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Identities in Québec: between 'la souche' and atomization*

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Introduction

"What does it mean to be a Quebecer?" Over the last thirty years, artists, academics, politicians and journalists have posed this question *ad nauseam* in various ways. The "distinct society" debate is but one recent, well-publicised instance of a preoccupation that has never left us since the abandonment of the notion of a French-Canadian identity.[1] This chapter seeks to throw some light on the debate and on the main answers that have been proposed to the aforementioned existential question.

The concept of identity has long been neglected by the social sciences. Even well-known studies of nationalism have often ignored it and have rarely seen the need to define it (see especially Kedourie, 1961; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). Since the second half of the 1980s, however, a number of political factors around the globe such as the rise of resurgent or nascent nationalisms, the multiplication of identity-related political demands, and European integration have led to a veritable explosion of academic interest in the phenomenon (Young, 1989, 1990; Dumont et al., 1989; A. Smith, 1991, 1992; Lash and Friedman, 1992; Lenoble and Dewandre, 1992; Hoffmann, 1993; Keane, 1993; Keith and Pile, 1993; Parekh, 1994; Cahen, 1994). In a country of multiple diversities such as Canada, confronted with an identity crisis that has intensified since the 1960s, the flourishing of analytic studies of identity-related issues has been particularly rapid

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[1] The year 1960 will be considered a necessary point of demarcation for the purposes of analysis rather than a complete break in history that in itself fully explains the evolution of the phenomenon under study.

and intense (Dion, 1987; Dumont, 1987:235-331, 1993; Dufour, 1989; Kymlicka, 1989, 1995; Létourneau, 1991, 1994; Taylor, 1989, 1992, 1993; M. Smith, 1992; Appel, 1993; Norman, 1993; Cairns, 1993; LaRue and Létourneau, 1993; Jenson, 1993, 1994; Tully, 1994a, 1995; Karmis, 1994; Resnick, 1995; Salée, 1995a, 1995b; Bourque and Duchastel, 1996; Elbaz, Fortin and Laforest, 1996; Karmis and Gagnon, 1996; Ancelovici and Dupuis-Déri, 1997).

Beyond the socio-historic conditions characteristic of the end of the Twentieth century, in what sense is the phenomenon of identity closely related to the political sphere? Jane Jenson has offered an enlightening response:

> *Politics are always identity politics, even when they appear to be about other things. They are, of course, about those other things – about taxes, deficits, access to abortion services, constitutions, childcare, schools, foreign policy, economic development, elections and everything which we normally think of when we think "politics". But our preferences, our actions, and even our expectations about what is political are related to the notions we share about the collectivities to which we belong, about our identities as citizens, about what Canada is, about who our fellow citizens are, and about why they have rights. These ideas about who we are, in turn, are never fixed in time, nor do they fall from the sky. They are created out of the political actions of groups and individuals who work to make themselves heard, their positions respected, and their demands met. Out of such efforts, which we can label here the politics of identity, come boundaries which distinguish those on the inside –us– from outsiders –them. They establish the rights and duties of those on the inside as well as the patterns of inequality or difference which are accepted as legitimate among the insiders (Jenson, 1994:55).*

The phenomenon of identity is thus multiple. We can speak of individual as well as collective identities, gender, class, national, regional, religious, generational and other identities, that may vary considerably over time and space.[2] What are we talking about when we refer to a *Québécois* identity? The concept of national identity is too narrow to encompass the breadth and complexity of the contemporary discourse of identity, particularly in plurinational and polyethnic federations.[3] As we will see in greater detail below, the more general notion of *comprehensive collective identities* [*identités collectives globales*] has considerable analytic advantages.[4] Comprehensive collective identities encompass a range of ethical-political definitions and redefinitions within a given political unit understood to be both the product and source of sentiments of allegiance and belonging. The term *comprehensive* signifies that we are speaking of identities related to political-territorial units, i.e. units which include necessarily a high level of social diversity (gender, sexual, generational, class, regional, national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious). Comprehensive collective identities represent the imaginary constructions emerging out of this diversity and which are more or less compatible with each other.

This paper looks at both the theoretical issues of comprehensive collective identity and the emergence and evolution of Quebec identity in particular. I will show that by dividing the notion of comprehensive collective identity into three types - civic, genealogical, and cultural and linguistic - and by taking into account the plurality of influences at work in twentieth century Quebec, we will be better able to account for the complexity of the identity-related transformations that have beset this province since the 1960s.

The present study has three parts. First, a critical evaluation of two of the best known recent studies of identity in Quebec - those of Léon Dion and Christian Dufour - will allow us to assess the concepts currently in the field. Secondly, a new set of theoretical propositions will be introduced when I develop the concept of

comprehensive collective identity. Finally, on this basis I will present a sketch of an alternative interpretation of *Québécois* identity. As we shall see, the transition from French-Canadian to *Québécois* identity represents the passage from an historical period of essentially exclusive genealogical identity to a period of fragmentation and competition between three conceptions of identity.[5] It should become clear that collective identity cannot be considered a static entity, something given once and for all.

Two Contestable Interpretations of Québécois Identity

During the tumultuous period between the signing of the Meech Lake Accord (April, 1987) and the eventual failure of its ratification process (June, 1990), when the question of identity presented itself with unprecedented urgency, Léon Dion and Christian Dufour both published important studies. Dion's book, published in 1987, was much more than the product of circumstance; it was the first volume of an eagerly-awaited intellectual testament of a man who has studied - indeed helped to make - Quebec for almost forty years. Adopting a tact unusual for a social scientist, Dion attempted to locate the *Québécois* identity through an unsystematic study of Quebec poetry, song and novels.

Dion certainly cannot be faulted for attempting to integrate literary works into the analysis of collective identity. He quite rightly notes that the imaginative dimension of reality is too often neglected in such analysis (Dion, 1987: 153-156). However, his work appears to err in the opposite direction, when he privileges an overly-restrictive definition of the *Québécois* identity's imaginative dimension. Although he acknowledges that everyone in his or her own way participates in the creation of this collective "imaginary" [*l'imaginaire collectif*], he insists on the preponderant importance of writers:

> *I see in a novelist such as Hubert Aquin, a poet such as Gaston Miron and a* chansonnier *such as Félix Leclerc a worthwhile conscience for the Quebec that is to be built; geniuses who benefit more from their past experiences than others, who see farther ahead, who serve as national heralds of good or bad "news", as prophets indicating the path that the nation really wants to take, or that it would take if only imagination could determine our action. [...] The imagination, considered in itself and in its strongest sense, is the dimension that points social reality towards the ideal. As Claude Racine explains, 'literature does not comprehend that which is but rather that which tries to become.' (Dion, 1987: 6-7).*

Writers, in other words, are the interpreters of "a part of ourselves of which we have only a partial conscience, [...] a part that we often insist upon repressing." (Dion, 1987: 8).

There are two problems with this approach. First, Dion's book *À la recherche du Québec* proposes a much too narrow vision of *Québécois* identity. Not only has Dion limited his analysis almost exclusively to literature - which in itself dismisses other forms of discourse from the imaginative dimension of identity - he has also ignored the work of a new generation of writers and

[2] It should also be noted that the concept of identity speaks to a need that appeared only with the advent of modernity. As Charles Taylor has written, "[w]e can speak anachronistically of the identity of medieval man. But this is anachronistic, because a medieval man did not have the question to which identity is the answer. The question is "Who am I?" The answer point to certain values, certain allegiances, a certain community perhaps, outside of which I could not function as a fully human subject" (Taylor, 1993:45).

[3] On the distinction between the notions of plurinational and polyethnic, see Kymlicka (1995: 11-26).

[4] This concept was originally developed in Karmis and Gagnon (1996).

[5] I intend to focus primarily on the fragmentation *between* these three total collective identities and on their mutual incompatibility. My choice should not however be taken as a denial of the diversity existing *within* each.

artists. Dion concedes at one point that the objects of emotional attachment traditionally present in the *Québécois* imagination - land, language and culture - seem to have either less importance or a different meaning for today's youth, whether they be writers or not (Dion, 1987: 38-40, 50-52). But by omitting references to works of writers younger than fourthy years old (even fifty!) he demonstrates a lack of appreciation for the nature and breadth of the changes he senses. This emerges most clearly when he gauges the evolution of Quebec nationalism. Since young people have been especially susceptible to new innovations in identity-related discourse, this omission is especially serious. Moreover, Dion's focus on a group of old-stock francophone writers whose work oscillates between a genealogical vision of identity and a mixed, assimilationist civic and cultural-linguistic vision of identity[6] can in no way reflect the changes in the nature of identity in Quebec over the last thirty years. In other words, Hubert Aquin, Paul Chamberland, Félix Leclerc, Raymond Lévesque, Gaston Miron and Gilles Vigneault do not exhaust the variety of identity-related discourse in Quebec. A more representative analysis would have to account for other names such as Neil Bissoondath, Ying Chen, Louis Hamelin, David Homel, Naïm Kattan, Sergio Kokis, Dany Laferrière, Robert Lepage, and Stanley Péan.

Secondly, by reducing *Québécois* identity to the literary imagination, Dion does nothing less than privilege an idealised collective identity over that embodied in real social agents. In his view artists do much more than propose collective representations with which other social actors can identify more or less consciously; they actually articulate "the culture's deepest expectations" or ideals (Jean-Charles Falardeau, cited in Dion, 1987: 7) and alone are capable of perceiving these (Dion, 1987: 156). *Pace* Dion, literary discourse should be seen not as something opposed to the identities expressed by social agents but instead as an important *part* of the narrative tradition that provides sustenance to the process of identification. Not all social agents, of course, will adhere to the collective representations emerging out of this process in the same way and to the same degree; but all are connected to a narrative tradition to which artists contribute. By privileging a one-sided reading of collective identity Dion accords to a privileged few an interpretive monopoly and an unlimited power to accuse others of ignorance or treachery.[7] While Dion himself criticises the dominant narrative of identity in Quebec for being (as he understands it) too closed to the "modern" realities of North America (Dion, 1987: 160-161), his approach can in turn be criticised for not taking into account the plurality of identity-related narratives on Quebec soil.

No less flawed is the approach of Christian Dufour, who makes a distinction between collective identity "at one moment or another" and a "collective unconsciousness". According to Dufour, a collective identity is always temporally situated and under the influence of a certain number of historical events that have shaped it. These events form the heart of collective identity and can affect the collective psyche to the point of provoking a "trauma" leading to their repression from collective memory and their banishment to the unconscious, where their influence remains strong, albeit unnoticed (Dufour, 1989: 14). On this basis Dufour argues that the *Québécois* and English-Canadian identities have been built upon the events associated with "the Conquest", i.e. the French capitulation to the British in North America in 1760. Because (claims Dufour) Quebecers and English-Canadians have constantly repressed the memory of this event into their collective unconscious, neither has been able to explore fully the scope of their own identity. Repression on both sides, observes Dufour,

has had a devastating effect on Canada and is responsible for cases of mutual rejection at the conscious level, i.e. the non-recognition of the other in the process of identity formation. In Dufour's eyes, the traumatism precipitated by the events of 1760 have prevented both Quebec and English Canada from recognising that part of their identity is dependent upon the "other" and that such recognition would be the best protection against the American cultural threat. His reading of history rests solely upon this thesis. Let us now examine this reading in greater detail.

Conquered by the English in 1760 and abandoned by France, the French colonists experienced a shock from which they never quite recovered. Consumed by their fear of extinction as a people, deprived of an authentic national sentiment and a strong leadership, they tried their best to forget the Conquest. The repression was made all the more easy, claims Dufour, by the atypically benign attitude adopted by England during the period of military occupation (1760-1764) (Dufour, 1989: 23). Dufour sees this initial repression and the attitude of the first English occupiers as the key to understanding the evolution of the identity of the original *Canadiens* into French Canadians and (later on) *Québécois*. Along with the defeat of the *Patriotes*, the traumatic experience of conquest is said to explain the use of psychological compensatory measures, both defensive (e.g. the messianic ideology of *survivance* dominating Québec from the 1840s to the 1950s; Bill 101) and offensive (e.g. the imperative to "catch-up" with the most advanced countries that undergirded Quebec government policy during the 1960s). Moreover, the contrast between the exemplary behaviour of the first English settlers in Quebec and the condescending attitude of later, Loyalist arrivals (reinforced in the wake of the 1837-38 Rebellion and the Durham Report) is invoked to explain Quebecers' characteristic ambivalence towards the English. For Dufour, this is the source of the ambiguous, ultimately self-destructive nationalism that has developed in Quebec since the 1960s (Dufour, 1989: 73-84).

In Dufour's view the British Loyalist attitude towards the Conquest is no less problematic than that of the French population. Defeated in the American colonies, the Loyalists were also traumatised as a vanquished people. Once resettled in Canada, however, they rapidly rediscovered and came to relish the position of conquerer. Plagued by the ever-constant fear of cultural disappearance at the hands of the United States yet scarcely different from the Americans in a cultural sense, they clung to their new identity as conquerors of the old-stock French population; indeed, according to Dufour their identity was parasitic upon these latter: "Canadian history can only be seen as the slow but systematic siphonning of the *Québécois* identity by the Canadian identity." (Dufour, 1989: 57). Because of this parasitism, English Canadians have always refused to recognise the political implications of the Conquest, i.e. the binational character of Canada and the institutional consequences appropriate to such a character. In lieu of a recognition of duality, a policy of uniformisation has been preferred (e.g. federal support for bilingualism) that has attempted to separate the French fact from *Québécois* identity and to extend it to all Canadian citizens. For Dufour, the Constitution of 1982 represents the institutionalisation of this fictive uniformisation of identity, while Quebec's Bill 178 and the failure of Meech are seen as more recent manifestations of non-recognition of the other (Dufour, 1991: 112).

[6] The different types of collective identity are defined and discussed in the second part of this paper.

[7] For some recent examples of writers who have adopted the same attitude, see the texts of Emmanuel Aquin and Paul Chamberland in the literary review *Liberté* 34:5 (October 1992: 14-16 and 26-29).

Dufour's exercise in collective psychoanalysis suffers from a number of weaknesses. The first concerns the use of psychological categories in the explanation of social phenomena. Although Dufour himself admits that his essay is but "a brief incursion into a field [...] that remains to be explored" (Dufour, 1989: 14), he throws all caution and prudence to the wind and forges ahead into some dubious analogies and conclusions. One is left perplexed, for example, by the recurrent usage of metaphors drawn from individual psychology to explain the history of a people (the abandonment of a child by his parents, the seduction of a victim through the apparent affability of the aggressor, etc.) (Dufour, 1989: 19, 26). Such analogies present Quebec as a monolithic whole, which was never the case before 1960 and is even less so since. Moreover, the assumption that the sentiments associated with an attachment to an imagined community[8] can be as intense as those that bind us to parents or close friends is dubious at best, except perhaps in very specific historical contexts.[9] Finally, Dufour's ahistorical psychologism is at least partly responsible for his inability to imagine the evolution of *Québécois* identity in terms other than those determined by a primordial traumatic experience transcending all generations and context.

Dufour tends to separate the structural and existential elements of collective identity which cannot really be analysed in isolation from each other. As Hans-Georg Gadamer has shown, a past event only becomes meaningful in light of the situation in which it is interpreted, i.e. in light of the life experience that separates us from the event and that provides us with some perspective on it (Gadamer, 1976: 130-148; 1982: 29-34). In other words, it is highly doubtful that the Conquest has had the same meaning and effect ("repression") in every generation since 1760. With respect to the most recent period, Simon Langlois has recently put forth solid arguments to back up his claim that Quebec francophones increasingly understand and conduct themselves as a majority (see Langlois, 1991: 101-103). Langlois, however, may have gone to far in suggesting that francophone Quebecers have completely left behind both their awareness of their minority status in North America and their sensitivity to the perceptions of other Canadians. I am rather inclined to the view expressed by the writer David Homel that francophone Quebecers tend to oscillate between the self-perception of a minority and that of a majority (Homel, 1992: 54). Nevertheless it is clear that seen through the prism of these last years the events of 1760 can only take on different meaning from that which they held (for example) in the wake of Lord Durham's Report. Perhaps francophone Quebecers do remain sensitive to the conquest of their ancestors and thus continue to be sensitive to precariousness of their minority status in Canada and North America; but they are also conscious of their success in resisting the pressures of assimilation, in shoring up their undeniable majority status in Quebec and in building a Canadian province that Langlois calls a "comprehensive society" [*société globale*], where francophones are able to take their rightful place in every conceivable sphere of social activity. As we will see in the final section, the cultivation of this "comprehensive society" of francophones since the Quiet Revolution allows us to grasp the rise in Quebec of a pluralist discourse of identity of unprecedented strength. *Pace* Dufour, the current discourse of identity is not limited to the defence of the French language (Dufour, 1989: 92). Not only is Dufour trapped by a determinism that traces everything back to a static perception of the Conquest, he insists on analysing its effects by concentrating exclusively on the declarations of politicians during the debate over the Meech Lake Accord. Moreover, Dufour follows many analysts and politi-

cians in confusing collective identity as such with certain highly original, distinctive features.[10] Such a one-sided view can only come down in favour of a verdict that pervades Dufour's work: that of the people's "false consciousness."

Some Theoretical Propositions

In order to grasp the *Québécois* identity as it has evolved over the last thirty years, an interpretive approach should be adopted that is cognisant of both the historical rootedness of social actors and the broad and diversified nature of the discursive subject under investigation. At the heart of any such study must be the development of an alternative definition of collective identity.

There are two advantages to developing a concept of comprehensive collective identity over the narrower concept of national identity. In the first place the former permits a better integration of the definitions of comprehensive identity which contest or at least diminish the importance of Quebec as a source of identification (e.g. Canada as a multicultural and bilingual country; the cosmopolitan view - the simplistic one - that the world as a whole is our community). Secondly, it makes room for those comprehensive definitions of identity that transcend the classic nationalist vocabulary while recognising nonetheless Quebec as an important source of identification (e.g. Quebec as a distinct society; Quebec as a plurinational and polyethnic society; Quebec as a community of solidarity). In sum, the notion of comprehensive collective identity allows for a better grasp of the diversity of identity discourse that has emerged over the last thirty years.

Generally speaking a comprehensive collective identity can be defined as the source of allegiance to a comprehensive political community. From the individual actor's point of view it involves the definitions and images of the self *qua* member of the community in question (e.g. woman, youth, ecologist, middle class, francophone Quebecer, Montrealer, Canadian, citizen of the world, atheist, punk) as well as the relationship one has negotiated between these definitions and images. From the social analysis perspective it involves the comprehensive collective definitions and images competing in the public sphere of a given society (e.g. indivisible nation, plurinational community, multicultural country, distinct society, community of solidarity) as well as the relationship one has negotiated between these definitions and images. Comprehensive collective identities, in other words, are found in the configuration of meanings and shared values developing out of the interpretations of collective experience that in turn constitute the narrative tradition of a total political community.[11] These meanings and values are rooted in social practices and institutions. In sum, these meaningful practices and institutions serve as the glue that binds social actors to particular comprehensive political communities.

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[8] I use this term in Benedict Anderson's sense: "[...] imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991: 6).

[9] In totalitarian societies, for example, the objective is not only to promote the collective dimension of identity but also to annihilate the individual dimension. In such societies it is not considered strange to betray close friends and family in the name of the common good.

[10] For more on this distinction see Parekh (1994: 502-503).

[11] I wish to emphasise the fact that collective identities are spatial and temporal *constructions* that take shape in and through relationships of power. Thus while they are open to change, they cannot be redefined in a vacuum (as the radical voluntarist perspective suggests). Every redefinition of identity operates in a spatio-temporal interpretive horizon that includes past, present and future. It is also situated in an ensemble of power relations in which the redefinition project itself is the primary object of contestation. To define a comprehensive collective identity is to determine the sort of meanings and collective values that prevail in a given place and time. For more on the spatial and temporal in the process of redefining identity, see Parekh (1994: 503-504). On the context of power relations that is indissociably a part of this process, see Jenson (1994: 66-69).

In "Cross-Purposes" (1989), Charles Taylor identifies an important distinction that provides us with the means for a more precise identification of the bases of a comprehensive collective allegiance. According to Taylor there are two types of collective goods: convergent and common. The former are goods that only the collectivity can provide but are meant to be enjoyed individually. The examples given include the security and order provided by armies, police forces and firefighters (Taylor, 1989: 169). Within the tradition of liberal individualism, which conceives of the collectivity simply as an instrument for the satisfaction of its individual members, convergent goods thus understood are the only collective goods conceivable. However, from the point of view of traditions with which Taylor has more affinity - civic humanism as evidenced in "Cross-Purposes", and expressivism in other texts (see Taylor, 1979; 1993: 135-139; 1995) - one can conceive of other sorts of collective goods, the value of which reside in their being experienced and enjoyed in common. As Taylor puts it, "[s]ome things have value to me and to you [the convergent goods], and some things essentially have value to us [the common goods]" (Taylor, 1989: 168). In this latter case, the value is partly constituted by a social relationship. Taylor makes a further distinction between "mediately" and "immediately" common goods. The former are those that offer more satisfaction when they are experienced by more than one person for whom they have a special, common significance. For example, listening to a concert of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in the presence of other symphony music lovers is not at all the same thing as listening to a tape recording of the same concert alone in one's living room. In the concert hall one's love of the music can merge and find an echo with that of the others, translating ultimately into the common act of enthusiastic applause (Taylor, 1989: 169). The same collective phenomenon could be observed in other contexts, for every meaningful common memory and valued artistic work. As for "immediately" common goods, these represent an even more valued attachment, where the commonality of the shared good resides directly in the sharing itself, i.e. in the *community of meaning and action*. Taylor gives the example of republican self-rule, i.e. the political freedom manifested in that font of patriotism, civic republicanism:

> *[...] patriotism is based on an identification with others in a particular common enterprise. I am not dedicated to defending the liberty of just anyone, but I feel the bond of solidarity with my compatriots in our common enterprise, the common expression of our respective dignity. (Taylor, 1989:166).*

The good, in other words, is largely constituted by the sharing (Taylor, 1989: 168; see also 169-175). Taylor insists not only that these common goods constitute the foundation of all national - and indeed all *public* - allegiance, but also and perhaps more importantly that the maintenance and continued strength of these allegiances serve to protect the convergent goods privileged by liberal individualists. A shared value is never more secure than when it is deeply identified with a given community. As Anthony Smith rightly argues, in the modern world nationality has become the dominant (albeit not the sole) locus of communal identification (A. Smith, 1992: 58).[12] This would suggest that the vision of modernisation proposed by liberal individualists is too one-sided, even when only Western civilisation is examined. Admittedly, modernisation has instrumentalised some of the common goods at the base of national identification and has relegated others to the private sphere. It is also true that religious institutions and practices are henceforth limited to the private sphere in most Western societies. This does not mean, however, that the proponents of liberal individualism are right in assuming that all the political practices and institutions have lost or are losing their identity-related

vocation. Nor does it follow that language and culture are now objects of a strictly private form of identification. Taylor is right to suggest that the liberal state's stability would be in jeopardy if the citizenry considered its institutions and practices coldly, as mere instrumental tools for the furtherance of private ends:

> *The various atomist sources of allegiance have not only been insufficient to generate the vigorous defensive reaction à la Watergate; they will never be able to do so, in the nature of things. Pure enlightened self-interest will never move enough people strongly enough to constitute a real threat to potential despots and putschists (Taylor, 1989: 175).*[13]

Historically, national identification has been manifested along three lines: civic, genealogical, and cultural-linguistic. This typology is different from the more classic model proposed by Smith, who collapses genealogical, cultural and linguistic identifications into one category: ethnic identity, which he then opposes to a less controversial "civic model". Associated with the classical republicanism of the Western world, this model finds its paradigmatic expression in the American and French Revolutions. National solidarity in the civic model rests upon four elements: an historical territory; a set of political institutions and laws associated with a given community; equality of civil and political rights for all citizens; and finally the collective socialisation into a common civic culture and civic values (Smith, 1991: 8-11). According to the standard interpretation of republicanism, adherence to these values becomes manifest in and through juridical and participatory forms of identification. In the United States, the Madisonian institutional guarantee of civic rights and stability has shaped civic identity much more than the Jeffersonian call for popular political participation and innovation (Arendt, 1967: 317-417). Republicanism in France, by contrast, having been nourished on a highly selective reading of Rousseau, emphasises to a greater extent the dignity of the politically-active citizen in a public space often conceived as hostile to plurality and diversity.[14] Whether its orientation is juridical or participationist, civic identity is distinguished first and foremost by its openness and voluntarism. It is open to anyone who identifies with its political and legal principles. Admittedly, its principles are not quite as universal as the defenders of a purely civic identity have suggested; the time required for a new immigrant to identify with these principles and the nation they embody can vary markedly depending on cultural antecedents and personal experience. Nevertheless the fact remains that there is no impenetrable barrier to inclusion and adherence.[15]

Smith notes that the civic model owes a great deal to the neo-classical movement initiated by intellectuals in Western European and the Thirteen Colonies during the second half of the Eighteenth Century. From this movement's point of view the ancient Greek and Roman republics represented the historical peak of civilisation and their achievements served as the models for

[12] Significantly, the old notion of "fatherland" [*patrie*] and its more recent derivations "patriot" and "patriotism", having been associated with varying types of collective loyalty throughout history, are now confounded with the concepts of "nation" and "nationalism". For a conceptual history of patriotism, see Dietz (1989), whose understanding of its recent evolution is however in need of some nuance.

[13] See also Taylor (1993: 125-126).

[14] On the selective and tendentious appropriation of Rousseauian ideas by the French Revolutionaries, see Hampson (1983, 1986) and Hayward (1991: 11-14). For a resolutely pluralist interpretation of Rousseau, see Todorov (1989).

[15] It is also important to note that the meaning of the term "equality" in the civic model is indissociable from certain dominant conceptions of the human being and of social organisation that have developed in the West since the end of the Eighteenth century. For a brief history of the exclusion of women and blacks from full American citizenship and an original interpretation of the consequences of such exclusion for contemporary conceptions of citizenry in America, see Shklar (1991). On exclusion in republican France, see Rosanvallon (1992).

modern civilisation's attempt to attain even higher summits. Whereas the Middle Ages were dismissed by partisans of neo-classicism as a period of decline and a return to rural backwardness and barbarism, supporters of "literary medievalism" believed that a revitalisation of the best of the Middle Ages - through its literature - would allow Europeans to rediscover the authenticity and genius of their respective nations (A. Smith, 1991: 87-90). According to Herder, whose expressivism played a key role in this intellectual tradition, each human being possesses a unique identity and can discover this identity only through a sense of national belonging. An individual, in other words, can fully examine and actualise his or her nature only in and through a culture and language that are lived in a community of belonging (Taylor, 1979: 2). For Herder, moreover, cultural communities have identities just as unique and natural as those of individuals:

> *[Herder] challenges Civilisation in the name of civilisations. For him, the nation emerges out of a cultural determinism rather than an ancestral political will. His focus is on the individualised and unique collectivity rather than the abstract individual forged by men. 'Politics makes states,' Herder observes, 'while nature makes nations.' [...] Like any individual, a nation has the responsibility to express its own creativity and originality. Thus Herder set about to rehabilitate the Middle Ages, that golden age of community (Delannoi, 1991: 25).*

Pace Smith, my impression is that this mix of individualism and communitarianism has fed two distinct models of national identity that should be distinguished from each other. On the one hand, a genealogical model has come to the fore that deems a largely mythical community of descendents to be the determining criterion of national belonging. This model is of course related to a recurring insistence upon language and vernacular custom without which it would be difficult to give meaning to the nation to be reconstructed, protected, liberated or unified. But here their value stems from a mythology of origins that reifies language and culture into pure, static entities. Thus even the immigrant whose mastery of the national language and culture is unquestionable cannot be considered entirely a member of the nation. National belonging is founded on so-called "objective" criteria rather than the willingness to belong. Depending upon the historical and ideological circumstances, this model has been manifest in nationalisms of a protectionist, secessionist, irredentist and/or racist nature, as well as in pan-nationalisms. Generally speaking it considers belonging and political borders to be derived naturally from genealogical ancestry.

On the other hand, an inversion in this order of priorities yields a cultural and linguistic model of belonging. Here culture and language constitute the primary and determining criterion of national membership, while national history - understood as an ever-changing and open form of shared experience - gives form and meaning to the nation that is to be saved and promoted. National belonging is achieved through either *assimilation* or *integration* into one or more national cultures and languages. A sense of political belonging is related to this national belonging in a manner supple enough that opens the door to federal types of institutional arrangements. This third model can be found in certain Western nationalisms of the secessionist and autonomist variety. It often implies shared cultural and linguistic allegiances.

With a few adjustments this typology of national identity could very easily be used to help us grasp the broader conception of comprehensive collective identity. In the first place, the category of civic identity has to be stretched to encompass (a) the idea of social rights and solidarity that have become common currency in the Twentieth century (Marshall, 1992), and (b) diverse supranational allegiances (e.g. Europeanism, cosmopolitanism). Sec-

ondly, the category of cultural and linguistic identity must be understood in a larger sense than is found in classical nationalist discourse and take into account the phenomenon of cultural mixing [*métissage*].[16] Finally, the three categories must be seen as non-exclusive and potentially the source of hybrid models.[17]

The preceding definition and typology can provide us with the basis for an hermeneutical approach differing markedly from that of Dion and Dufour. While it converges with Dion and Dufour in imagining the constitution of identity on more than one level, it articulates the different constitutive levels of identity in an entirely different way, according to the hermeneutical precepts of Gadamer. The history of a collectivity is conceived in a Gadamerian spirit in terms of a never-ending process of self-interpretation out of which emerges a certain configuration of shared meanings that continues to evolve as the narrative tradition of the community in question develops through new experiences. Although there is an historical base that structures and limits a given national identity, this base is not static and cannot impose upon that identity a definitive meaning. The hermeneutic definition allows us to distinguish between the main historical components of collective identity, permitting a characterisation of that identity's evolution that takes into account its plurality. Moreover, it refuses to predetermine which type of discourse must be interpreted in grasping collective identity and casts doubt on all efforts at presenting a definitive, completely representative portrait without first analysing the various genres of discourse and covering a significant period of time. This is the only way to grasp the plurality of allegiances and to separate purely instrumental discourses from those related more authentically to questions of identity.

The evolution of any comprehensive collective identity is a very complex phenomenon. The Gadamerian image of a "fusing of horizons" allows us to better appreciate it. Gadamer breaks up the hermeneutical event into three distinct horizons of meaning: the historical and cultural horizon in which the interpreter is situated and which gives him or her a particular perspective on the future; the horizon of past phenomena that the interpreter tries to understand (vertical interpretation); and the extra-cultural horizon with which the interpreter enters into contact (horizontal interpretation). According to this schema, a comprehensive collective identity changes in concert with the interplay between the horizon of meaning of a given comprehensive community and its historical and extra-cultural horizons. In other words, although the question of collective identity is indeed part of the human condition, it is not always a matter of public discussion and debate. For it to become so, the society in question must come under the influence of more than one tradition of thought - or the dominant tradition must be beset with incompatible interpretations. From the defeat of the *Patriotes* in 1837-1838 to the end of the Second World War, these two conditions were absent from the Quebec scene. The French-speaking majority's precarious collective situation and its relative ethnic and cultural homogeneity were more conducive to a form of self-absorption and to the myths and institutions of a messianic survivalist ethos [*la*

[16] Cultural mixing represents an *encounter* and a *dialogue* amongst a plurality of cultures resulting in the transformation of each. It does not necessarily imply a perfectly symmetrical relationship amongst them but does presuppose the will to move towards mutual recognition and the absence of a will to assimilate.

[17] In fact the three models are rarely found in a pure state, even in France and the United States. For example, the French republican sense of belonging, which sees itself as purely civic, rapidly became a form of allegiance to *one* national culture. In recent times this identity has come under siege at the hands of both cultural and linguistic allegiances in the regions and genealogical conceptions of identity. On the gradual introduction of non-civic elements in American self-understanding, see Janowitz (1983, chs. 4, 5).

survivance messianique].[18] The hegemony of this ethos was not seriously challenged until a series of transformations in the Twentieth century rendered French-Canadian society more permeable and self-critical (e.g. the acceleration of industrialisation and urbanisation at the turn of the century, the institutionalisation of the social sciences in the 1940s and 1950s,[19] the advent of television). Henceforth the conditions were in place for a major reorientation of allegiances.

Quebec and Modernity: Between "la souche" and Atomization

The transition from a French-Canadian to a *Québécois* identity represents the passage from a predominantly genealogical and restrictive conception of the nation to a period of fragmentation and competition between a number of hybrid and more inclusive definitions. A French Canadian was considered to be a direct descendant of the French colonists in Canada and inheritor of traditional French culture; he or she was always assumed to be Catholic, was said to have a special destiny on a Continent dominated by those of English and Protestant extraction, and was supposed to express allegiance to a set of religious institutions (Church, parish, family) that exerted their power even in the city.[20] It goes without saying that this stress upon a common ancestry and religion was not particularly conducive to openness towards the mixing of ethnic groups and the exchange of beliefs and ideas. The goal of collective survival - *la survivance* - was attained almost exclusively through a high birthrate. The Quiet Revolution was crucial to the redefinition of comprehensive collective identity in Quebec. Not only did the Quebec government assume responsibility for the province's modernisation, it did so primarily in the name of the francophone majority. The rapid ascent of the provincial state to the rank of Quebec's primary institution and its intimate association with the collective identity of the majority largely explains the accelerated decline of French-Canadian identity. Since the 1960s a multiplicity of tendencies have emerged on the identity front. Religion and genealogical ancestry have lost much of their identification power to the forces of culture, language and the civic components of the new comprehensive collective identity (historical territory, political institutions, law, political rights, civil and social equality, public system of socialisation). The rest of this paper deals with three of the most important tendencies associated with this shift.

The first such tendency can be termed civic-juridical. Its importance lies less with the level of support it has mustered within Quebec than with the stature and popularity of its promoters in the rest of the country. In the 1950s, most of the leading lights of the periodical *Cité Libre* found the word "nation" abhorrent. Marked for life by their confrontation with traditional French-Canadian nationalism, and more generally by its more extreme forms of the early Twentieth century, they attacked all forms of nationalism without distinction. Within this worldview the vision of Canada and Quebec of Pierre Trudeau and his comrades-in-arms during the Duplessis era was nourished.

Trudeau's story is particularly revealing.[21] A co-founder of *Cité Libre* and an academic, Trudeau was an active participant in the battles against Duplessism during the 1950s. At the beginning of the 1960s, in the face of the Lesage government's autonomist nationalism and the rise of secessionist nationalism, Trudeau's universalist views emerged more clearly as the driving force behind his thinking. Considering that "the openness towards universal values" was being threatened (Trudeau, 1993: 74), he reduced *Québécois* neo-nationalism to a narrow type of nation-statist

particularism and contrasted it to his preferred federal model.[22] Initially close to the New Democratic Party, Trudeau became a member of the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) and was first elected under its banner to the House of Commons in 1965. After his election as Prime Minister in 1968 his understanding of nationalism and federalism and his vision of Canada undergirded Ottawa's policies on the question of identity. It is no exaggeration to say that he left an indelible mark on the institutions and political culture of the country.

Trudeau went through a marked evolution on the question of comprehensive collective identity. His early, brief career as political theorist is characterised by the marriage of universalism and reason. In this vein he wrote at the beginning of the 1960s that "the history of civilisation is the history of the subordination of tribal 'nationalism' to broader forms of allegiance." (Trudeau, 1968: 165). The nation-state, in his eyes, slowed down this civilising process. Understanding the nation in a sociological sense, he considered that any emotional, particularist attachment to it is contrary to human reconciliation. As the foundation of the state, the sociological nation is said to lead inevitably to fragmentation and never-ending war (Trudeau, 1968: 161-169). Trudeau proposed as an alternative the idea of a "juridical nation", a political entity founded on reason, as the basis for reconciliation and peace. In one sense, the juridical nation permits diverse sociological entities to cohabit within a "multinational" state (Trudeau, 1968: 174). In another sense, this internal diversity is said to lead to a greater reconciliation between states and international recognition of universal values. For Trudeau, federalism represents the most sophisticated form of the juridical nation and embodies the exercise of reason in politics (Trudeau, 1968: 206).

This plea for reason in politics, however, was considerably mitigated in Trudeau's political practice. He came to believe that the triumph of universalist ideals could be guaranteed only by marrying rational policy with a pan-Canadian sentiment of belonging. As a theorist, he wrote that there is no reason why one nationalism would supersede another one and that "in the *last analysis* adherence to federalism could not be based in emotion [...]" (Trudeau, 1968: 206). In order to unify Canadians, Trudeau increasingly relied in practice on emotional appeals to pan-Canadian nationalism. He continued to insist, however, that his brand of nationalism was founded on *universal* values, values such as individual freedom and equality of opportunity that appeared in the LPC programme during the 1968 election under the banner of "the just society" (Trudeau, 1990: 381-382).[23] Trudeau's just society programme came out against the recognition of any par-

[18] A viable, alternative vision of French-Canadian identity, resting on a solid organizational base and associated with the uncompromising liberalism of the *Rouges*, was only present on the public scene during the 1850s and 1860s (see Bernard, 1971). In the last few years Quebec historiography has been witness to a major revisionist current that has tried to uncover the cultural and ideological diversity that marked Quebec between 1837 and 1945 (see especially Roy, 1993). However, while this new scholarship has successfully shown the gradual evolution of pluralism, it has done little to refute the basic fact that before 1945 a clerical-nationalist ideology and a genealogically-based identity dominated the public sphere, in large part because of the prevalence of anti-statism and the clerical control of the main institutions of socialisation.

[19] For an account of how this development led to an openness in the Quebec public sphere to other traditions of thought as well as to a reinforcement of progressive traditions already in place, see Brooks and Gagnon (1988: 3-40). On the intellectual debates that marked the period between 1945 and 1960 in Quebec, see Behiels (1985).

[20] On the ability of this type of social organisation to transpose itself into urban society, see Dumont (1987: 266).

[21] This discussion of Trudeau is drawn from Karmis and Gagnon (1996).

[22] In the course of the 1960s Trudeau also demonstrated an even-handed severity towards English-Canadian nationalism, deploring the fact that the federal government had all-too-often been used as its instrument. See Trudeau (1968: 169-76, 211-12).

[23] On the mythology and revisionist history associated with the ideology of the "just society", see Norman (1993: 52-53).

ticular collective status founded on historical, cultural or territorial claim. It addressed solely the concerns of individuals and attempted to shift individual allegiances towards the "juridical nation". Linguistic rights were seen as compatible with liberal values only to the extent that they were accorded to individuals and justified as necessary for equality and individual autonomy. Trudeau, in other words, wished to separate the sociological differences from the collectivities, territories and institutions which constitute them. In his vision, sociological differences are strictly individual attributes protected from sea to sea by a central state invested with a sense of its own moral superiority.[24]

In June 1968, when the LPC was chosen by the electorate to form a majority government, the set of collective allegiances that made up Canada was far from the Trudeauist ideal of pan-Canadian uniformity. The majority English-Canadian population was divided between its British roots, the new pan-Canadian symbolism and declining regionalist sentiments. Recent immigrants to Canada, for their part, began to demand a certain institutional recognition of their differences, while Quebec's French-speaking majority separated itself not only from the English Canadian population but also from French-speakers outside of Quebec by redefining its identity around its language, culture and its sense of Quebec citizenship. Finally, the Aboriginal peoples, heretofore unorganised, unmobilised and largely absent from the Canadian public consciousness, wavered between the genealogical form of identity and the uprootedness favoured by the Indian Act.

Faced with this situation, the Trudeau government launched an ideological programme of uniformisation designed to inculcate in the population a sense of Canadian citizenship and a pan-Canadian identity. The main pillars of this project included the aborted attempt to eliminate the special status of the Aboriginal peoples (the White Paper of 1969), the policies of bilingualism (1969) and multiculturalism (1971), and the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution and entrenchment therein of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1981-1982). However one judges these efforts at building a civic-juridical, universalist, pan-Canadian nationalism, it is undeniable that they had a considerable impact on many Canadians' sense of belonging. The programme certainly achieved some of its objectives, notably in its instilling in Canadians an attachment to the Charter's protection of individual rights and freedoms (Cairns, 1991; Taylor, 1993: 162-163). However, as Miriam Smith has noted, Trudeau's policies had the unintended consequence of reinforcing certain particularistic identities, mainly in Canada outside of Quebec. This has been so even with respect to the Charter:

> *[t]he big surprise of 1982 was not the provincial opposition to this 'nationalising' vision. [...] Rather, it was the transformation of the Charter itself by the political pressure applied by social movements. The First Nations, representatives of ethnic minorities and the feminist movement all lobbied vigorously for the inclusion in the Charter of guarantees for their respective communities. Articles 25, 27 and 28, which include strong protections of Aboriginal rights, recognition of the multicultural nature of Canada and of the equality of women, are the results of these political battles (M. Smith, 1992: 87).*

Henceforth, continues Smith, these identities are given constitutional validation and "call into question both the idea of a singular Canadian nation and the notion of binationalism" (M. Smith, 1992: 89).[25] In Quebec, with the significant exception of the anglophone minority and the old immigrant minorities that have been traditionally aligned with it,[26] the Canadian policy of "nation-building" has not had the desired effect. While it may have reinforced a sense of civic allegiance amongst the francophone majority, the object of this

allegiance has not always been the Canadian nation. In effect, as Simon Langlois has stressed (1991), the homogenising pressures effected by federal policy have served to reinforce and accelerate the sense that Quebec itself forms a "comprehensive society." This sense took off during the Quiet Revolution and increasingly became a reality of sorts when the Quebec government began building a network of social and political institutions parallel to that of the federal government. What is more, the emergence of a quasi-form of citizenship exclusive to Quebec along with a *Québécois* civic identity was closely related to the cultural and linguistic allegiances of the majority.[27]

The fusion of civic and cultural-linguistic identities gave birth to two other tendencies that have marked identity politics in Quebec over the last thirty years. Michael Behiels has well described how a second tendency, alongside the civic-juridical one, became associated with the intellectual battles that preceded the Quiet Revolution. Even though the *Citélibristes* and the neo-nationalists[28] were both stridently opposed to traditional French-Canadian nationalism, the two sides were never able to make common cause. While their socio-economic thought was quite similar, the two were guided by very different alternatives to the genealogical conception of identity at the hearth of traditional nationalism. Although neo-nationalism contained a civic component (neo-nationalists declared by the end of the 1940s that the majority of the French-Canadian nation was liberal, democratic and reform-minded), their continued insistence upon French cultural and linguistic roots indisposed the *Citélibristes.* In actual fact, the neo-nationalists under the intellectual influence of *l'Hexagone* had in mind a North American version of the French republican identity.

Initially, neo-nationalist policy proposals were limited to the abandonment of the British monarch as Canada's Head of State and the creation of a Canadian, binational republic (see Behiels, 1985: 49). After 1960, however, in the wake of a slew of disappointments, most neo-nationalist intellectuals gravitated towards the *Québécois* independence movement. Here the influence of the French republican ethos was readily apparent. Stanley Hoffmann has noted that whereas in its origins the French republican identity, like that of the United States, was essentially civic, it rapidly acquired a crucial cultural dimension. Hoffmann explains thusly the difference between the American and French republican identities:

> *[...] because French nationality is not merely contractual - the signing on the principle of the Constitution, as in the United States - but has a heavy historical component, the public dimension is* both *political and cultural: it entails the assimilation of French culture, which the school system [is] supposed to produce. Moreover, the political principles [are] more pointed or militant, as the result of long struggles (Hoffmann, 1993:64).*

[24] Guy Laforest has rightly noted that such a programme need not be incompatible with a decentralised form of federalism, notably in the area of public spending. Such a programme does require centralisation, however, in the symbolic arena. See Laforest (1995).

[25] Unlike Smith I believe that Aboriginal identities for the most part are based upon territorial claims (founded, of course, on a very different conception of territory) and could be integrated into a pluri-national vision of Canada. See Karmis (1993).

[26] The historical roots of this alignment can be traced back a number of causes, notably Canadian immigration policy, the undeniable attraction of the English language, the constitutional protection for institutionalised bilingualism in Quebec (Article 133) and for a confessionally-based school system (Article 93), and the long-standing resistance of a Catholic clergy unwilling to welcome immigrants into the schools under their control. Notwithstanding the changes of recent years - e.g. the clergy's loss of control of the schools in the 1960s, the proclamation of French as Quebec's official language in 1974 (Bill 22) - some of these factors remain major obstacles to the integration of new immigrants into Quebec's French-speaking majority community).

[27] For a more extended analysis of the fragmentation caused by the Trudeau government's identity-related policies, see Karmis and Gagnon (1996).

[28] Representatives of this group were primarily associated with the newspaper *Le Devoir* and the journal *L'Action nationale.*

Thus French republicans find the idea of multiculturalism difficult to accept, even in the private sphere: "[t]here is only *one* French culture, and "separate" subcultures are not welcome insofar as they impede assimilation to the French culture" (Hoffmann, 1993: 64). This marriage of civic-participationist identity and the *assimilationist* variant of cultural and linguistic identity, a dominant mix in France's Fifth Republic, gave sustenance to at least one important element of Quebec's independence movement. This element was found for the most part at *Le Devoir*, *L'Action Nationale*, at the nationalist *Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste* , in the *Mouvement Québec français*, and in the world of party politics in the *Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale* (RIN), the *Mouvement souveraineté-association* (MSA) and the *Parti québécois* (PQ).

Jean-Marc Léger, former journalist at *Le Devoir* and (according to Behiels) one of the main neo-nationalist intellectuals during the 1945-1960 period, recently presented one of the clearest expressions of this Quebec version of the French republican model of identity. In Léger's eyes, "we, Quebec's French-speaking majority or "old-stock" Quebecers, are not simply francophone; we are French, as much of French origin as are (for example) the Wallons or the Romands" (Léger, 1993: 61). French language, culture and French history until 1760: *this* France belongs as much to the francophone majority "as it does to the people of France today." (Léger, 1993: 131)[29]. This stress on the close connection of the *Québécois* with France leads Léger to draw three conclusions. First, he notes and deplores a loss of memory and identity in French-speaking, "old-stock" Quebecers. Secondly, he considers that the continued survival of these latter is much more in doubt now than in the past, when homogeneity, isolation and a high birth rate provided solid protection (Léger, 1993: 57, 79, 81). Finally, relying heavily on the French model of the nation-state[30] and on the greatness of French language, culture and history, Léger proposes a very restrictive immigration policy. Without going so far as to close Quebec to newcomers, Léger recommends a vigorous natalist policy combined with a careful selection of immigrants according to linguistic and cultural criteria and with an eye to their "assimilation". In his view the model immigrant family is one whose children have become "perfect *Québécois*, i.e. Franco-Quebecers whose accent and behaviour reveal nothing of their foreign origins" (Léger, 1993: 80). Even if this assimilationism is not opposed to the recognition of the national status of the Aboriginal and anglophone minorities, this is never a priority and is always grudgingly looked upon as a concession. Talk of any limited concession towards minorities hardly appears in Léger's book; for him, the urgent problem is the cultural survival of the French-speaking majority rather than the respect for minority rights (Léger, 1993: 68-69).[31] Although this view is echoed in most of the writers cited by Dion, it has never succeeded in rallying a majority, even among francophone Quebecers.

A third tendency in identity-related debates became manifest more recently, in the middle ground between the *Citélibristes* and the neo-nationalists. Given its eclecticism, the origins of this tendency cannot be pinpointed with the same precision. Its emergence paralleled Quebec's reconfiguration as a "comprehensive society" and represents a reaction to the failure of the other two tendencies to integrate multifarious and shared national senses of belonging. It is constituted by a mix of civic identity and *integrationist* ideals on questions of culture and language. Portraying francophone Quebecers as an increasingly strong linguistic and cultural majority rather than a fragile appendage of greater French culture and positing liberal-democratic citizenship as a shared good of this majority, it looks upon Quebec as a land open to all cultures and seeks the integration rather than the assimilation of new

arrivals. It insists, moreover, upon the importance of guaranteeing certain collective rights to national minorities, the English-speaking community and Aboriginal peoples. The language and culture of the majority are seen as a common good to be preserved and promoted, but not at the cost of discouraging other forms of allegiance and sealing off the majority culture from other cultural influences.[32]

Since the start of the 1980s, this intermediary position has gained an increasing number of adherents in public debate.[33] Its ability to mobilise support lies in its success in integrating different ways of belonging: that of Quebec's allophones, who typically manifest a double or triple allegiance; that of francophones and anglophones who identify with both Canada and Quebec; and finally that of a significant part of the *Québécois* sovereignist population. Since this intermediary tendency has often been overlooked and cannot be reduced to the anti-sovereignist and anti-nationalist line, further discussion of its growing influence within the independence movement is warranted.

The *Parti québécois*, the main umbrella group for Quebec sovereignists for almost thirty years, has since its inception been plagued by a conflict between two competing conceptions of identity: a civic and cultural-linguistic form of adherence that privileges the assimilationist ideal, and another civic and cultural-linguistic vision drawn towards the notion of integration. Contrary to what the party's political adversaries have suggested, this second tendency has consistently been important, even though it was not always predominant. As Gérard Bergeron maintains, at the time of PQ's foundation, "[René Lévesque] risked his political career over the principle of linguistic rights for the minority [anglophone] group" (Bergeron, 1985: 164). With the PQ's first ascent to power in 1976, the two tendencies clashed over the question of Quebec's language law. The initial version of Bill 101, adopted in 1977, represented a clear victory for the assimilationist ideal (associated with the then-Minister of State for Cultural Development, Camille Laurin).[34] Four years later, in December 1981, shortly after the first referendum on Quebec independence and one month after the decision to repatriate the Canadian Constitution without the consent of the Quebec government, a PQ party congress was held that was marked by radical speeches and resolutions sponsored by the party's assimilationist wing. Disturbed by an apparent resurgence of elements of the

[29] Typical of a *mentalité de colonisé*, such a conception of France-Québec relations was recently well exemplified by the Québec government erection of a memorial commemorating the 30th anniversary of de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec libre!" On that occasion, de Gaulle and more generally the France-Québec relations were nothing less than glorified by the neo-Jacobin wing of the independentist movement. See especially the texts published in *Le Devoir* (on July 23-24, 1997) by Jean-Marc Léger, Josée Legault, Guy Bouthillier and Gilles Rhéaume.

[30] Léger, it should be noted, relies on a highly idealized view of the French model. In the first place, contrary to what he believes, the Fifth French Republic has yet to find a solution to the problem of assimilating the growing Arabic, north African population and has been witness to serious debate on the validity of the assimilationist model (see Hollifield, 1991: 135-142 and Hoffmann, 1993: 65-69). Moreover, Léger ignores the long and painful history of resistance mounted by national minorities in France opposed to the uniformity of allegiance. A nation that is "one and indivisible" does not come about painlessly, in France or elsewhere.

[31] For a perspective very similar to Léger's, see Bouthillier (1997).

[32] This tendency should be distinguished from the federal government's policy of multiculturalism. The former seeks to develop an alternative, made-in Quebec model on the basis of such concepts as *cultural convergence* and *interculturalism*. For *Québécois* integrationists, society must rest upon a language and a certain number of values common to all.

[33] It was found explicitly, for example, in the multiparty consensus of the Report of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec (the Bélanger-Campeau Report, 1991: 17-27). Admittedly the consensual nature of the report has often been exaggerated. It is significant, however, that none of the dissenting contributions found in the Report's addendum broke with the section containing the definition of Quebec as a modern, pluralistic society.

[34] On the internal debates within the PQ that marked the adoption of Bill 101, see Levine (1990: 113-119).

old genealogical discourse, Lévesque once again laid his leadership of the party on the line and asked members to vote in favour of three fundamental principles that would serve to guide the party in the future. The resolution on the third principle was as follows: "[Be it resolved] that the party reaffirm its respect for and openness towards all Quebecers, whatever their ethnic or cultural origin, notably by the recognition of the right of the minority English-speaking community to its own essential institutions, educational or other" (cited in Bergeron, 1985: 277).

The successful passage of this resolution seemed to boost the party's integrationist wing, which gained further strength by successfully pushing for a series of amendments to the French Language Charter in 1983 (Bill 57) that contained a clause explicitly recognising the fact that the anglophone community's institutions are "precious to the development of Quebec" (cited in Levine, 1991: 130). Ten years later, in the spring of 1993, the PQ reaffirmed its commitment to the historic rights of Anglo-Quebecers in a policy paper insisting (a) that Quebec culture would never be monolithic and (b) that it gains sustenance from the contribution of citizens of diverse ethnic and cultural traditions (Parti québécois, 1993: 57-60).

At the party congress of August 1993, the battle between the two tendencies was renewed. The party leadership withdrew its rather modest proposal for allowing bilingualism on commercial signs in reaction to manifest discontent within the rank and file over the issue (see O'Neill, 1993: A1). Two days later, however, party leaders succeeded after an acrimonious debate in overcoming the vociferous opposition of one quarter of the delegates to a declaration affirming that a series of specific rights for the anglophone community would be inscribed in a constitution of an independent Quebec (see Bellefeuille, 1993: A1; Turenne, 1993: A1).

In the course of his speech to the party faithful on the evening of the October 1995 referendum, Premier Parizeau spoke scandalously of "the ethnic vote". Even aside from this particularly controversial phrase, the angry tone of his speech and its persistent reference to a "we" that seemed to exclude all non-francophone Quebecers called the party leader's openness into question. How can such an about face be explained? Even as we recognize sincere efforts towards openness within the PQ since its foundation, the line between the assimilationist ideal on the one hand and the genealogical model on the other - or even between recent integrationists and the genealogical model - has always been very fine. Some members of the French-speaking majority are tempted to cross that line when they see policy disagreements over language and culture - and particularly over political independence as a means to protect them - as evidence of the non-francophone minorities' rejection of the French fact in Quebec. More than a few *Québécois* sovereignists succumbed to this unhealthy temptation in the immediate aftermath of the October 1995 referendum.[35] Nevertheless, on the identity question (and many other questions as well) the PQ and the independence movement are far from constituting a monolithic bloc.[36]

Moreover, the integration model, whether it be presented in a sovereignist or federalist guise, still has great difficulty accepting the sort of Aboriginal identity that Aboriginal peoples have themselves defined. As Daniel Salée has noted, despite Quebec's better treatment of Aboriginal issues relative to other provinces and its apparently generous policy statements with regard to Aboriginal issues, the fact remains that

> *Quebec intends to remain master - alongside the federal government - of all affairs that affect native peoples. It has chosen, in other words, 'to be the player who determines the rules of the game as well as the content of*

> *native self-government.' [...] The non-native conception of native self-determination is limited to the delegation - or better, decentralisation - of certain state powers within the existing institutional and administrative framework, a delegation that recalls the current division of labour between the municipalities and the province (Salée, 1992: 384).*

Far from conceiving of themselves as minorities whose aim is to integrate into the mainstream, most Aboriginal peoples see themselves as national communities with the inherent right to political, cultural and economic autonomy; as, in other words, equal to the two other founding peoples of Canada. They wish to revitalise the federalist bond that has always characterised Canada in law but rarely in the practice of federal and provincial aboriginal policy (Tully, 1994b). Despite their surprisingly similar perceptions of their relationship with the rest of Canada, francophone Quebecers are still reluctant to perceive their relationship with Aboriginal peoples along these lines, with the exception of a few intellectuals and leaders of several civil society organisations that form the *Forum paritaire québécois-autochtone* (see notably Salée, 1992, 1995a; Karmis, 1993; Karmis and Gagnon, 1996; Forum paritaire québécois-autochtone, 1993). This reticence in the face of Aboriginal demands has multiple causes: the anti-nationalism of Trudeauists; the siege mentality and French-style republican thought of the assimilationists; the recent and still tenuous majority identity of the integrationists; and finally the politico-economic interests and impoverished historical consciousness of all these groups.[37] Among all three the integrationists are the most advanced but it will still prove necessary to persuade them to stretch their conception of diversity to accept the ideal of a plurinational federation (whether it be Canadian or *Québécois*) in which Aboriginal peoples are equal partners. Only then will the nations concerned be able to agree upon a solid, equitable arrangement respecting the various linguistic, value-related and symbolic identities.[38]

A discussion of the main tendencies in Quebec's identity politics would be incomplete without at least a more few words on something that was briefly touched upon in the second section: the individualisation and atomization characteristic of modern societies. Like other modern societies of the West, Quebec no longer possesses a form of national identity of the religious-genealogical variety. Collective allegiances that are more open and shared[39] necessarily produce a less unconditional comprehensive collective identity that is all to the benefit of democracy and liberalism. Modern Quebec society is individualised in the benign sense that the citizen's multiple allegiances allow for more moral and political autonomy. Atomization, however, understood as the perversion and extreme

[35] See especially Léger (1995). For an opposing view and solid defense of the ideal of integration, see Sciortino (1995). More generally, since Lucien Bouchard replaced Jacques Parizeau as PQ leader, the internal PQ struggle over the linguistic issue has been very harsh. From Bouchard's reconciliation speech to the anglophone community in March 1996 to his successful but contentious defense of law 86 at the November 1996 party congress, it has been more and more evident that for the radical wing of the PQ, the English language has no legitimate place in Quebec public space.

[36] I should add that the parallel post-referendum radicalization of a significant part of the Quebec anglophone community has its roots in Trudeau's prepolitical vision of rights. For an activist like Howard Galganov, rights are so prepolitical that one should not have to debate them in the public sphere (cited in Dion, 1996). For a strong civic republican criticism of such a view, see Barber (1988).

[37] At a conference at McGill University on January 24, 1994, organised as part of the series "Dialogue McGill-Québec", the anthropologist Sylvie Vincent exposed the impoverished nature of the Quebec government's historical view concerning the Aboriginal peoples. Less than one month later, another anthropologist, Rémi Savard, underlined the Quebec mass media's ignorance of Aboriginal history (Savard, 1994).

[38] See the notion of "deep diversity" developed by Taylor (1993: 181-184).

[39] Included in these are the political allegiances manifest in the new social movements.

radicalisation of individualism, is another story. Under its neo-liberal guise, the interpenetration of markets and cultures could lead to the weakening not only of national identities, but also to all collective solidarity founded on a *common good*, i.e. on something other than purely individual interest. Across the globe, at a time wCahiers du PÉQ / December 1997Peter Graefe / The Retreat of the Québec State?hen the "globalisation" and "liberalisation" of markets have become new laws of history in the eyes of most economic and political élites, this atomizing effect is having an impact on Quebec's identity politics.[40] It could be countered by, among other ways, a better and more serious study of history[41] that would permit each individual to gain a minimal knowledge of the importance of certain common goods without which no liberal democratic society is possible.

Conclusion

In order to understand comprehensive collective identities in the sort of open and pluralistic society that Quebec has become over the last thirty years, supple definitions and awareness of the historical rootedness of social actors are essential. The interpretations proposed by Dion and Dufour are inadequate largely because they fall short in this respect. The alternative interpretation sketched out in the last part of this paper certainly leaves room for much improvement, notably in the area of the impact of external perceptions of Quebec's identity. Nevertheless, as it stands this interpretation can throw some light on the murkier areas of political debate in Quebec and Canada over the last few years.

In the first place it has shown that Quebec - even its majority French-speaking component - is far from monolithic. The sovereignty movement itself is characterised by two competing conceptions of identity that have little in common with the portrait of the movement still being made by the admirers of Pierre Trudeau. Identifying these divisions allows for a better understanding of some important political battles raging in Quebec, particularly within the PQ. Secondly, this interpretation reveals that Quebecers are divided between a majority identity on the one hand, and a minority identity on the other. This schism was well illustrated by the post-Meech debate on the definition of the distinct society clause. In the face of the three-point definition of the distinct society[42] and the proposals for economic centralisation found in *Shaping Canada's Future Together* (Canada, 1991), many francophone Quebecers (and not simply the sovereigntists) came out in favour of defending the distinct character of Quebec's economic institutions. Whether or not Quebec's economy is in fact distinct is of little importance for our purposes; certainly it is doubtful that the economy forms an important part of Quebec's distinct identity. What this popular reaction reveals is the existence of a dual sentiment (and often a dual set of allegiances); that of a minority within Canada needing protection and of a French-speaking majority that has built the "total society" that is modern-day Quebec, a society with its own economic institutions. Finally, the interpretation proposed in this paper reveals that the settling of community differences, whether it take place within the Canadian federation or a sovereign Quebec, requires an increased level of cultural exchange, mutual comprehension and mutual acceptance of the many layers of diversity among communities. A better understanding of the differences, needs, allegiances, and social visions of other communities is needed. This sort of reconciliation can only come about gradually and will require an intercommunal dialogue on a large scale, involving more participants than the small circle of élites that generally represent each community.

Only when a higher level of mutual understanding has been attained will it become possible to agree upon the basis for a common citizenship that does not negate differences. Obviously, each level of diversity poses its own particular set of problems.

[40] And yet Quebec's two major political parties seem unconcerned with the collective implications of neo-liberal globalisation. See, for example, the extracts from a speech given by Quebec cabinet minister Bernard Landry (1995).

[41] Such study should give special prominence to civic history.

[42] (1) A French-speaking majority; (2) a unique culture; (3) a tradition of civil law.

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