

# Quebec: Between Founding Nation and Sovereignty

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Don't forget that we are facing a very strong sovereignist movement in Quebec. Those who thought on the basis of the famous 'Plan B' that sovereignty was something of the past, was outmoded, were wrong.

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On its way into the Third Millennium the province of Quebec is still split over its future as a Canadian province. According to a poll by CROP, 49,4 % of respondents say they would choose sovereignty, while 50,6 % oppose such an option.<sup>2</sup> The separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) remains the most popular political organization in Canada's largest province and its prospects to win the next provincial election are quite good.<sup>3</sup> So is Quebec on its way to a third referendum on sovereignty after 1980 and 1995 or is the Canadian Nation strong enough to stay alive? This question is on the Canadian political agenda at least since the 1960s and the so called Quiet Revolution in Quebec. But the antagonism between the Francophone and the Anglophone element of Canada is as old as the Canadian federation itself. This cultural dualism is part of the Canadian identity as well as a major thread to its existence.

To understand this contested and contradictory form of identity we have to consider Canadians, Anglophones, Francophones, and Quebecers as different populations representing themselves as nations in different ways and with different concepts. Quebec is of special relevance in this regard as it has experienced a marked transformation of the meaning of identity and of belonging to a particular community over the last decades. Historically Quebecers used to present themselves primarily as members of a French Canadian nation defined in cultural terms. At least since the so called Quiet Revolution in the 1960s they have come to see themselves as a part of a Quebec nation defined first and foremost in a socio-political sense. This transformation from an ethnically and culturally defined concept of a nation to a

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1 *The Montreal Gazette*, April 29, 2005.

2 Angus Reid – Centre for Public Opinion and Democracy, November 6, 2004, <<http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/index.html>>.

3 According to recent polls, 40 % (plus 8 %) of respondents would vote for the PQ in the next provincial election. The governing Liberal Party of Quebec (PLQ) is second with 33 % (Minus 7 %). CROP (2009): *Le climat politique au Québec: Rapport préparé pour La Presse*, <<http://pdf.cyberpresse.ca/lapresse/0964539%20rap%20La%20Presse%20mars09%202.pdf>>.

civic definition is the central question of this essay. How did this transformation happen and what are the implications for the future stability and the successful integration of the Canadian Federation?

To explore this process of redefinition, some theoretical considerations on the concepts of 'nationalism' and 'nation' prove to be highly useful. There are many different ways to define nationalism. These differences are instructive in understanding the changing nature and function of nationalism in Quebec. Let us begin the discussion with a more or less neutral definition of nationalism as

an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, cohesion and individuality for a social group deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation.<sup>4</sup>

That leads us to the next important and contested term to explain: the nation. This term has assumed a variety of completely different meanings in scholarly works. Some understand nation as a more natural, quasi-biological concept rooted deeply in history, others see it much more as a result of collective choices, expressing the free will of social groups. According to the latter understanding nations are the result of the association of free citizens. In this school of thought the concept of the nation offers a new model of belonging, based upon citizenship and equality.<sup>5</sup> Ernest Renan provides the most prominent and radical example by defining the nation as “un plébiscite de tous les jours.”<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, it is possible to say a nation exists “when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as they formed one.”<sup>7</sup> But if we look at the factors that help build some kind of common identity, we are led to observe, that in most instances history, language, religion, territory and a common culture figure prominently in such discourses. Yet these factors may be presented as necessary, but not as sufficient conditions for a nationalistic mobilization. Especially with regard to the Quebec case and the mentioned transformation of the national subject (from Francophone to Québécois) the theory of Karl W. Deutsch is helpful in explaining the pattern of national development.<sup>8</sup> For Deutsch, nationalism is essentially an effect of modern communications, more specifically of “social mobilization” which he defines as

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4 Anthony Smith (ed.), *Nationalist movements* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 1.

5 Louis Balthazar, “The Faces of Quebec Nationalism,” *Quebec: State and Society*, ed. Alain-G. Gangnon (Scarborough: Nelson, 1993), 2-18, 3.

6 Ernest Renan, “Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?” Conference fait en Sorbonne, le 11. mars 1882, *Ernest Renan, Oeuvres complètes*, ed. H. Psichari (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947), 887-906, 904.

7 Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nation and State: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), 5.

8 Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966).

the shift of people away from subsistence economy and local isolation into exposure to the demonstration effects of modern technology and practices, to exposure to mass media of communication.<sup>9</sup>

Thus as long as a population is not mobilized, as long as it is clustered in villages where individuals communicate little with others, national belonging is not important. But with the processes of industrialization and urbanization it becomes increasingly difficult to rely on traditional forms of solidarity like the family, the village or the region. They tend to look for new forms of solidarity and allegiance and rely more and more on a common language and culture. The national setting responds to this need. As Deutsch said,

the greater the need for people to communicate in order to make a living, the greater the importance of language in their lives, and the greater is their potential motivation to prefer a language of their own.<sup>10</sup>

The rapid modernization of Quebec during the Quiet Revolution and the persistent focus on preserving the French language in that province fits well into this explanatory framework of Karl W. Deutsch. As I will discuss later, there is another important element for understanding the evolution of national movements: the respective patterns of political response to nationalist demands and the evolving interaction between the federal government and the nationalists on the sub-national level.

Returning to the conceptual questions and the case of Quebec, it seems to be much easier to define a Quebec nation, than to define the Canadian nation. From an English-Canadian perspective there are a variety of different conceptions of what Canada is. Some say Canada is a kind of post-national community of communities<sup>11</sup> while others think of Canada as a multi-national state, composed of many different cultural or socio-political nations.<sup>12</sup> The majority of Canadians think of Canada as constituting a single civic nation composed of two linguistic communities and a multi-cultural society.<sup>13</sup>

So while most English-Canadians agree on the existence of some kind of a civic Canadian nation, it is not as easy to find a common definition of Canada from a French-Canadian perspective. What used to be a historical minority or one of the two founding peoples of Canada no longer exists and is split into two different groups: We do find Francophones outside of Quebec that form a national minority of the Canadian nation, and we do find Francophones within Quebec that form a

9 Karl W. Deutsch, *Tides among nations* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 302.

10 Ibid. 303.

11 Jeremy Webber, *Reimagining Canada: Language, Culture, Community and the Canadian Constitution* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

12 Philip Resnick, *Toward a Canada-Quebec Union* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

13 Michel Seymour, "Quebec and Canada at the Crossroads: a Nation within a Nation," *Nations and Nationalism* 6.2 (2000): 227-255, 239.

national majority of the Quebec nation. That leads us to a definition of the Quebec nation that differs from a primarily cultural definition. The Quebec nation can be described as a political community, containing a national majority of French Quebecers, and a national minority of Anglo-Quebecers and individuals of other national origins.<sup>14</sup>

This is but one way to define the Quebec nation – a definition reflecting a social science perspective; the nationalist discourse in contemporary Quebec is plurivocal and we do find, in fact, several nationalist discourses.<sup>15</sup> This is noteworthy as it directly relates to the aforementioned function of nationalism as instrument for political mobilization. The one definition prevalent over much of Quebec's history may be called melancholic nationalism; it was the main focus of the new nationalism that emerged during the Quiet Revolution. The history of Quebec is described as a long series of failures, set backs and humiliations. It began with the defeat on the Plains of Abraham in 1759, followed by the abandonment of New France by the motherland and its surrender to England in 1763. Further on, the domination by the British, the threat of assimilation and finally the repeated failures of reforming the Canadian state, most prominently the failure of the referendum in 1980, the Meech Lake Accord in 1990, and the second referendum in 1995 as well as successful constitutional reforms as the repatriation of the constitution in 1982 and successful reform attempts of the federal government (Clarity Act 2000). From this perspective the conquest is discussed primarily in terms of a national trauma. A most striking example is to be found in the words of Maurice Séguin:

It is possible to judge the Anglophone-American conquest and the change of the empire as a major disaster in the history of French Canada. It was a catastrophe that tore this young colony out of its protective, nurturing environment, impairing its organization as a society and a budding nation, condemning it to annexation, to political and economic subordination.<sup>16</sup>

Such an interpretation of Quebec or Francophone history provides only two options for the future of Quebec: *survivance* or assimilation.

But there is a strong and influential alternative to this melancholic nationalism in Quebec that may be called antinationalism or cosmopolitanism,<sup>17</sup> with Pierre Elliot Trudeau as its most prominent proponent. Trudeau and his colleagues at the journal *Cité libre* did not deny humiliations suffered by the Francophones, but in their view it is more important to participate actively in the modernization of the State, of

14 Seymour. "Quebec and Canada at the Crossroads." 240.

15 See for detailed discussion Joyclyn Maclure, "Narratives and Counternarratives of Identity in Québec," *Québec: State and Society*, ed. Alain-G. Gagnon (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004), 33-50.

16 As quoted in Jocelyn Maclure, *Quebec Identity: The challenge of pluralism* (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2003), 24.

17 *Ibid.* 40.

democracy and of the economy.<sup>18</sup> Trudeau did not only have problems with a certain kind of Quebec or Francophone nationalism, he generally believed that nationalism as a way of relating to the self and to others as well as a political expression was an act of arbitration.<sup>19</sup> Following this line of thinking, Trudeau clearly rejected any kind of special status for Quebec within the Canadian federation. The repatriation of the Constitution in 1982 and the entrenchment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms can be seen as an expression and implementation of Trudeau's political thought.

The melancholic and the antinationalist concepts provided, for the most part, the intellectual and ideological framework for the formation and evolution of the separatist movement in Quebec. And the success of nationalist mobilization is mainly constrained by what particular concept is hegemonic in the political and societal discourse in the province at a particular time.

This proposition leads me back to the more theoretical discussion on the formation and development of nationalist movements. As I have tried to show elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> we even have to go one step further in trying to explain the evolution of nationalist movements and look at the patterns of political responses to nationalist demands and the evolving interaction between the nationalist movement in Quebec and the federal political power in Ottawa. This process of interaction is heavily constrained by the institutional setting in which it takes place. The historically rooted pattern of Canadian Federalism provides considerable leeway to the provincial political system. This latitude gives new political and societal forces ample opportunity to participate effectively in the political process. In combination with the weakness of traditional societal actors in Quebec – the Union National and the Catholic Church – and their inability or refusal to adapt to the realities of a emerging modern welfare state, this situation created an opening for the new nationalists. On the one hand, the strong representation of Francophone interests at the federal level (factor Trudeau) facilitated the acceptance of the nationalist movement in Québec. On the other hand, it weakened the support of the nationalist drive for separation that reached the political agenda during the 1970s. Thus nationalist mobilization has only been successful in periods of federal antagonism.

This pattern explains the waves of nationalist mobilization in Quebec. Only in times of conflict as in the late 1970s and early 1980s surrounding the process of constitutional repatriation or the debate on the Meech Lake Accord and the Charlottetown Agreement, the nationalists were able to mobilize under the banner of separation. After those reforms were implemented or failed, the support among the elector-

18 Pierre Elliot Trudeau, "Nationalist Alienation," *Against the Current: Selected Writings 1939-1996*, ed. Gerard Pelletier (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996), 143.

19 Maclure. *Quebec Identity*. 41.

20 Christian Lammert, "Nationalist Movements and the State in Canada and France," *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* 21.2 (2001): 133-152 and Christian Lammert, *Nationale Bewegungen in Québec und Korsika 1960-2000* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2004).

ate for an independent Quebec dropped again clearly. Another factor that weakened the sovereignty option is the Parti Québécois (PQ) itself. With its enormous success as a governing party – as is best illustrated by the language policy – the PQ helped Canadian federalism to work effectively. Political success in Québec is interpreted by the electorate – as polling results show – not as argument for separation, but for the effectiveness of the federal system. For the PQ this poses a serious dilemma: successful governance stabilizes the Canadian federation, failure as a governing party strengthens the political opposition in Quebec – here in first instance the Liberal Party with its concept of autonomy within the Canadian state.

But let us take a closer look at the history of Quebec and see what kind of nationalist concepts were dominant at what time.<sup>21</sup> The first period started with the establishment of the Canadian Federation and lasted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at least until the end of the Second World War. The traditional nationalism at that time had several characteristics. First it was predominantly cultural, not political. Although the topic was on the political agenda of that period, this kind of French-Canadian nationalism rarely reached the level of political realization or produced a successful political organization or party. Second, the traditional nationalism was not concerned with economic matters and religion was much more important for the nationalist agenda. The strong connection between French-Canadian nationalism and Catholicism can be considered as third feature of traditional nationalism. Fourth, French-Canadian nationalism was basically inward-looking. In general, nationalist leaders were not interested in international affairs and were mainly concerned with the protection of the French-Canadian element in a basically Anglophone North America. Consequently, as a fifth characteristic, the French Canadian nation was mainly closed for newcomers. The French-Canadian nation was conceived as an ethnic entity and some kind of racial homogeneity was an important element.

This type of traditional French Canadian nationalism was challenged in the post war years, particularly because of the massive modernization and urbanization of Quebec, a process that had already begun at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and accelerated in the 1920s.<sup>22</sup> The new nationalism that emerged as a result of this modernization process may be described on the one hand as a continuation of the traditional nationalism, because it is dedicated to the same degree to the preservation of the Francophone nation in North America. On the other hand the new nationalism is radically different from its predecessor. This new nationalism could not be espoused without a total rejection of the old one. There had to be a clear shift towards some kind of antinationalism before adapting the new Quebec nationalism. And this shift is accompanied by a new relationship between the Anglophone and Francophone element in the Canadian Federation. Resulting from the process of social mobiliza-

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21 See for a detailed description Louis Balthazar, "The Faces of Québec Nationalism," *Québec: State and Society*, ed. Alain-G. Gagnon (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993), 2-17.

22 See John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *A short history of Quebec* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd, 1993), 195.

tion, the majority of the French Canadians in the 1950s had moved into the world of communications and they realized that those communication systems were controlled by the English-speaking majority.<sup>23</sup> The language problem became more important in Quebec and was connected to questions of social mobility. Thus French Canadians living in Quebec saw the need to create and consolidate their own communication network, or formulated more generally, they tried to organize their own nation. And this process resulted in a reformulation of the national subject. This shift becomes obvious in the message of Jean-Jacques Bertrand when he said: "Without Québec, there could be French minorities, but there would not be a French Canada."<sup>24</sup> Only in Québec could there be a real, well-organized, and authentic modern French-speaking society. In this manner French Canadian nationalism was superseded by Quebec nationalism and the main institutional carrier of this new nationalism was the provincial state. As the reforms of the Quiet Revolution were brought about, a new middle class emerged and looked for ways to legitimize its authority. In this development a special role could be conceived for the government of Quebec. The former Prime Minister of Quebec, Jean Lesage, forcefully made this point, when he said in 1963: "Quebeckers have only one powerful institution: their government. Now they want to use this institution to build a new era."<sup>25</sup>

But there was not only an upspring of some kind of Quebec nationalism, at the same time a 'Quiet Revolution' ensued in Ottawa, helping to reshape the Canadian nation after gaining its sovereignty from Great Britain. This Canadian nation building can be seen as in direct competition to the aspirations of the political elites in Quebec. Canadian citizenship was established in 1947 and the federal government took over former provincial responsibilities in order to pursue 'national' goals such as equalization of standards of living and unemployment insurance. Louis Balthazar goes as far as to say that the more one tries to unite Canada, the more one unites Quebec. In that sense, Quebec nationalism is the illegitimate child of Canadian nationalism. The Canadian nation-state gave rise to the Quebec nation-state.<sup>26</sup> What followed was, until recently, the same kind of action-reaction pattern between the Canadian federation and Quebec. Henri Bourassa's nationalist party was a result of Laurier's policies and the nationalist spirit of the Quiet Revolution was a direct response to St. Laurent's new Canadianism. As for Pierre Trudeau, it has become obvious that his concept of a united bilingual and multicultural Canada as well as his Charter of Rights and Freedoms has received a much better reception outside Quebec than within. The post-Meech Lake upsurge in Quebec nationalism can be characterized as a direct consequence to Trudeau's maneuvers of 1981-82.

That leads to another interesting question, the functions of Quebec nationalism with its special form of separatism in the Canadian political and constitutional arena

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23 Ibid. 8.

24 Cited in Claude Morin, *Le combat québécois* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1973), 69.

25 *Le Devoir*, 10 October, 1963.

26 Balthazar. "The Faces of Québec Nationalism." 10.

as well as in provincial political system in Quebec. At least since the 1970s, the Party Quebecois has been, and still is, a constant and strong factor in provincial as well as in national politics.<sup>27</sup> Nationalism may be characterized as an effective point of reference for political mobilization in Quebec and success at the polls. Of special interest in this regard is the option of separation as a tool to gain control over the political affairs of the Quebec nation. Two different concepts of how to serve best the purposes of the Quebec nation are offered: either within the Canadian federation or as an independent state. Looking at the evolution of the Party Quebecois (PQ) and the political system in Quebec in general, we do find different concepts of nationalism and separatism competing in the political arena for hegemony. In the early phase we can distinguish at least two wings in the PQ: a radical wing that opted for an immediate separation from Canada, and a more moderate wing that demanded a referendum on the question of separation before deciding on the future of the province. The moderate wing gained control over the leadership of the party and the provincial election of 1976 was won by the PQ by focusing on other issues than separation. Until the 1980s the concept of separation did not figure prominently in the program of the PQ. Even the first referendum in 1980 can not be taken as a clear indicator for a wider support for separatism among the Quebec population. The referendum question was phrased in a way that implied no real independence from Canada, but a complex arrangement of sovereignty-association, a kind of partial separation with many responsibilities left to be shared with the Canadian federal government.<sup>28</sup> The way the referendum question is formulated is a good indicator for analyzing what kind of separatist option is on the political agenda and how popular such an option is among the population at that point in time. It often looks like as there were only two options on which to decide on: an independent Quebec or some kind of status quo within the Canadian federation. This kind of polarization distorts the answer to the question: What does Quebec want? The nearly 50 %-share of yes-votes in the referendum of 1995 cannot be taken to mean that half of the province's population wants to live in an independent Quebec outside of Canada. A closer look at the phrasing of the referendum question may help to explain this. In 1995, the question was phrased in the following way:

Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership, within the scope of the Bill respecting the future of Quebec and the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?<sup>29</sup>

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27 See for an overview John Fitzmaurice, *Quebec and Canada: Past, present, future* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1985).

28 See René Lévesque, *Option Québec* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1968).

29 Patricia Hughes, "Legislatures and Constitutional Agnosticism," *The Least Examined Branch: The Role of Legislatures in the Constitutional State*, ed. Richard W. Bauman and Tsvi Kahana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2006), 226.



The wording does not support an interpretation that points to a straightforward and unilateral declaration of independence. People were basically asked to give the government of Quebec a mandate to negotiate the conditions for a new economic and political partnership with the federal government of Canada. Maurice Pinard and his colleagues showed in their studies that this is not simply a fight about words. The responses of the people in Quebec strongly correlate with the questions and the choices they are offered. Pinard demonstrates that the level of agreement differs widely depending on whether the option is called independence, sovereignty or separation.<sup>30</sup> In the time period between 1988 and 1995 a maximum of not more 42 percent of the people in Quebec opted for the separation of Quebec from the Canadian federation. An independent Quebec on the other hand is favored by up to 50 percent and the most popular option is a sovereign Quebec with a maximum of 58 percent favorable responses.<sup>31</sup> The highest rates achieved in all three categories were a direct result of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990. The Meech Lake Accord was designed to integrate Quebec into the constitutional framework of Canada. Quebec was the only province that did not sign the constitutional document of 1982. The Meech Lake Accord incorporated nearly all of the demands of the nationalists in Quebec. Furthermore the package also included many of the demands of the Western provinces, from a proposal to reform the senate to limitations of federal jurisdiction and federal spending power. The most important part for the nationalists in Quebec however was the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society. The agreement would have had to be ratified within three years by the federal parliament and all provincial legislations, but for reasons relating in mostly to domestic affairs the, provinces of Manitoba and Newfoundland did not sign the accord and therefore the Meech Lake Accord and the new effort to integrate Quebec into the Canadian constitutional framework failed. As a consequence the vote in favor of independence rose rapidly in Quebec. For the first time in Canadian history the Canadian federation said no to reform proposals – a position, which so far has been reserved for the government in Quebec. Stéphan Dion – former federal minister for intergovernmental affairs – defined the failure of the Meech Lake Accord as the main cause of the strength of the Quebec nationalism in the 1990s. Quebecers felt rejected by the Canadian federation and, building on the structural problem of language and the socio-economic developments in Quebec – which had strengthened the national self confidence of the Quebec people –, this feeling of rejection was used by the separatists for a nationalistic mobilization.<sup>32</sup>

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30 Maurice Pinard, "Le quatre phases du mouvement indépendantistes québécois," *Un combat inachevé*, eds. Maurice Pinard, Robert Bernier and Vincent Lemieux (Sainte-Foy: Presse de l'Université du Québec, 1997), 29-50.

31 Ibid. 35.

32 Stéphan Dion, "Explaining Quebec nationalism," *The Collapse of Canada*, ed. R. Kent Weaver (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution), 77-121, 78.

As I have stated already, the different rates of support for concepts of separatism, independence or sovereignty are not just a matter of wording but of different concepts. This was also realized by the political elites in Quebec. Both sides of the nationalist discourse, the melancholy nationalists and the antinationalist used different terms in their efforts to strengthen their political position. The anti-nationalists or federalists used the term independence in order to stir up fears among the Quebec population that was concerned with the economic consequences of independence, while the radical nationalists used the term sovereignty without explaining the exact meaning. Public opinion polls in Quebec show that the province's population believes that an independent Quebec will still be a part of the Canadian federation. Almost 20 percent believe that an independent Quebec would still send delegates to the federal parliament in Ottawa.<sup>33</sup> The confusion over the different terms and models became even more obvious in a 1992 poll. Almost 47 percent of the respondents voted in favor of an independent Quebec, while 38 percent voted against independence. After explaining the implications of independence, i.e. that Quebec would no longer be part of Canada, the picture changed markedly: just 39 percent voted in favor for independence but 55 rejected such an option.<sup>34</sup>

In reaction to the apparent confusion, the Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien demanded clear conditions and a clear question in a possible third referendum on Quebec's separation in the late 1990s. Although the political elites in Quebec rejected this proposal, Chrétien's suggestion was very popular among the Quebec electorate. In a public opinion poll by the Center for Research and Information on Canada 58 percent indicated their preference for the government's initiative and just 28 percent against it. Two questions stood in the center of Chrétien's initiative: would a simple majority be enough to separate Quebec from the Canadian federation and is a unilateral declaration of independence possible under the constitutional framework in Canada. Chrétien's initiative was again successful, if we look at public opinion polls. 56 percent of the population in Quebec does not believe that a simple majority would be enough and 48 percent rejects the nationalist position that a unilateral declaration of independence would be legal. To clarify this question in a constitutional sense, Chrétien and the Canadian Justice Minister Alan Rock presented those questions to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court set two conditions for the legitimacy of an eventual secession: for Quebec, a clear majority and question, and for Canada, the obligation to negotiate. Chrétien's initiative resulted in the so called Clarity Act that was adopted by the Canadian Parliament in March 2000.<sup>35</sup>

33 Pinard. "Le quatre phases du mouvement indépendantistes québécois." 38f.

34 This is not just a phenomenon of the 1990, similar results can be found in polls surrounding the first referendum in 1980. See Jon H. Pammett, Jane Jenson, Harold D. Clarke and Lawrence LeDuc "Soutien politique et comportement électoral lors du référendum québécois," *Compartement électoral au Québec*, ed. Jean Crête (Chicoutimi: G. Morin, 1984), 387-419, 397f.

35 See for a detailed discussion Andrée Lajoie, "The Clarity Act in Context," *Quebec: State and*

If we look at public opinion polls covering the 2000 to 2009 period, this hard line strategy of the federal government seemed to be successful. But the weakness of the separatist option in the nationalist movement of Quebec was also a result of its own structural crisis. Paradoxically this crisis is to a great degree the result of the successes of the PQ in government. The national project in Quebec since the Quiet Revolution was primarily based on two pillars: language and the powers of the state in Quebec. The language problem has lost its power to mobilize due to a successful language policy of the PQ that led to high popularity and approval ratings among the electorate and stabilized the French language segment of Quebec's population. Today it is for the most part the English speaking minority in Quebec that is calling for a protection of their language in the province. A similar success story weakened the question of state power as the second important pillar of nationalism. With the modernization of state structures imposed by the Liberal Party of Quebec during the 1960s, the state became the main agent for economic and social development for the Francophones in Quebec. The expansion of provincial authority in Quebec was achieved through protracted conflict with the federal government in Ottawa and this conflict could be and was used by the nationalists for political mobilization. Thus, in summing up the argument the successful policy concerning the role of the state and the language problem in Quebec can be described as a success with regard to the national project in Quebec, but at the same time it has reduced the chances to mobilize against the Canadian state in favor of a sovereign Quebec, because this success story may also be interpreted as a result of a functioning federal order. For this reason, it seems unlikely that the upsurge in separatist mobilization in Quebec will lead to a third referendum and to a sovereign Quebec. The institutionalized barriers in the Canadian state are, especially with the adoption of the Clarity Act, remain high. So on its way from a founding nation towards separation, Quebec has, with remarkable success, found its place as a nation within the Canadian nation.

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