, and the creation of a cluster of public corporations to promote capital formation, resource development, and the restructuring of industrial enterprise.

Inevitably the expanded activities of the Quebec government bumped up against those of the federal government, and also frequently incurred the opposition of private (mainly anglophone) capital. Quebec wanted to do things in its own way, and the coherence of its policy innovations was limited by its having to share the control of legislative and administrative instruments with Ottawa. Quebec wanted to move fast, and in its own direction. However, it is a characteristic of Canadian federalism that most policy fields are shared between the federal government and the provinces. Not surprisingly, then, government leaders constantly expressed frustration at being restrained to a pace of change, or to a type of policy design, that the rest of the country would accept. Also, the suddenly-active provincial government, which was engaged in the greatest

program of public works in the province's history as well as the very considerable extension of public services, found itself in desperate need of more tax dollars. Both factors brought the provincial government into increasingly bitter conflict with Ottawa, and sometimes with the other provinces.

Meanwhile, outside government, ethnic tensions were mounting. Economic inequality, formerly seen as inevitable or simply not questioned, began to be perceived as resulting from discrimination, and was correspondingly resented. Francophones began to question why they had to develop a bilingual capacity while anglophones remained unilingual; francophones began to feel more keenly their minority status within a province in which they constituted the vast numerical majority. They began to aspire to the status of *majoritaire*—the person "who has never been forced to choose between his culture and his career, has never had to earn his living in a second language, and has never learned that to speak his own language means to be reprimanded, ineffectual, or marginalized; a person who requires only his own language to satisfy all his daily needs, and for whom a second language, if he has one, is a hobby."<sup>18</sup> Naturally, it was those who were in greatest daily contact with anglophones, whether in business or in the federal public service, who experienced the greatest resentments and, in some cases, humiliations. Such experiences provided the emotional charge that, in combination with the frustrations of the new élites who found themselves without adequate policy control and/or fiscal resources, eventually led to the formation of a separatist (anti-federalist, but in relatively few cases anti-Canadian) movement in the mid-1960s. The movement was sporadically violent, with occasional bombings of mailboxes or of federal government installations such as an armoury. In 1970 there were two high-profile kidnappings, one of a British diplomat and one, which ended in murder, of a provincial cabinet minister.

The bombings and kidnappings were the violent fringe of a generally peaceful and democratic movement for the expansion of Quebec's constitutional powers. Some sought to achieve their goals within the federal system (under a "special status" involving the conferral of powers not exercised by other provincial governments), others aimed to establish a form of confederacy (political sovereignty, but in full economic union with the rest of Canada, an arrangement known as "sovereignty-association"); and still others looked toward the creation of a fully independent Quebec state. The debate among Quebec nationalists

18 This definition of the *majoritaire* was given by Hubert Guindon at a conference in 1986. See Peter M. Leslie: *Rebuilding the Relationship: Quebec and Its Confederation Partners, A Conference Report* (Kingston, Ont.: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1987), 14.

regarding the extent of the necessary and desirable powers of the Quebec state—whether the goal should be special status, sovereignty-association, or fully separate statehood—took shape after the reforming Lesage government was defeated at the polls in 1966. The leader of the nationalist wing of the provincial Liberal Party, René Lévesque, tried unsuccessfully to move the party (which as early as 1964 had dissociated itself organizationally from the federal Liberal Party) towards a constitutional program that would significantly reduce federal legislative powers within Quebec territory and transfer additional fiscal resources to the Quebec government. The party rejected Lévesque's proposed constitutional formula. With this rebuff, he walked out of the party's policy convention and founded a movement for sovereignty-association. The small breakaway group became a rallying-point for a number of left- and right-wing separatist movements and political parties, and in 1968 constituted itself as the *Parti Québécois* with Lévesque as leader.

The debate within the Parti Québécois (PQ) on appropriate constitutional options continues to this day. The PQ's main problem has been that its active members (the *militants*) tend to be oriented towards a more radical constitutional platform than the Quebec electorate has so far been willing to endorse; since the mid-60s support for outright independence has hovered in the 15 to 20 per cent range in cross-province samples, never higher. Caught between its own militants and the electorate, the PQ has vacillated between hard- and soft-line positions. The party won power in 1976 on the basis of a promise that it would conduct "good government" and would put off any constitutional adventures until, by referendum, the people of Quebec had endorsed the principle of sovereignty-association. This they refused to do; the vote, held in May 1980, rejected the government's request for a mandate by 59.6 to 44.4 per cent, on an 85 per cent turnout. Since the referendum the PQ has been notably moderate and even evasive about its constitutional option, although at the close of 1987 its leader Pierre-Marc Johnson, successor to Lévesque, resigned as a result of dissension from hard-liners within the caucus. The most likely successor, former Minister of Finance Jacques Parizeau, endorses an unambiguously *indépendantiste* position, sovereignty without economic association except in the context of generalized North American free trade.

Many people, especially outside Quebec, appear to think that Quebec nationalism is in terminal decline, effectively having been dealt a death-blow by the referendum. The politicization of the society which was so evident during the 1960s and 70s gives evidence of having waned considerably; polls show that Quebec youth today are largely uninterested in politics, federal-provincial relations, and relations between language groups; they are preoccupied by personal goals; they want most of all feel good about themselves ("*se sentir bien dans sa peau*"); family relationships, personal friendships, and work matter

most of all to them.<sup>19</sup> Thus it comes as a surprise that a poll conducted in November 1987 showed support for sovereignty-association at 44 per cent; another poll, restricted to the Quebec City area, asking respondents "Are you for or against the independence of Quebec?" yielded 28 per cent yes, 55 per cent no, and 17 per cent undecided.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps of equal interest is that these results appear not to have been reported outside the province. But it was ever thus: in English Canada the modal attitude toward nationalist demands emanating from Quebec (to the extent people have been aware of them) has been neglect and complacency, so that each fresh crisis has caught both the politicians and an indignant public by surprise.

#### IV — RESPONSES TO QUEBEC NATIONALISM

French Canadian nationalism has required some sensitivity and forbearance from anglophone Canada, and has called for forms of accommodation that have not always been forthcoming (especially in the two world wars, with major crises over conscription; but schools issues, language issues, and civil liberties issues also have been important, and remain so). *French Canadian nationalism* has been not a challenge or a threat to the rest of the country. Not so with *Quebec nationalism*, especially in the period 1976-80 (from the election of the Parti Québécois government until the referendum). Although some nationalist leaders, René Lévesque in particular, tried to allay fears, they had little success in doing so. Lévesque presented sovereignty-association as an arrangement that would benefit the rest of the country as much as Quebec (because it would liberate "Canada" from having to put up with Quebec's opposition to policy initiatives favoured by "Canadians"); however, non-Quebecers viewed the PQ option as "separatist," rending the country in two. The Quebec anglophones felt particularly threatened, though Lévesque assured them that their rights would be scrupulously respected within a politically sovereign Quebec. And many francophone Quebecers too were hostile, some because they were worried that independence would impose an intolerable economic cost, and some because they regarded ethnic nationalism as inherently illiberal and reactionary.

Federal political parties and politicians have responded to Quebec nationalism with a mixture of *incomprehension* (the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker, 1957-63), *accommodation* (the Liberal Government of Lester Pearson, 1963-68, and also the Conservative governments of Joe Clark,

<sup>19</sup> Leslie, *Rebuilding the Relationship*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> *Le Soleil* (a Quebec City newspaper), 30 November 1987 and 4 December 1987. The soundings were conducted by independent polling agencies.

an eight-month interlude in 1979-80, and Brian Mulroney, 1984 to present), and *rejection* (the Liberal governments of Pierre Trudeau, 1968-79 and 1980-84). Of these three types of response, it is the strategic choice between accommodation and rejection that interests us.

The accommodative response, as exhibited by Pearson and by a succession of Conservative Party leaders after Diefenbaker (Robert Stanfield, and then Clark and Mulroney), combined all three elements that were noted at the beginning of this chapter: favourable policies, enhanced participation, and decentralization. At the urging of the editor of the influential Montreal daily *Le Devoir*, Pearson committed himself during the 1963 election campaign to create a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The Commission (RCBB) was instructed to "recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the founding races [sic], taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups," and to propose ways of "promoting bilingualism, better cultural relations and a more widespread appreciation of the basically bicultural character of our country."<sup>21</sup> The RCBB's multi-volume report recommended the recognition of English and French as official languages of Canada. This meant that French and English would be placed on an equal footing as languages of work in the federal public service, and also that citizens should have the right, wherever practicable, to communicate with government (and that meant also receiving written and oral responses) in the official language of their choice. The aim was partly to make all francophones feel that the federal government was equally at their service as at the service of anglophones, and partly to recruit and hold talented francophones to the upper ranks of the federal bureaucracy. (One is reminded of Lévesque's "the state is one of us"—though of course *he* meant the Quebec state.)

The goals and principles enunciated by the RCBB were accepted by the Pearson government, and have since been essential features of federal policy under Trudeau, Clark, Turner (Liberal prime minister briefly in 1984) and Mulroney. They have involved the bilingualization of the upper ranks of the federal public service; a policy supported by the creation of French-language work units for certain specialized functions. The bilingualism objective required extensive French-language training for senior bureaucrats and also favoured the hiring of bilingual personnel (often francophones). The shortcomings of the policy as actually implemented are obvious, and are documented each year in the report of a Commissioner of Official Languages, but the achievements have been con-

21 Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: *Preliminary Report* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 151

siderable when measured against past experience. Far less progress has been made in moving toward other goals formulated by the RCBB, those of developing a bilingual capacity among business leaders, and introducing bilingualism in major associations operating on a cross-Canada scale. Nonetheless it is now widely accepted among anglophone elites in both the public and the private sectors in Canada that acquisition of a working knowledge of French is a considerable career advantage. Yuppie parents across the country send their kids to bilingual schools or French-immersion programs.

The language policies initiated under Pearson were an important step toward extending francophone rights both within Quebec and in other provinces, and were a vital support for achieving a higher degree of francophone participation in the federal public service.<sup>22</sup> There were other aspects as well to the "favourable policies" and "enhanced participation" types of response to Quebec nationalism. In fact, a qualitative difference in these areas, distinguishing the 1960s from earlier periods of Canadian history, was attention to economic issues of special concern to Quebec. Regional development was one of these. Whereas, during the nineteenth century, Montreal had been Canada's leading city, by the 1950s it had been surpassed by Toronto as a manufacturing and financial centre. South-central Quebec, originally a beneficiary of national economic policies at least on a par with southern Ontario, now began to resent the shift of the economic centre of gravity to Toronto, and to interpret this change as a consequence of neglect by Ottawa. Naturally, Quebecers compared their province with wealthy Ontario, not with the far-poorer Atlantic provinces; and thus, during the 1960s, a time when regional development began to be a major preoccupation of the federal government, Quebec demanded a substantial share of federal developmental expenditures. Moreover, economic disparities within Quebec, between the Montreal region and the more remote areas of the province, began to receive considerable attention. The provincial government saw itself as having a responsibility for reducing such intraprovincial disparities, but wanted financial and other forms of support from Ottawa. The response was inevitably less generous than hoped for, but was nonetheless far from negligible.

As with language policies, the Quebec-focused economic initiatives of the 1960s have been carried forward to the present day. During the 60s a pattern

22 On the other hand it has been argued that policies to promote bilingualism were not very successful until the passage of the Official Languages Act in 1969, a year after Pearson left office. See Yvan Gagnon: *The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and Bilingualism in Canada*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1974.

was established whereby the Quebec government and the Quebec caucus in the federal parliament have both lobbied hard for maximum levels of federal expenditure in the province, especially in the areas of business bailouts, public works (transportation facilities, government offices), and subsidies to agriculture. Several interprovincial "balance sheets" have been produced by various governments, showing federal tax dollars collected and monies expended on a province-by-province basis; in each case the intent has been to demonstrate that a particular province either has a valid economic grievance, or that there is no reliable evidence supporting such an allegation. (The figures purport to show that certain provinces are net contributors to interregional redistribution through the agency of the federal government, and others net recipients.) Quebec has been a grievor, but in other provinces the widespread impression is that Quebec has been and continues to be treated with conspicuous favouritism by Ottawa. The data themselves are inconclusive,<sup>23</sup> and attitudes inevitably are formed on high-profile decisions such as the award (1986) of a multi-year, multi-billion dollar maintenance contract for fighter aircraft. A Montreal firm received the contract, although the federal government's own evaluation showed that the bid of a Winnipeg firm was not only cheaper but technically superior. This decision had a major and strongly negative impact on public opinion in the western provinces, where it was interpreted as evidence of two sorts of discrimination against them. On the one hand it was said that big provinces routinely get favoured over smaller ones; on the other hand, resentments were deepened by the conviction that Quebec is selfish and unreasonable, and that the federal government can't or won't stand up to criticism by French Canadians. Obviously, with the concentration of francophones in Quebec, it is impossible consistently to disentangle regional issues from ethnolinguistic ones; Quebecers and non-Quebecers alike tend to see policies that directly or even incidentally touch the special interests of that province, as evidence of discrimination either for or against francophones. Although perceptions of what's "fair" often differ, there would certainly be general agreement that Ottawa is attentive to the economic problems of Quebec to a degree not witnessed prior to 1960s. It is generally thought, probably correctly, that the rise of Quebec nationalism is mainly responsible for the change.

The accommodative response to Quebec nationalism, as originally formulated by the Pearson government, was evidenced in other ways as well. As noted, federal bilingualism was introduced in part to enhance francophone participation in the federal bureaucracy; similarly, at the political (cabinet) level,

23 Peter Leslie and Richard Simeon: "The Battle of the Balance Sheets," in Richard Simeon, ed: *Must Canada Fail?*

Pearson made a determined and successful effort to recruit top-flight francophones. When the Quebec leadership with which the Liberals had captured power in 1963 began to crumble (which it did shortly after the new government took office), Pearson turned to Jean Marchand, a prominent Quebec labour leader who was not a Liberal and was not even active in politics, to become his "Quebec lieutenant". Marchand refused to take the plunge unless places were created also for two close associates, Pierre Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier. The three announced their adhesion to the Liberal Party at a joint press conference in 1965, and soon formed the francophone core of the party and of the government. They in turn recruited others. Trudeau succeeded Pearson as party leader and prime minister in 1968, and launched the period of "French power" (as some disgruntled anglophones termed it). For example, French Canadians, for the first time, were appointed to senior economic portfolios in the cabinet. It is now unthinkable that a federal government should be formed if it lacks strong, high-prestige francophones occupying some of the key positions.

The final element in the accommodative response to Quebec nationalism, as shaped by Pearson—but totally rejected by Trudeau after 1968—was decentralization. When Quebec sought the extension of its policy control and fiscal resources, Pearson went along. Of course other provinces, too, put forward similar demands, especially for gaining a larger share of the income tax (which in all provinces but Quebec is a single tax administered by the federal government, with a portion of the total yield being transferred to the provincial treasuries). Ottawa responded by handing over more "tax points" to the provinces, a trend that had been going on since the early 1950s and had been accelerated by the Diefenbaker government. At the same time, new federal initiatives were inducing the provinces to expand the role of government in two major ways—by formulating policies to shape the structure of the economy both nationally and regionally, and by setting up a welfare state that is modest by European standards but highly developed or over-developed by American ones. The overall thrust of federal policy fitted perfectly with the new statism in Quebec, except that Quebec now wanted, in many areas, to go farther and faster than Ottawa, and in any case to assert its own priorities. In economic and social policy alike Quebec sought to take the lead, looking to Ottawa to play a complementary and supporting role, especially by supplying a large portion of the necessary funds. Other provinces shared some of the Quebec perspective, but on the whole were readier to go along with federal initiatives so long as they did not impose an undue burden upon their own treasuries. (For example, all provinces but Saskatchewan initially opposed the introduction of public compulsory medical insurance in 1966, fearing the costs it would entail; Saskatchewan liked it because the federal scheme was modelled on its own program, which would remain in place but with Ottawa now paying about half



the cost.) Quebec's concerns were equally financial and, in the most fundamental sense, political; the other provinces' concerns were mainly financial and administrative. Their complaints focused on the existence of shared-cost arrangements that generated irresistible electoral pressures to enter schemes they could ill afford. The Pearson government responded to some of these concerns (1965) by offering fiscal compensation to any province that "opted out" of a federal program set up on a shared-cost basis—i.e., established on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement that Ottawa would pay about half the cost of a particular program lying within an area of provincial jurisdiction, so long as that program met certain stipulated features of policy design. The opting-out arrangement would give at least the appearance of greater provincial policy control, on condition that the program remained in place with its main features intact. However, only Quebec took advantage of the opting-out scheme. Study of the new arrangement shows that Quebec gained little if anything out of the arrangement in terms of administrative flexibility or policy control, but it did give the appearance of conferring upon Quebec a more autonomous policy role than the other provinces enjoyed, and the symbolic achievement was in itself significant.

Pearson appeared to be not greatly worried that Quebec would acquire, through the opting out scheme, a special status in the sense that its policy responsibilities might be (or appear to be) more extensive than those exercised by other provinces. He took the view that the federal and the Quebec governments should work together to improve the position and satisfy the aspirations of francophones. To acknowledge Quebec's uniqueness made sense to him, since (as we have noted) almost 90 per cent of Canadian francophones live in that province. Thus the transfer to Quebec of special policy responsibilities, together with the fiscal resources necessary to fulfill them, was considered by Pearson to be an essential feature of an overall accommodative response to the new nationalist mood in Quebec. Decentralization was seen by Pearson as a necessary complement to the "favourable policies" and "enhanced participation" responses. This view of Pearson's has been shared by the post-Diefenbaker leadership of the Conservative Party: Robert Stanfield, Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney, and their closest associates.

Pearson's successor as leader of the Liberal Party and as prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, carried forward the "favourable policies" and the "enhanced participation" elements in Pearson's program, but made an about-face on decentralization. He set himself up as simultaneously the supporter of francophone rights and the vehement opponent of Quebec nationalism. In 1968 he wrote:

I fought [the Union Nationale government of Quebec] until its downfall in 1960. During the entire period, while nearly everyone connected with the Left was ur-

ging Ottawa to redress the situation in Quebec, I remained a fierce supporter of provincial autonomy. By 1962, however, the Lesage government and public opinion in Quebec had magnified provincial autonomy into an absolute, and were attempting to reduce federal power to nothing; and so, to defend federalism, I entered politics in 1965....

All the various kinds of "special status" which have been discussed until now, whatever their content, lead to the following logical problem: how can a constitution be devised to give Quebec greater powers than other provinces, without reducing Quebec's power in Ottawa? How can citizens of other provinces be made to accept the fact that they would have less power over Quebec at the federal level than Quebec would have over them?... How can Quebec be made the national state of French Canadians, with really *special* powers, without abandoning at the same time demands for the parity of French and English in Ottawa and throughout the rest of the country?... [Under special status, Quebec's] electorate would not be entitled to demand complete representation at the federal level; and, more specifically, it would have to accept that the French fact be limited, legally and politically, to the province of Quebec.<sup>24</sup>

With these words, Trudeau sharply distinguished the concept of dualism on a cross-Canada basis from the dualism that many Quebecers had begun to struggle for during the Quiet Revolution, the dualism of Quebec and the rest of Canada. Philosophically (and Trudeau is probably the only Canadian prime minister to whom the word might be applied) Trudeau had long-previously established a position hostile to ethnonationalism and in favour of the multinational state:

The history of civilization is a chronicle of the subordination of tribal "nationalism" to wider interests.... The tiny portion of history marked by the emergence of nation-states [in which political boundaries supposedly encompass ethnically homogeneous nations] is also the scene of the most devastating wars, the worst atrocities, and the most degrading collective hatred the world has ever seen....The nationalists—even those of the left --are politically reactionary because, in attaching such importance to the idea of nation, they are surely led to a definition of the common good as a function of an ethnic group, rather than of all the people, regardless of characteristics. This is why a nationalistic government is by nature intolerant, discriminatory, and, when all is said and done, totalitarian.<sup>25</sup>

24 Pierre Elliott Trudeau: *Federalism and the French Canadians* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), xix, xxiv-xxv

25 Pierre Elliott Trudeau: "New Treason of the Intellectuals," [1962], in his *Federalism and the French Canadians*, 156, 157, 169

Trudeau's political career, which spanned the two decades from 1965 to 1984, was dedicated to the destruction of Quebec nationalism and the achievement of full political equality for francophones across Canada, without discrimination against French unilinguists (hence demanding bilingualism equally of anglophones and francophones in leadership positions, particularly in federal politics). Where Pearson sought accommodation, Trudeau deliberately polarized public opinion in Quebec on the issue of "separatism." Where Pearson shaped the accommodative response to Quebec, not really distinguishing provincial demands from those of francophones generally, Trudeau vigorously and consistently emphasized precisely this distinction. He became publicly known outside Quebec only in 1968, when he engaged in a verbal duel with the premier of Quebec at a federal-provincial conference. This event occurred only a couple of months before the party convention that was to choose him as Pearson's successor, and since it was broadcast over national television, it enormously helped him establish a reputation in English Canada as the Quebecker who would stand up to Quebec. For 16 years this remained the most solid and enduring source of his political support in the other provinces; at election time, the more he was able to play on the separatist threat from René Lévesque and the PQ, the more the voters turned to him. Evidently this did not hurt at all in his own province either, where the Liberals were able virtually to freeze out the Conservatives as long as Trudeau remained at the head of the party.

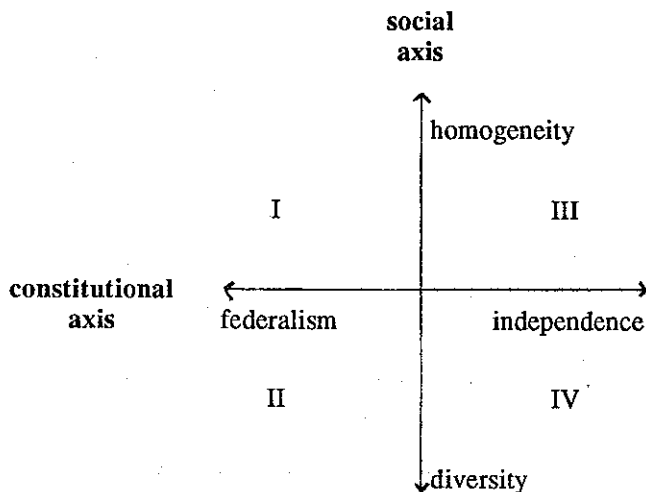
In sum, Trudeau's response to Quebec nationalism (which is also the response of many federal Liberals today) was to reject and disparage it, while simultaneously accommodating and indeed pressing for the demands of French Canadians as an ethnic/linguistic minority. Some of the policies of his government, such as official bilingualism, were highly favourable to francophones across Canada; other policies, especially in the economic realm (including regional development) were directed more specifically to the province of Quebec. Trudeau also stressed, more than any other leading Canadian politician has done, the importance of "enhanced participation" by francophones in the federal government, both at the political (elective) and bureaucratic levels. But he saw an expansion of Quebec's powers as a threat to this objective, and affirmed the power of the federal government against the demands not only of Quebec but also of all other provinces as well. While deliberately playing to Canadian nationalist sentiment and pursuing a set of nationalistic economic policies, he portrayed himself as a strong anti-nationalist *in the ethnic sense*, and his confrontational style emphasized the "rejection" element in his response to Quebec nationalism. But, obviously, Trudeau did not cater to anglophone dominance, whether in ethnicity-related or in economic issues. His bilingualism policies, his economic nationalism, and the economic favours his government gave to Quebec earned considerable animosity, especially in the West. Critics

attributed all three aspects of the Trudeau policies, at least in part, to the strong francophone presence in the cabinet, and they developed a corresponding resentment of the extent of "French power" under his prime ministership.

#### V — ETHNONATIONALISM, SEPARATISM, AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Quebec nationalism would be inconceivable without ethnic difference, or the fact that a strong majority of the province's population shares a common ancestry, language, culture, and historical memory. But this does not mean that Quebec nationalism is ethnically intolerant or exclusive. Its proponents share the goal of building an "original" society, unique in its characteristics, and not a copy or imitation of any other. Possession of the territory and the exercise of a considerable degree of political control within its boundaries are prerequisites of its "projet de société:" on this all Quebec nationalists are agreed. However, beyond this point, unanimity dissolves. The movement is internally divided on at least two axes: a constitutional axis, and a social axis. In relation to former, differences exist on the issue of sovereignty, or the powers required to develop autonomously as a distinct society; the clearest point of difference is between those who believe that adequate constitutional powers can be obtained within the Canadian federal regime, or are at least consistent with federalism, and those who regard political independence as indispensable. In relation to the social axis, no obvious dividing line exists between groups, for there are no dichotomous categories (as there are between "federalists" and "independentists"); but nationalists—even those strongly committed to independence—evidently differ among themselves on the extent of cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity that is to be accepted or desired within the Quebec society of the future. This conceptualization is represented in the accompanying figure, "Varieties of Quebec Nationalism." The figure is equally a schema for classifying groups of nationalists (or for characterizing individual nationalist figures) and a tool for understanding diverse responses to Quebec nationalism.

Figure 1  
Varieties of Quebec Nationalism



Controversy exists over the distribution of Quebec nationalists among the four quadrants: specifically, whether significant numbers are to be found in quadrants I and IV. (Quadrant I comprises federalists who are also nationalists in the sense that they strive for a homogeneous society in which the ethnic Québécois—non-immigrant francophones—predominate culturally, politically, and economically; quadrant IV comprises *indépendantistes* who are committed to an ethnically and culturally diverse Quebec, and accept or encourage the use of minority languages on the condition that French be the main language of business and public affairs.) The touchstones of the "homogeneity option" are a preference for French unilingualism and/or a desire to control immigration.<sup>26</sup> Both language policy and immigration are hot issues in contemporary Quebec politics; they are controversial within as well as between the two main parties, the provincial Liberals and the PQ. Thus, there are Liberals who favour a restrictive language policy (and in particular, favour a French-only policy for

26 To some extent these policy choices are alternatives: a restrictive language policy permits the adoption of a relatively open immigration policy, because immigrants can be constrained to assimilate to the francophone majority; conversely, a restrictive immigration policy may be relied upon to ensure francophone predominance even if language use (in education, public signs, commerce, and municipal politics) is only lightly regulated.

the posting of public signs); and there are *Péquistes* who are strongly committed to the building of a multi-racial, linguistically tolerant, fully independent Quebec. A particularly dramatic illustration of the strength of feeling within the PQ on this point is provided by an incident in March 1988, where the entire executive of the youth wing of the PQ resigned in protest against the unilingualist policies of the heir-apparent to the leadership, Jacques Parizeau (who shortly afterward was indeed acclaimed as leader). The group issued a manifesto that may become a historic document in Quebec politics, and in any case illustrates a fact of fundamental importance: that Quebec nationalism is an admixture of ethnonationalism and a more inclusive form of nationalism *not* based on ethnicity. Some excerpts illustrate this.

In Quebec, as elsewhere, solidarity is an essential condition of the establishment of a promising future, within which there will be place for all. It behooves francophones to behave as a majority, extending a hand to all those who feel excluded and correspondingly insecure.... Our nationalism, the nationalism of tomorrow, a nationalism born of a geopolitical vision of Quebec and its future, is one that encompasses rather than divides. It is obvious that old-style nationalism will find it has less and less appeal, if based on ethnicity, its French Canadian character. Henceforth, our action as Québécois ought to allow everyone, notwithstanding ethnicity or place of birth, to manifest his attachment to the land that has welcomed him, where everything yet remains to be done.... The force of consensus around nation-building goals ("un projet de société") will be the cement that constitutes us as a majority.... Such a consensus must transcend generations, ethnic groups, political parties, and special interests, to the greatest extent possible, respecting the attitudes of all ("dans le respect du rythme de tous").<sup>27</sup>

This statement is exceptionally clear as a commitment to a territorially-defined rather than to an ethnically-defined form of nationalism, but it is far from unique. Some of the leading figures in the Parti québécois, particularly René Lévesque (its founding president; premier 1976-85; d. 1987), made a real though almost wholly unsuccessful effort to shift the focus of Quebec nationalism from ethnicity to territory. One should not overstate the case, as our subsequent review of language policy will show; but, subject to general acceptance of French as the main working language, the vision of Quebec that has been conveyed by most of the declarations and policies of the PQ is pluralist and certainly non-racial. (In this respect, recent developments within the PQ, involving the resignation of Lévesque's successor Pierre-Marc Johnson, and his

27 "Pour un Québec de son temps," extracts from the manifesto of the executive of the youth wing of the Parti Québécois, published in *Le Devoir*, Montreal, 3 March 1988, p. 9

succession by Jacques Parizeau, may presage an atavistic twist in its orientation.)

The nuances of Quebec nationalism, indicating a complex and unstable balancing of ethnicity and territory as its defining characteristics, have had little impact, over the years, on political controversies surrounding it. Partly because of the sheer force of the personality and intellect of Pierre Trudeau, and of course because of the politically strategic position he occupied as prime minister for 14 years, Quebec nationalism has been characterized by most of its opponents as a movement dedicated to ethnic exclusivism and intolerance. The tensions that have arisen as a result of its emergence, and as a result of responses to it (by governments and among the public), have crystallized in intermittent controversies over constitutional reform. These have focussed both on the political status and powers of Quebec, and on the protection of individual rights, notably the constitutional entrenchment of language rights claimable by linguistic minorities.

Projects for constitutional change have been a recurring, high-profile item on the Canadian political agenda since the emergence of Quebec nationalism in the mid-1960s. Quebecers have had two main motives for raising the constitutional issue: first, that the existing constitutional framework has been felt too constraining, (in other words that Quebec has needed a degree of policy control it can obtain only by expanding its constitutional powers); and second, that demographic change has been weakening the province's political weight within confederation. About 20 years ago the province's birth rate, which had been the highest in Canada, dropped to the lowest in the country; in the early twenty-first century, as the population ages, the number of deaths will come to exceed the number of live births. Indeed, the Quebec population has already been declining as a percentage of the total Canadian population: from 28.6 per cent in 1951, to 26.4 per cent in 1981, and an estimated 25.9 per cent in 1987; and this trend is expected to continue or to accelerate. This unfavourable demographic situation threatens to reduce Quebec's political weight in the federal political arena and in federal-provincial relations; and Quebec knows this. Thus it is urgent, from the Quebec perspective, to act quickly to put in place constitutional guarantees of its role and its rights in the federation.

Over the past 20 years the political demands of the province of Quebec have set in motion four major rounds of intergovernmental negotiation on the constitution. Of these, two produced unanimous agreement among the federal government and the ten provinces (1965, 1971), but were not proceeded with because Quebec itself subsequently repudiated them; one ended in an agreement between the federal government and all provinces except Quebec (1981) and was then, as the Constitution Act of 1982, imposed on that province over its vehement objections; and one (1987) resulted in a unanimous inter-

governmental agreement, which must be endorsed by all ten provincial legislatures as well as by the Parliament of Canada before taking effect.

Although constitutional matters became prominent on the Canadian political agenda because Quebec succeeded in putting them there, the politics of constitutional change have so far worked to Quebec's serious disadvantage. A factor affecting the treatment of the issue has been that the 1867 constitution, an act of the British parliament, did not contain an amending formula. Through most of the relevant period it was assumed that unanimity among governments was required to arrive at a formula by which the constitution could be amended in Canada (that is, without having recourse to London); in 1980, as will be related, Prime Minister Trudeau attempted to cut the Gordian knot by proceeding unilaterally, and he partially succeeded. But until that year, all governments acted as if they possessed an absolute veto; and the history of attempts at reform in 1965 and 1971 can only be understood in that context.

The two aborted agreements of 1965 and 1971 elicited a strong negative reaction from Quebec nationalists, in both cases forcing the premier to withdraw the assent he had previously given. The 1965 agreement proposed a rule of unanimity for changes to the division of powers, thus giving Quebec (and of course other provinces as well) an absolute guarantee that its jurisdiction would not be infringed without its consent. In addition, provision was made for the delegation of legislative powers between orders of government, an action that was then and still remains unconstitutional. A consequence of the proposed delegation procedure was that over time Quebec could have acquired, if the federal government agreed, a more extensive policy-making role than other provinces. This agreement by Premier Lesage provoked a storm of protest from nationalist forces in the province (which were led in this affair by a constitutional lawyer who later became deputy premier in the PQ government); their complaint was that the amending formula as negotiated, would have placed Quebec in a "straitjacket" at a time when it was essential not merely to hold onto the powers the province then possessed, but to expand them. Under the agreement, even so small a province as Prince Edward Island, with a population barely greater than 100,000, could veto Quebec's future constitutional development. Lesage decided not to proceed, and the agreement fell to the ground.

In 1971 a more comprehensive agreement was reached by the First Ministers at a conference in Victoria, British Columbia. Known as the "Victoria Charter," the agreement comprised: 1) an amending formula requiring that changes to the constitutional division of powers be approved by Parliament, the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, at least two Atlantic provinces, and at least two western provinces comprising 50 per cent of the population of the West; 2) a charter of human rights giving constitutional status to certain fundamental freedoms; 3)



constitutional protection of the rights of linguistic minorities (French and English), giving francophone minorities more extensive guarantees than have ever, before or since, been agreed to;<sup>28</sup> 4) a clarification of federal and provincial powers in matters of income support, determining that in several categories of support federal laws were not to "affect the operation of any law present or future of a Provincial Legislature;" and 5) various other changes mainly restricting federal powers. This package was more favourable to Quebec, and simultaneously to the francophone minorities in other provinces, than any other constitutional proposals on which it has been possible to reach an inter-governmental consensus. But Premier Bourassa, upon his return to Quebec City, let himself be persuaded that it was not enough. Declaring that the income security provisions lacked clarity and gave too much power to the judiciary, Bourassa announced that he would not ask the Quebec National Assembly to ratify the agreement.

The Victoria Charter was the high-water mark of acceptance of official bilingualism and of the principle that there should be constitutional guarantees of minority language rights in Canada. This is not to say that the availability of public services in the minority language (English or French) has diminished since 1971; on the contrary, especially in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba significant advances in this respect have subsequently been made. However, except in the case of New Brunswick, the English-speaking provinces have been reluctant to give constitutional effect to their commitments to provide French-language services; and Quebec has moved decisively toward French unilingualism, although it must be emphasized that the anglophone minority there has continued to receive more favourable treatment than the francophone minorities in other provinces, with the possible exception of New Brunswick.

28 D.V. Smiley summarizes the linguistic provisions as follows: "Both English and French might be used in the Parliament of Canada and all the provincial legislatures except those of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Statutes, records and journals of Parliament were to be published in both languages. The statutes of each province were to be published in English and French. Both languages could be used in the courts established by Parliament and in the courts of Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. An individual had the right to use either language in communicating with the head offices of any agency of the government of Canada or the governments of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. If any province subsequently extended the rights of the two languages beyond those contained in the constitution such privileges could be revoked only by an amendment to the constitution of Canada." Smiley, *Canada in Question: Federalism in the Eighties* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980), 76.

Five years after the collapse of the Victoria Charter the PQ swept into power, aided by an electoral revolt among the Quebec anglophones. This group had traditionally voted Liberal, and they had every reason to oppose the PQ, but in 1976 many of them stayed away from the polls. This was apparently in angry reaction to a 1974 language law of the Bourassa government. "Bill 22", as the law was known, declared French the sole official language of the province, though English was recognized also as a "national language." The distinction was in part a symbolic affirmation of French as the primary language of the province, but it also had real effect. French was made the normal language of instruction in the schools, and access to the English-language schools was limited to those who could pass a proficiency test. The intent here, an evident response to the demographic situation described earlier, was to channel immigrants into the French system, in order to counteract their overwhelmingly strong tendency to integrate with the anglophone minority. This policy was a direct reflection of nervousness about the future of the French language even within Quebec; the more pessimistic observers predicted that in the absence of laws constraining individuals' choice of language, Montreal would become a majority-English city within a generation. Other provisions of Bill 22 prescribed the use of French in contracts and on public signs (though English might be used as well), required proficiency in French as a condition of entering professions offering service to the public, established that French was to prevail in "the public administration" (a general phrase that comprised institutions such as municipalities and school boards, which in English-speaking parts of the province had tended to operate uniquely in English), and required businesses that wanted subsidies or contracts from the provincial governments to have an adequate "francophone presence" in management ranks, attested to by an official "francization certificate".<sup>29</sup> To all of this the Quebec anglophones and allophones reacted angrily, staying away from the polls in droves in the 1976 election, thus helping to elect the PQ as a majority government. As noted earlier, the party had promised not to declare independence or a sovereignty-

29 Alison d'Anglejan: "Language Planning in Quebec: An Historical Overview and Future Trends," in Richard Y. Bourhis, ed: *Conflict and Language Planning in Quebec* (Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1984), 37-40. The ambivalence of the thrust toward unilingualism was illustrated by the vagueness of the term "francophone presence." A reporter asked the official in charge of implementing the program whether a francophone was a person whose ethnic origin and mother tongue were French. The official stated that fluency in French was the operative criterion. "So the Queen of England is a francophone?" "Yes." And so it was reported, in bright red headlines, the next day.

association status without first getting the endorsement of the Quebec electorate by referendum.

The 1977 language law, "Bill 101," was similar in overall thrust to Bill 22, but went further. The minister who introduced it declared: "There will no longer be any question of a bilingual Quebec," a statement reflecting the belief that to have a fully bilingual society in Quebec meant, given demographic realities in North America, the economic and social superiority of English and therefore, for francophones, a situation structured to result in their linguistic assimilation. Another slogan also captured this sentiment: "Quebec must be as French as Ontario is English." Unjust? So indeed it seemed, for many of the Quebec anglophones, who were accustomed—in the case of the older generation but not of most youth—to living within their own unilingual subculture and working in English without economic penalty. This situation was precisely what Bill 101 intended to overturn. The law, also known as "the Charter of the French Language," provided that no employer could require knowledge of any language other than French as a condition of employment, unless it could be established that such knowledge was clearly demanded by the nature of the work. It prescribed fines for firms employing more than 50 people if, by 1983, they had not qualified for francization certificates. It limited access to English-language instruction to the children of those who had, themselves, been educated in English in Quebec, though this rule was to be relaxed in the case of those living temporarily in Quebec. (The intent of this clause was to discourage the in-migration of English-speaking people from the rest of Canada and from the United States, and not merely to steer allophone immigrants toward integration with the francophone majority.) Though statutes and regulations would be translated into English, only the French version was to be authoritative (this provision was subsequently struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada as unconstitutional). Most public signs and posters could be in French only, not bilingual.

The thrust toward unilingualism in Quebec naturally made it harder to sell the idea of bilingualism elsewhere in the country. This trend, the emotional impact of which was accentuated by the emigration of a substantial number of anglophones from Quebec, was undoubtedly a factor working against the extension of French-language rights in the nine English-majority provinces. Given also the resentment against Quebec for its threat to (as anglophones saw it) "break up Canada," the non-Quebec francophones were placed in a difficult and in some cases ambivalent position. Many of them had considerable sympathy for Quebec *indépendantisme*, but they also realized that the more Quebec went its own way constitutionally and in terms of language policy, the more they themselves were politically isolated. There developed for the first time a real and well-understood community of interest between the anglophone

minority in Quebec and the francophone minorities in the other provinces: it was in the interests of both to see the spread of bilingualism and the constitutional protection of minority language rights. It would have been logical had there developed an equally well-cemented coalition—and, given relative numbers, obviously a far more potent one—among pro-unilingualists in all provinces; it was part of the PQ strategy to encourage the formation of such a coalition. However, too many other considerations including, notably, patriotic ones, got in the way.

Debates over language policy were part of the context of the May 1980 referendum campaign over sovereignty-association. The economic risk involved in any constitutional adventure was also a significant factor, and has generally been regarded by the Quebec nationalists as the decisive one. For whatever reasons, the sovereignty-association project failed by a 60-40 margin, large enough that one may infer it fell short of a majority even among the francophone population; indeed, this supposition is sustained (subsequent political argument to the contrary notwithstanding) by an analysis of the vote on a constituency basis. Be that as it may, the rejection of sovereignty-association ushered in a period of intense intergovernmental negotiation and constitutional debate on a cross-Canada basis. Where the referendum was intended to strengthen Quebec's hand in subsequent bargaining over the constitution, it had precisely the opposite effect—disastrously so for the nationalists.

The end result of 18 months' jockeying and sparring over "a renewed federalism" (Trudeau's promise during the referendum campaign) was the Constitution Act, 1982. At first, during the summer of 1980, an attempt was made to reach a comprehensive intergovernmental agreement covering not only the substance of the Victoria Charter but such diverse matters as the reform of some of the central institutions of government and various division-of-powers items. This attempt crashed spectacularly in September 1980 at an acrimonious federal-provincial conference. At that point Trudeau, evoking a 50-year history of failure to "patriate" the constitution, announced he would proceed unilaterally on a narrower range of items: patriation (necessarily, with an amending formula) and a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Other matters would be left for a second round. He invited British Members of Parliament to "hold their noses" and, notwithstanding opposition from the provincial governments, to pass the required amendments to the British North America Act, 1867,<sup>30</sup> on the

30 The British North America Act or BNA Act, as passed in 1867 and subsequently amended, was renamed the Constitution Act, 1867, as part of the 1982 package of reforms. The main part of those reforms is contained in a separate "Constitution Act, 1982"—confusing, but true!

basis of a resolution to be passed by the Canadian Parliament. This initiative was supported only by the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick, and was vehemently opposed by the federal Conservative Party. The Opposition's tactics eventually succeeded in forcing a halt to the progress of the resolution in Parliament, pending a decision by the Supreme Court of Canada on the constitutionality of the Government's move. When the Court ruled (September 1981) that Trudeau's manner of proceeding was constitutional in the legal sense, but unconstitutional in the conventional sense, its decision forced the reopening of talks with the provinces. It was on this occasion, culminating 5 November 1981, that an intergovernmental "consensus"—*actually, excluding Quebec*—was reached. Essentially, the provinces agreed to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (about which most were leery, as it stood to crimp their legislative powers), while the federal government agreed to an amending formula put forward by the provinces. Quebec assented to neither. The November 1981 partial accord was the basis of a resolution of the federal parliament, and that resolution in turn was the basis of the Constitution Act, 1982, enacted on Canada's behalf by the parliament at Westminster.

The 1982 act goes some distance, but certainly not all the way, toward giving constitutional form to Trudeau's vision of the country. Its outstanding feature is unquestionably the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There is substantial agreement among observers that the Charter will transform the politics of the country, by virtue of its emphasis on and support for individual rights, which reinforce the notion that citizenship confers substantially uniform rights or entitlements across the country. Thus it has been predicted that the Charter will have a homogenizing effect on the political community and the expectations of citizens, and indirectly on public policy. French and English are given constitutional recognition as official languages of Canada (i.e., in the federal parliament and administration, and in courts established by parliament—though most courts are established by the provincial legislatures). These provisions, as noted above, fall considerably short of what had been agreed to ten years earlier and inscribed in the (aborted) Victoria Charter. In addition, the 1982 Charter establishes minority language educational rights, as follows: those whose mother tongue<sup>31</sup> is English or French, or who themselves have received their primary school instruction in French or English *anywhere in Canada*, are entitled to have their children receive instruction in English or French, according to individual choice, within their own province. However, there are two vital

31 The term "mother tongue" does not appear in the Charter. The operative phrase, found in section 23, is "Citizens of Canada whose first language learned and still understood...."

restrictions on this right: first, it applies only where numbers warrant (the definition of which the courts will eventually have to rule upon), and second, the stated rights will not come into effect in Quebec until the legislature so provides. Thus most non-Quebec francophones have more extensive constitutional rights in the matter of language of instruction than is possessed by anglophones in Quebec—although most Quebec anglophones enjoy, in practice, better access to public services in the minority language than is the case with most non-Quebec francophones; this generalization applies both to educational services and to other policy areas, e.g. health services.

Other features of the Constitution Act, 1982, are also pertinent to our discussion of ethnonationalism in the Canadian federal state. These features of the constitution, by contrast with those just noted, do not so much concern the rights of linguistic minorities as they do the capacity of the Quebec francophones to shape their future development as a collectivity. Whereas Trudeau had entered the referendum debate in 1980 promising a "renewed federalism" if the electorate rejected sovereignty-association, the Constitution Act did nothing to respond to the political aspirations of Quebecers who found the existing constitutional framework too constricting. Moreover, in two major respects the Constitution Act marked, for the Quebec nationalists, a significant reversal. Thus the PQ denounced the Charter as a general assault on the powers of the National Assembly, as well as a specific infringement of its powers to legislate in relation to language; and it is certainly true that the Charter does limit legislative powers equally at the provincial and the federal levels. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the new formula for amending the constitution was unacceptable to Quebec.

The amending formula was based on, but in one vital respect differs from, a formula agreed to by Premier Lévesque as part of a package of constitutional reforms put forward by eight premiers in April 1981, as a counterweight to the Trudeau initiative. The eight agreeing provinces (all but Ontario and New Brunswick) proposed that almost all clauses of the constitution be amendable by Parliament plus *two thirds of the provinces containing at least half of the Canadian population, but with an important "opt-out" proviso*. Thus there was to be a general rule that did not give any province a veto, and made no reference to the regions; in both respects this formula contrasted with the formula in the Victoria Charter. While giving weight to provinces on the basis of population, in other respects the new "provincial consensus" was based on the principle of the complete equality of the provinces. To affirm this principle was a major objective of major western leaders such as Alberta's Premier Lougheed; and it was attractive also to the four Atlantic provinces. However, the general rule was qualified by another vitally important clause: that no amendment could infringe upon the legislative powers or the property of a province if that province, by

resolution of the legislature, declared that the amendment should not apply; and furthermore, if any amendment transferred policy responsibilities to the federal government, and a given province opted out of the amendment, the province would be entitled to full financial compensation. In other words, an opting-out province would find its treasury enriched to the extent that its residents would, in the absence of the opt-out arrangement, be receiving benefits provided by the federal government. For the resource-rich provinces, Alberta in particular, the opt-out provision was important because they wanted an absolute guarantee that no combination of forces in the rest of Canada could diminish their control over, or revenues from, natural resources. For Quebec the opt-out provision held out the promise of, potentially, the gradual achievement of special status or even a move toward sovereignty-association. The financial compensation element in the opt-out clause ensured that financial inducements could not lever the province into transferring powers or policy responsibilities it would sooner keep.

The federal government was eventually forced into accepting the main features of the eight provinces' amending formula, but insisted that financial compensation be limited to amendments in the fields of culture and education. This was acceptable to all provinces but Quebec, which at the crucial moment in November 1981, was abandoned by its erstwhile allies. Premier Lévesque denounced them as traitors, and denounced the amending formula, with its more limited financial compensation clause, as a standing threat to the capacity of Quebec to manage its own affairs. The Quebec National Assembly unanimously passed a resolution protesting the Constitution Act. The all-party support for the resolution demonstrated the Act's non-acceptability to all major figures in provincial politics.

It is now (March 1988) seven years since these events occurred. In the interval the situation has changed dramatically. In September 1984 a new Conservative government under the leadership of Brian Mulroney came to power in Ottawa, pledged to "national reconciliation" and the amendment of the Constitution Act of 1982, such that Quebec can assent to it "in honour and enthusiasm." In December 1985 the PQ was replaced by the provincial Liberals, once more under the leadership of Robert Bourassa; the party is now unequivocally federalist (whereas in his earlier stint as premier, Bourassa had described himself as merely a "conditional federalist," committed to maintaining the link with Canada only as long as it could be demonstrated to be in Quebec's economic interest.) Bourassa and his Minister of International Affairs, Gil Rémillard, who is also responsible for "Canadian intergovernmental affairs," had both announced their commitment to constitutional reform, and in May 1986 Rémillard set out five conditions for reaching a settlement. They were:

- explicit recognition of Quebec's character as a distinct society
- guarantee of extended powers for Quebec in the field of immigration
- limitation of the federal government's spending power in areas of provincial jurisdiction
- changes in the formula for amending the Constitution of Canada, in effect giving Quebec a veto power
- participation by Quebec in the nomination of judges to the Supreme Court of Canada<sup>32</sup>

Three months later the premiers unanimously and publicly agreed, to give priority to Quebec's constitutional agenda before raising additional issues of their own. This held out the promise of holding the agenda to manageable proportions, and implicitly acknowledged that Quebec had a well-founded grievance dating back to the 1980-82 period. Then, through the fall and winter of 1986-87, in a series of *in camera* bilateral discussions (between Quebec and the other governments, and between the federal government and the provinces), the main features of an agreement were blocked out. The First Ministers met, again behind closed doors, at the end of April and, to almost everyone's surprise, reached agreement on a set of amendments responding to the five conditions put forward by Rémillard 11 months previously. This, from the location of the meeting, is known as the "Meech Lake Accord," although a final (amended)

32 For the text of Rémillard's speech, see Peter M. Leslie: *Rebuilding the Relationship: Quebec and Its Confederation Partners, Report of a Conference at Mont Gabriel, Quebec, 9-11 May 1986* (Kingston, Ont.: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1987), 39-47; or Peter M. Leslie, ed: *Canada: The State of the Federation 1986* (Kingston, Ont.: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1987), 97-105. Both sources also contain an account of reactions to the speech by participants at the conference where it was delivered.



text was not agreed to until June 3, in Ottawa. The Accord will not become constitutionally binding until (and of course unless) it is endorsed by Parliament and the ten provincial legislatures. By January 1988 the necessary approval had been given by the House of Commons, but not the Senate,<sup>33</sup> and by the provinces of Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. In New Brunswick there has been a change of government (October 1987); the new premier, Frank McKenna, has announced that he is dissatisfied with some features of the Accord and wants to improve it. Two other provinces, Ontario and Manitoba, will hold cross-province hearings by a legislative committee before acting on the Accord, and it is possible that opposition within these two provinces, or either one, or in New Brunswick, will sink the First Ministers' agreement unless further changes are agreed to. Since the discussions in April and June 1987 came within a hair's-breadth of failure, prospects for reaching unanimity on an amended accord would appear to be minimal.

The debate over the Meech Lake Accord<sup>34</sup> neatly encapsulates the political issues posed by ethnonationalism in Canada today, as well as highlighting other matters of considerable importance to the future development of the Canadian federation. Only two areas of controversy will be touched on here: 1) the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society within Canada, and related provisions on linguistic duality, multiculturalism, and aboriginal peoples; and 2) the alleged aggrandizement of the provinces (not just Quebec) through a set of clauses on the federal spending power, appointments to the Supreme Court and the Senate, and the formula for future constitutional amendments.

*Linguistic duality and Quebec as a distinct society.* The Accord stipulates that the Constitution of Canada shall be interpreted consistently with two principles: "that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society," and that "the exist-

33 If the Senate fails to approve the Accord within six months, it can be bypassed by a new vote in the House of Commons.

34 For the text of the Accord, see: Government of Canada: *A Guide to the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord* ([Ottawa: Queen's Printer], 1987). For a full report on the debate as reflected in hearings conducted by a committee of the Canadian Parliament, see: Canada, Parliament: *The 1987 Constitutional Accord, The Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1987). (Note, however, that the main concerns of the Quebec nationalists were not represented at these hearings, but rather at hearings earlier held by the Quebec National Assembly.) Commentaries on the Accord include the text of papers delivered at a symposium on the Meech Lake Accord held at the University of Toronto, 30 October 1987 (publication forthcoming), and a series of articles by Peter Leslie, John Whyte, Beverley Baines, and Ramsay Cook, in the *Queen's Quarterly*, 94:4 (Winter 1987), 771-828.

ence of French-speaking Canadians, centred in Quebec but also present elsewhere in Canada, and English-speaking Canadians, concentrated outside Quebec but also present in Quebec, constitutes a fundamental characteristic of Canada." However, these principles are qualified by the inclusion of three non-derogation clauses: that this interpretation clause does not alter the division of powers, whether relating to language or other matters; that it does not affect another interpretation clause according to which the Charter of Rights "shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians;" and that it does not impair existing rights of aboriginal peoples.

With so many qualifiers, the clause is clearly intended to concede the "distinct society" principle, as demanded by Quebec, without entailing consequences unacceptable to groups other than the francophone majority in Quebec. First, it confers no additional legislative powers upon Quebec and thus apparently respects the principle that Trudeau had fought for, that there should be no special constitutional status for that province; indeed, a preamble to the Accord states unequivocally that it recognizes "the principle of equality of all the provinces." Second, it aims to assure the official-language minorities—both the Quebec anglophones and the francophone communities in other provinces—that their rights will be fully protected. Third and finally, in case the recognition of Canada's linguistic duality and also Quebec's character as a distinct society could be thought to have negative consequences for multicultural groups and/or aboriginal peoples, the clauses of the constitution referring to these groups are explicitly reaffirmed.

Nonetheless the "linguistic dualism - distinct society" clause is controversial. Quebec nationalists, while welcoming the "distinct society" principle, consider that with so many qualifiers, and with no attempt being made to state *in what ways* Quebec is distinctive, the clause may be an empty symbolic gesture. They would like to make sure that it really means something, in effect that it *will* end up broadening the authority of the provincial legislature, if only through more generous judicial interpretation of Quebec's existing constitutional powers. Among other groups exactly the opposite concern is expressed: that the various non-derogation clauses are too narrowly stated to adequately affirm and protect the interests of ethnic minorities and other groups. Some, including New Brunswick premier Frank McKenna, would like a blanket exemption for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The most powerful political force supporting such an amendment is a group of women's organizations—significantly, however, not including women's organizations from Quebec. Also demanding revision of the Accord is a set of organizations representing ethnic minorities. The coincidence of interests between the Quebec anglophones and non-Quebec francophones, and the tendency of their organiza-

tions to support each other politically, became increasingly evident as the campaign against the Accord got under way. These groups want not only ironclad protection of their existing rights but a commitment, constitutionally imposed upon legislatures and administrative bodies, to enhance and extend them. Multicultural organizations and aboriginal organizations also consider their respective groups neglected under the Accord. In short, the Accord represents a delicate balance between two forces: Quebec's thrust for recognition as a distinct society (and for a constitutional status reflecting that conception of itself), and other groups'—especially women and ethno-linguistic minorities—insistence upon obtaining constitutional protection and support; and that delicate balance, as negotiated among First Ministers at Meech Lake, is the target of strong opposition in several provinces.

*Aggrandizement of the provinces.* As stated, one concern about the Meech Lake Accord has been that Quebec may acquire excessive powers or an expanded policy role, permitting it to accede over time to a special status within Canada, with negative consequences for groups other than the francophone majority in Quebec. However, there is another current of opinion, also hostile to the Accord. According to this view, it might have been acceptable for Ottawa to make concessions to Quebec, after all it does have legitimate and unique concerns, but the nine English-majority provinces insisted upon getting everything Quebec got, and the federal government gave in to them all. The result is a dangerously weakened federation.

Only some of the arguments supporting this view are of interest to us in this chapter, given our present concern with specifically ethnonational issues. We shall take note of only two aspects of the controversy. One concerns the amending formula, and the other the exercise of the federal spending power.

Future constitutional amendments will be made as set out in the 1982 formula, except 1) if a province opts out of any future amendment transferring powers to Ottawa financial compensation will now be guaranteed in all policy areas, and not only in relation only to cultural matters and education, and 2) certain matters hitherto covered by the general amending formula (parliament plus two-thirds of the legislatures, encompassing half the population of Canada) will henceforth require unanimity. The matters added to the "unanimity list" pertain mainly to the structure of central institutions—Senate, House of Commons, Supreme Court—and offer assurance that basic features of these institutions will not be altered to the detriment of Quebec, or for that matter of any other province, without its consent. The rationale for unanimity in such matters is that here the opt-out provisions (with financial compensation) are irrelevant: Quebec cannot opt out of the House of Commons or Supreme Court.

The "federal spending power" refers to a practice which (by convention, but not hitherto by explicit constitutional provision) has allowed Ottawa to launch new programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction on a jointly-financed basis, that is, through conditional grants or grants-in-aid. The spending power, in this sense, is both affirmed and limited by the Meech Lake Accord. The limitation is that the Accord provides, as in the case of constitutional amendments, for provincial opting out with guaranteed financial compensation. However, to qualify for compensation, a province must have mounted a program or taken some other initiative "compatible with the national objectives." There has been considerable argument about what this may mean.

The thrust of English-Canadian criticism of the proposed clauses relating to the amending formula and to the spending power has been that in both respects the Accord will inflate the role of the provincial governments and weaken the federal government. And what has this to do with ethnonationalism? Precisely this: that Quebec nationalists have represented, in extreme form, a more widespread tendency to see Canada as a "community of [provincial] communities" associated with each other through a federal state. This concept, articulated by former prime minister Joe Clark, has been vigorously attacked by Pierre Trudeau and the Trudeau wing of the federal Liberal Party, whose suppositions are strongly individualistic and, in a pan-Canadian sense, nationalistic. Controversies over the strength (or weakness) of the federal government have become surrogates for opposing views of Canada and alternative conceptions of citizenship and community.

The Meech Lake Accord is a negotiated settlement of several outstanding constitutional issues between Quebec and its Confederation partners, i.e. the federal government and the nine English-majority provinces. To reach agreement, the First Ministers resorted to language that included some carefully crafted ambiguities. Opponents on both sides, the Quebec nationalists and *indépendantistes* on the one hand, and a group best (if somewhat narrowly) described as "Trudeau Liberals" on the other, have criticized these ambiguities and sought assurance that their respective interests and goals be more clearly articulated in a revised Accord. But it is obvious that whatever might be done to "improve" the Accord from the one perspective would make it totally unacceptable from the other. The Accord represents a delicate balance that may yet be wrecked by the intransigence of its critics who, as I have shown, lie on both sides of the "ethnonationalism divide." The Quebec legislature has endorsed the Accord, so it is at least temporarily safe from the Quebec nationalists. However, if forces outside the province, with the moral support of the Quebec anglophones, insist upon opening up the agreement, it is virtually impossible to imagine that amendments could successfully be negotiated. The Quebec

government probably has zero room for manoeuvre, even if it were itself willing (as seems unlikely) to backpedal.

## VI — CONCLUSION

The character of ethnonationalism in Canada, the strategies of ethnonational organizations, and governmental responses to ethnonationalism: all have been conditioned by federalism. Instead of there being (as in some unitary states) a plurality of ethnonational movements focussing their demands upon a single political authority, in Canada there is a single major ethnonational movement, internally divided and expressing incompatible visions of the country, focussing demands upon several loci of political authority. Within the francophone group, there has been tension between those whose primary identification is with Quebec, and the (self-defined) *Canadiens*, whether resident in Quebec or in other provinces.

A Quebec nationalist movement arose during the 1960s, seeking an enhanced constitutional status for that province, either "special status" within the federation, political sovereignty with economic association, or full independence. The new Quebec nationalism, unlike traditional French Canadian nationalism, challenged the economic, social, and political dominance of the anglophones and threatened the political fabric of the country. Among francophone groups in other provinces and anti-nationalist francophones within the province, as well as among anglophones, it produced a set of reactions ranging from uneasiness to hostility and rejection. One of the least compromising opponents was prime minister Pierre Trudeau, who articulated more forcefully than anyone else the fundamental inconsistency of objective between the Quebec nationalists and those who, like himself, sought full political equality for French Canadians on a cross-Canada basis. The more Quebec acquires a special status within Confederation, he argued, the less will Quebecers be able to play a role in federal politics proportionate to their numbers. Moreover, any weakening of the francophone presence in Ottawa cannot but redound to the disadvantage of francophone minorities in provinces other than Quebec.

Policy responses to ethnonationalism include incomprehension, rejection, and accommodation. The most common response to Quebec nationalism in the rest of Canada has been incomprehension (and, closely related to it, indifference). This explains why crises such as the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 have apparently caught an over-complacent country unawares. However, in the context of this chapter such a response, or non-response, is less interesting than the more deliberate or *strategic* alternatives: rejection and accommodation. The first Canadian prime minister to face up to Quebec nationalism in a serious way was Lester Pearson, who formulated a three-

faceted accommodationist response: favourable policies, enhanced participation by francophones in the federal political arena (electoral politics and the bureaucracy), and decentralization. The three facets appeared to him to be mutually supporting. Under his successor Pierre Trudeau, the extension of official bilingualism, the constitutional entrenchment of linguistic minority rights, regional economic development with (in part) a Quebec focus, and the promotion of francophones to leading political and bureaucratic positions in Ottawa were all aspects of a response to Quebec nationalism (which by his own declaration goaded him into electoral politics) that combined *favourable policies* and *enhanced participation*. In these respects Trudeau carried forward and intensified Pearson's policy of accommodation; but on the matter of decentralization Trudeau reversed direction. Here he became aggressively rejectionist in relation to provincial pretensions generally but especially vis-à-vis the demands of Quebec for special status or more. On this issue Trudeau deliberately polarized opinion, urging that to endorse sovereignty-association or independence for Quebec would be tantamount to abandoning the official language minorities, both the anglophones in Quebec and the francophones elsewhere. These two groups now increasingly perceive that in language policy matters they can and must make common cause.

It is impossible to say whether the rejectionist response to ethnonationalism is consistently the "right" response, if the aim is to create or strengthen a multinational state. At a critical juncture in Canada's history the implementation of a policy favourable to francophones but confrontational in relation to Quebec-focussed ethnonationalism enjoyed a dramatic success. What is at issue now is whether to continue to apply basically the same formula, or, the crisis having subsided, to attempt to patch up the quarrel. That attempt has been made, and the eleven First Ministers have reached agreement on a new constitutional formula which retains the essential features of the settlement forced upon Quebec in 1982, but also modifies it somewhat to make it acceptable at least to the present government of Quebec. It remains to be seen whether opponents outside the province, supported by the Trudeau wing of the federal Liberal party and by Trudeau himself, will sink the deal, and if so with what consequences for the future fortunes of the PQ and Quebec nationalism.