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Hudson Meadwell


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THE POLITICS OF NATIONALISM IN QUEBEC

By HUDSON MEADWELL

INTRODUCTION

THE nationalist movement in Quebec is one of the most powerful national movements in the developed West. It has weathered more successfully the disappointing results of a referendum on the national question than either the Welsh or Scottish nationalist movements. Its efforts to entrench the use of the French language in Quebec have been more successful than the efforts of any other language movement in the developed West, with the possible exception of Catalonia since the transition to democracy in Spain. Nationalists have been able to use the provincial state to weaken the cultural division of labor, which worked in the past to segregate Francophones in lower-status and lower-paying occupations.

Nationalism dominates Quebec politics. Indeed, since the formation of the Parti québécois (pq) in 1968, one single question has increasingly defined political discussion and action: how much decentralization should govern relations between Quebec and Canada? Unlike most other cases in which movements have produced a single ethnoregional party (for example Scotland, Wales, and Brittany), both the provincial Liberals and the Parti québécois are nationalist parties that differ fun-

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damentally on how much decentralization is desirable. This is a luxury that other movements do not often enjoy.

The case of Quebec is distinguished by the combination of popular support for territorial decentralization and the institutional capacity to translate this support into meaningful political pressure. By contrast, other cases, such as Scotland, have broad support for decentralization but institutional environments that make it difficult for nationalist leaders to use this support to produce political change. Conversely, cases such as the Swiss cantons are characterized by low levels of support for territorial change and relatively high institutional capacity. Finally, there are cases, like Brittany, in which nationalist leaders have neither the significant support nor access to local institutions to mobilize support: hence they must depend on nonnationalist parties to implement parts of their nationalist agendas.

In this article, I examine one central feature of the nationalist movement in Quebec: the ability of its leaders to mobilize popular support for substantial changes—up to and including political independence—to the constitutional status quo in Canada. I focus especially on the period since the Quiet Revolution of the late 1950s and early 1960s. More specifically, I provide an interpretation that accounts for the events following the formation of the Parti québécois in 1968, that is, the pattern of mobilization, demobilization, and subsequent remobilization of the nationalist movement in the late 1980s. Whereas most accounts of Quebec nationalism have proved useful for the initial phase of mobilization and the second phase of decline, the goal here is to construct an explanation that is useful for all three phases and that can also say something about nationalism and political mobilization more generally.

The article is divided into five sections. I first discuss the historical background and consider several influential interpretations of the contemporary Quebec nationalist movement. In the third section I introduce an alternative theoretical argument that focuses explicitly on processes of ethnic nationalist mobilization, and I assess relevant features of the Quebec case, using this model of mobilization as a framework for interpretation. In the final section, I extend this model further to examine the factional politics of nationalist parties and, once again, to assess features of the Quebec case. Finally I discuss the consequences of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, the package of constitutional reforms designed to make the Constitution Act of 1982 acceptable to Quebec. The accord was adopted by the Canadian prime minister and provincial premiers on June 3, 1987, but was not ratified by all the provincial legislatures.

My central argument is straightforward. (1) The contemporary Que-
bec nationalist movement has moved through phases of mobilization, demobilization, and remobilization. (2) A useful model of mobilization should account for all of these phases. (3) The interpretations of Quebec nationalism considered in this paper do not successfully explain all three phases. (4) A new model can provide a more satisfactory account.

I. Some Historical Background⁴

The institution that defined the character of French Canadian nationalism in Quebec from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century was the Roman Catholic church. The population was mobilized by the church around local symbols, with rural life and la patrie linked together and glorified as part of a natural community. The church attempted to insulate the flock from social changes perceived as dangerous to the maintenance of the faith and consequently to the power and the position of the church in Quebec. The high clergy had close ties to the European church and closely followed events overseas. Changes associated with the French Revolution—republicanism, anticlericalism—were viewed by the church with great concern. Not surprisingly the insurrection of 1837–38, which was led by an emerging middle class that argued for secular education and a liberal state, was viewed as a “small French revolution.”

In fact, the failure of the insurrection marked the consolidation of the position of the church as the principal intermediary between the government and the French Canadian population. From then on, the fusion of faith and nationality preserved boundaries that insulated the church’s flock from the influence of the English, Protestant, and industrial world.

Except for a short period following the Durham Report (1841), the Canadian state pursued an accommodationist rather than an assimilationist policy toward French Canadians. The political arrangement underlying confederation gave the church control of the regionally concentrated, French-speaking Catholic population. The federal structure of political authority in Canada was in part a direct consequence of both the French Canadian reality and the decision not to pursue assimilation—a strategy that would likely have been costly, in terms of social programs and of increased social unrest and disorder. Part of the negotiated accommodation was the relinquishment of certain limited powers to the province of Quebec. In return, English Canada retained its control of commerce in Quebec, a necessary feature of the accommodation for

⁴ This section draws on Hudson Meadwell, “Forms of Cultural Mobilization: Quebec and Brittany, 1870–1914,” Comparative Politics 17 (July 1983).
the English Canadian commercial and financial elite, and the Canadian political elite avoided the costs of an assimilationist strategy.

Although it did not attack traditional authority in Quebec, accommodation by the Canadian state nevertheless left the traditional elites more dependent on the structure of local society. Provincial political elites were dependent on Quebec society since their positions were part of the provincial political system. The church’s continued existence as an institution depended on its ability to maintain its flock. Since the French Canadian cultural group was concentrated in Quebec, the church’s control over it became increasingly linked to the provincial boundaries of Quebec, especially after 1900.

The traditional elite in Quebec was effectively able to control cultural and political resources through the 1940s. The 1950s then brought the emergence of a new political class that contested the local power of the church and the traditional political elite, as well as the co-optive arrangement underlying confederation. The decline of traditional elite control brought with it an end to these co-optive institutions and practices and ushered in a new bargaining relationship between state and ethnic group. The changes in Quebec politics since this Quiet Revolution have been the subject of theoretical debate. In the next section, I discuss the most important interpretations of contemporary nationalist mobilization in Quebec.

II. Other Approaches to Nationalism in Quebec

Let me comment here on three different arguments: internal colonialism, the new middle class thesis, and the capitalist state thesis.

Internal Colonialism

The most powerful class-based interpretation of ethnic nationalism is the thesis of internal colonialism,5 which locates the cause of nationalist mobilization in the inferior structural position of the ethnic group.6 The mechanisms that account for nationalist preference are typically some combination of exploitation and injustice experienced by individuals who occupy similar economic positions and therefore share material interests. These structural conditions are linked to nationalist preferences


6 Internal colonialism is both too strong and too weak an explanation for ethnic mobilization. Too strong, because there are cases with significant nationalist movements that are not internal colonies, such as Catalonia. Too weak, because there are cases with weaker movements that are internal colonies, such as Brittany during the Third Republic.
by an ideological trope of internal colonialism. These arguments typically predict that support for nationalism will be associated with a stable cultural division of labor and will be concentrated among those inferior positions in occupational structures. Moreover, the political rhetoric of nationalism is expected to be couched in terms of "ethnic class."

This ideological trope has appeared in nationalist discourse, and it had some influence among the 1960s generation of indépendantistes. As in other cases, such as the Basque country in Spain and the peripheries of France, these activists found their model for political action in the movements for national liberation in the developing world. This model is not important today among activists or the mass public, including the Quebec working class.

Related interpretations of Quebec nationalism, which turn on the presence of a cultural or segmented division of labor, are flawed in other ways. National mobilization cut across class lines in the 1970s and 1980s and occurred, not when segmentation was stable, but as it was breaking down. As a consequence of this change in the division of labor, Francophone Quebec is no longer dependent on Anglophones to manage key institutions in the private and public sectors. As the Francophone division of labor has become more complete, resembling a "pillar" rather than a segment, independence has become a more plausible option, and popular support for it has increased. This development contradicts an important prediction of the internal colonial thesis, namely,

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12 As in some other cases, as well, this orientation was associated with the use of violence in the 1960s, which culminated in the kidnapping of a provincial cabinet minister and British diplomat in 1970.


15 A "segmented" division of labor refers here to the concentration of an ethnic group in a narrow range of activities, while a "pillar" refers to a division of labor in which the group spans a broad range of activities. See Ronald Rogowski, *Rational Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); and Hudson Meadwell, "Ethnic Nationalism and Collective Choice Theory," *Comparative Political Studies* 22 (July 1989).
that nationalist mobilization is caused by segmentation in a cultural division of labor.

The PQ does have a cross-class base of electoral support that includes substantial working-class support: the trade union movement, for example, has supported sovereignty. In its formative years, the PQ drew support from activists who combined a national project with social democratic goals. Despite the party's shift toward a more liberal economic program, the trade unions have continued to support sovereignty. Their leaders now distinguish between the national and social projects, which provides a rationale for group solidarity when sovereignty seems achievable. Survey research has also shown that individual perceptions of economic domination are related to nationalist support.16

Little is gained, however, from viewing these features of nationalist politics through the too narrow optic of internal colonialism. This approach to ethnic mobilization fails to account for two central features of nationalism: its embourgeoisement in the 1970s and its remobilization in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

**The New Middle Class**

Another approach emphasizes the linkage between an emerging new middle class and support for nationalist politics.17 It thus explains embourgeoisement as follows: nationalism is a strategy that secures a niche in the provincial public sector for this class, which has found upward mobility blocked in the private sector (in large part because of the limited opportunities in the economic sectors controlled by the French Canadians and because of discrimination within the sectors controlled by English Canadians). In this argument, the strengthening of the provincial state must at least be a by-product, if not the central goal, of nationalism. Individuals in the new middle class thus support nationalism because it widens, maintains, and legitimates a niche in the occupational structure that provides them with otherwise unavailable opportunities. The boundaries of the niche, and therefore access to positions, are defined by one's language (and educational background). This tended de facto to restrict entry to French Canadians. All else being equal, the fewer the opportunities in the private sector, the greater the interest in nationalism;

16 Maurice Pinard and Richard Hamilton, "Motivational Dimensions in the Quebec Independence Movement: A Test of a New Model," in _Research in Social Movements Conflicts and Change_ (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI, 1986).

and the larger the state sector, the lower the degree of distributive conflict over jobs within the educated subset of the group. This argument emphasizes the private benefits that flow to individuals from the capture of the state.\(^\text{18}\)

The argument, however, is also statecentric and downplays the effects of the partisan composition of governments. Public sector expansion in Quebec is not associated with any particular administration or party but rather holds across governments in the post-Lesage period. If the public sector is expanding regardless of who is in office, however, individuals in the new middle class might be expected to be indifferent toward parties on this issue. The argument thus does not provide a consistent theoretical rationale for the prediction that these individuals will be supporters of separatism. Nor has it explained why some are federalist and others \textit{indépendantistes}. (The argument that support for these options is associated with different fractions of the new middle class\(^\text{19}\) is neither convincing nor substantiated.\(^\text{20}\)

Further, the argument about the new middle class does not provide a convincing explanation of the different levels and composition of support for independence in the various cases of ethnic nationalism, nor does it provide an account of the mobilization process of \textit{indépendantiste} organizations. The argument does not distinguish between two different propositions: (1) that all or most of the new middle class supports separation and (2) that all or most separatist supporters are from the new


\(^{19}\) Gilles Bourque and Nicole Laurin-Frenette, “La structure nationale québécoise” (The national structure of Quebec), \textit{Socialisme québécois} 21–22 (April 1971).

middle class. These propositions are not equivalent. Most of the middle class may support separatism, but most separatists may still come from other strata. Conversely, few from the middle class may support separatism, but all supporters of separatism may be middle class. The proportion of new middle class supporters in an organization also can be higher than the proportion of this stratum in the broader group and still be only a small part of the organization's support. The most sensible reading of the argument, however, is that there is disproportionate support for separatism within the new middle class and that separatists are disproportionately drawn from the new middle class. If this argument is accurate, support would vary mainly with the size of the new middle class. Level of support across time in one case is thus assumed to depend on changes in the size of this stratum; and cross-sectional differences in support across different cases are assumed to vary with the sizes of their respective new middle classes. Neither of these assumptions is compelling.

Part of the problem is that this argument lacks a theory of the competitive process of political mobilization. Mobilization, for example, is not always precisely defined, and the argument may fail to distinguish between membership, on the one hand, and active participation and electoral support, on the other, in an indépendantiste organization. The new middle class thesis assumes, moreover, that relevant cases are located in the developed West. The relevant organizations are nationalist parties that participate in the electoral process; and in several of these cases, nationalist issues have been addressed in referenda. In no case in the developed West is the new middle class of the ethnic group large enough to provide electoral victory, however. Nationalist parties that seek to mobilize broad support must invariably move outside the new middle class. Hence, the new middle class thesis provides no purchase on explaining these processes of mobilization. At best, the argument provides a partial theory for the emergence of activists.

These problems are confirmed in the case of Quebec. The relationship between occupation and different measures of electoral support in the 1970s and the 1980s are summarized in Table 1. The evidence is consistent across different measures, including support for independence and the Parti québécois. Most supporters are not drawn from the middle class, old or new, but come instead from the working class. While the PQ and the independence option do well among intellectuals and other professionals, this support is only a small fraction of overall support. Fur-

**Table 1**  
**Class Basis of Support for the PQ and Independence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Basis of Support</th>
<th>Intellectuals</th>
<th>Other Professionals and Technicians</th>
<th>Managers and Proprietors</th>
<th>Clerical and Sales</th>
<th>Workers</th>
<th>Farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. PQ supporters within classes (1973): Francophones</td>
<td>58%\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQ supporters by classes\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>17%\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Support for independence within classes (May 1980): Francophones</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for independence by classes\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Basis of Support</th>
<th>Professionals and High Managers</th>
<th>Semiprofessionals and Middle Managers</th>
<th>White Collar and Functionaries</th>
<th>Semiskilled Workers and Technicians</th>
<th>Skilled Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Support for independence within type of employment (April 1990): Francophones (Montreal only)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Support for independence (April 1991)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Panels A and B: Pinard and Hamilton (fn. 16), Table 2, Panels 3d. and 2a. Panels C and D: Cloutier, Guay, and Latouche (fn. 18), Table 21.  
\textsuperscript{a} Includes Other Professionals and Technicians.  
\textsuperscript{b} Calculated by author from data in Pinard and Hamilton (fn. 16), Table 2. Row percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.
ther, support was already coming from all strata very early in the development of the nationalist movement, with the class differentials remaining roughly the same over time. The movement has constantly and gradually gained supporters from all classes.\textsuperscript{22}

Furthermore, Pinard and Hamilton show that activists in the movement are not drawn from the new middle class or the state middle class overall but rather are drawn from a specific segment of these classes—the intellectuals. Intellectuals proper make up only 5–10 percent of the Quebec labor force but constitute 50 percent of PQ deputies and 33 percent of the party executive.\textsuperscript{23} The party combines an activist base centered around intellectuals with additional electoral support that is located outside of the intelligentsia and, indeed, outside the new middle class altogether. The party must thus be able to recruit in the broader group without alienating its activist base.

The language issue has been so potent a vehicle for mobilization precisely because it can elicit support without alienating activists. Language use combines expressive and instrumental concerns, since language symbolizes elements of collective identity and at the same time is cultural capital\textsuperscript{24} that determines access to positions in the public and private sectors. The issue of language provides a basis for broader support without alienating activists. However, the party has been subject to internal factionalism whenever the leadership has sought to increase or maintain its level of support by weakening its commitment to independence.

\textbf{The Capitalist State Thesis}

Another argument emphasizes how the Quebec state has served the interests of Francophone capital.\textsuperscript{25} This perspective illuminates issues neglected by the new middle class thesis. It points out that the expansion of the parapublic sector has provided not only employment for the middle class but also the infrastructure for private sector growth. The strengthened Francophone business community, however, has only a limited commitment to nationalism.\textsuperscript{26} Paradoxically, then, the conse-

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 44.

\textsuperscript{23} This pattern distinguishes the PQ from the provincial Liberal Party, which had much lower proportions of intellectuals as candidates and deputies in the 1970s. See Maurice Pinard and Richard Hamilton, “The Leadership of Intellectuals in Traditional Parties: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives,” in Alain G. Gagnon and A. Brian Tanguay, eds., \textit{Canadian Parties in Transition} (Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Canada, 1989), 294.

\textsuperscript{24} Pierre Bourdieu, \textit{Ce que parler veut dire: l'économie des échanges linguistiques} (What speaking means: The economy of linguistic exchanges) (Paris: Fayard, 1982).

\textsuperscript{25} Alain G. Gagnon and Mary Beth Montcalm, \textit{Quebec beyond the Quiet Revolution} (Toronto: Nelson, 1989); Belanger and Fournier (fn. 3).

quence of public and parapublic expansion has been to provide an effective counterweight to any indépendantiste coalition. The implication of this line of argument is that the national movement had been demobilized and deradicalized in the 1980s.

This picture is consistent with the broad outline of provincial politics in the early and mid-1980s, when the PQ appeared to have come around to the business point of view in two ways. Their approach to economic management moved away from modest initial attempts at concertation to a neoliberal development strategy, punctuated by a series of confrontations with public sector unions in the early 1980s. By the 1985 election the party, led by Pierre-Marc Johnson, also had shelved sovereignty-association. Further, the 1985 election brought to power a Liberal Party even more moderate than the PQ on the national issue and more committed to neoliberalism. Thus, it appeared that neoliberalism and a moderate nationalism went hand in hand. As the PQ softened its stance on sovereignty-association, it changed its economic strategy. And the most moderate party on nationalism was also the most committed to neoliberalism.

Yet the relationship between national and class questions is not this smoothly linear. First, it holds only up to a threshold. There are limits to this neoliberalism. Not surprisingly, the Liberal commitment to deregulation and privatization, expressed early on in the 1985 government, went unfulfilled. Further, while both the PQ and the Liberals now support free trade in the international economy and the lowering of interprovincial trade barriers, they are also committed to the state regulation of economy and culture. In response to international openness and a low birth rate among Francophones, Quebec governments have supported and encouraged immigration into Quebec. They have also sought to devolve as much political responsibility for immigration as possible from the federal to the provincial level. Further, the most important practical justification for the provincial regulation of public language use, especially Bills 178 and 101, has been the importance of presenting a “French face” to immigrants. Thus, the political regulation of culture has been joined to support for deregulation (free trade) at the international level. The industrial strategy of governments has also been statist, and for this reason both PQ and Liberals, as well as segments of business and trade unions, challenged the constitutional proposals of the federal government tabled in September 1991. They argued that the economic project

of the proposals not only sought the deregulation of interprovincial trade but also threatened a more general deregulation of the Quebec economy.

Second, the position of the PQ has changed in ways that contradict this apparent relationship between the national and class questions. In 1987 the indépendantistes recaptured the party. The PQ also supported free trade under the leadership of Jacques Parizeau, despite coordinated trade union opposition and some dissension among party activists. Thus, the option of sovereignty-association has become linked to a form of neoliberalism. Further, resistance to sovereignty-association in business has decreased, as will be discussed below. This weakens the capitalist state thesis and is difficult to reconcile with the internal colonial argument, which sees nationalism as the territorial expression of class liberation. More fundamentally, the capitalist state thesis does not account for nationalist remobilization in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Moreover, the mobilizing rhetoric of indépendantistes, especially since the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, has been primarily political. Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard, who is the leader of the Bloc québécois in the House of Commons, have emphasized that the Québécois are second-class citizens of Canada and that the constitutional framework of Canada does not allow them to be a part of Canada as Québécois. The symbolism of this politics draws on the collective identity of Francophone Quebeckers and downplays the significance of economic class as a source of grievance. Instead of discussion of “ethnic class” (the argument that Francophones were both culturally and economically exploited), which was part of political debate in the late sixties and early seventies, political rhetoric has now focused on the relationships among political community, citizenship, and collective identity. The constitutional debate in Canada lends itself naturally to this rhetoric; indeed, this language is an integral part of the debate. It focuses attention on shared attributes and concerns among Francophones in Quebec. As a consequence, the nationalist movement is less likely to be fragmented by the kinds of division that would be produced by a rhetorical strategy tied to class. This kind of political rhetoric is a more potent call for solidarity than the rhetoric of internal colonialism in societies such as contemporary Quebec, which have a significant degree of economic stratification, especially when the terms of the broader political debate are not cast in class terms.

III. The Politics of Nationalism

There are a number of problems associated with the internal colonial, new middle class, and capitalist state theses. Each is relevant for only a specific phase of mobilization in Quebec since the formation of the Parti québécois, with none adequately covering the politics of the entire period from 1968 to the present. Indeed, each of these arguments was developed to account for changes in the movement. As a consequence, the relevance of each argument is limited. Nor do the arguments, taken together, converge toward an overarching theoretical logic. In this section I introduce a more appropriate model of nationalist mobilization. This model identifies and incorporates the effects of conditions that both enable and constrain mobilization.

Enabling Condition: Counterhegemony

The enabling condition is counterhegemony. Several authors have suggested that ethnic mobilization is easier to accomplish to the extent that leaders can fashion interpretations of the situation of the group that build on structures of meaning embodied in collective identities. Preference formation and identity are closely tied together in theories of counterhegemony. To overcome hegemony, activists may have to resocialize others to form identities and to recognize their “real” interests. Counterhegemony also has an institutional dimension that involves the development of a countersociety and a set of institutions that are an alternative to those of the central state, thus contributing to the political self-sufficiency of the group.

Identity and organization are analytically separate dimensions of counterhegemony and have a reciprocal relationship. Identity formation is easier to the extent that “organizational encapsulation” is present; in that case individuals are less exposed to cross-pressures and alternative identities. Identity formation legitimates and justifies group-specific organization. Encapsulation and identity formation together create “communities of fate,” which shape the perception of grievances and facilitate collective action.


Constraining Condition: The Transition to Independence

The constraining condition is the problem of the transition to independence and the economic viability of the group, if it were to become politically independent. If we distinguish short- and long-term effects on opinion formation, these problems have stable, long-term negative effects on support for independence. These problems set limits on the level of support that is possible, although they are not insurmountable, unchanging, or the same across cases. Finally, the effects of the problems of transition and viability can vary within the group, depending not only on patterns of counterhegemony but also on where individuals are located in economic structures.

This theoretical logic will be summarized in a simple model of mobilization. This model states the consequences of the problems of transition and viability. In this section I emphasize the direct consequences for the mobilization of popular support; in a subsequent section I examine the more indirect consequences for the internal dynamics of nationalist organizations. While this model is not directly estimated, I use it as a framework for the interpretation of empirical evidence. The model also summarizes the theoretical logic independently of the details of this particular case. This helps to make clear that the model is not case specific and in fact can be used for other movements.

The model of mobilization implicit in identity theory is

\[ Y = sX \]  

(1)

where \( Y \) is the level of support, \( X \) is the number of self-identified collectivists in the group, and \( s \) is the efficiency of mobilization. According to these theories, \( s \) should be extremely high, approaching unity. Levels of support can be increased essentially through processes of socialization that increase the size of \( X \). Identity theorists have great faith in the likelihood of preference and motivational change in the processes of social interaction and identity formation, which together constitute the socialization process in organizational networks.

This is a robust interpretation of the consequences of collective identity. It may need to be qualified, however. Because of the problems of transition and economic viability, even those individuals whose primary identity is tied to the ethnic group may not support independence. One way to incorporate the constraining effects of risk aversion is to divide \( X \) from equation (1) into two subsets. In the first subset the relationship between identity and support is assumed to hold. The size of this subset, however, depends on the extent of risk aversion in the group. In the
second subset the relationship between identity and support does not hold because of the effects of the extent of risk aversion in the group.

One representation of this constraint on mobilization is:

$$Y^* = qX$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)$$

where \( q \) measures the average level of risk aversion on the unit interval \([0, 1]\) and \( Y^* \) represents the size of the second subset defined by risk aversion. Where \( q = 0 \), there is no risk aversion and \( Y^* \) is empty. When \( q = 1 \), individuals are absolutely risk averse and there is no support for independence. Where \( 0 < q < 1 \), the form of equation (2) is:

$$Y = s(X - qX)$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)$$

Theorists of identity would suggest otherwise, that individuals accept the risks associated with a transition to independence. Collective identity provides the motivational set for social action. These theorists expect that support for independence is increased by working to increase the number of self-identified collectivists and by creating the organizational networks that can recruit an increased proportion of this group. It is assumed by theorists of identity that this process of mobilization is in itself a solution to the problem of viability. The internalization of collective identity leads individuals to accept the risks of independence because to do otherwise would violate one's identity. This interpretation is consistent with the common argument that secession is supported despite the economic costs,\(^32\) and with the proposition in work on new social movements that individuals bear risks when their identities commit them to a course of action.\(^33\)

\(^32\) Horowitz (fn. 29), 132. For a more detailed discussion that takes into account the different strategic structures of secessionist movements in the developing world and in the developed West, see Hudson Meadwell, "Transitions to Independence and Ethnic Nationalist Mobilization," in William James Booth, Patrick James, and Hudson Meadwell, eds., Politics and Rationality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

\(^33\) Craig Calhoun, "The Problem of Identity in Collective Action," in Joan Huber, ed., Macro-Micro Linkages in Sociology (Newbury Park and London: Sage Publications, 1991), 51ff. As I hope is clear, I am reluctant to accept this interpretation of the consequences of identity. I have suggested elsewhere that this argument is quasi-functionalist: identity is needed when the barriers to change are so high that they cannot be surmounted without it. See Meadwell (fn. 32). I think the reasoning here is dubious. There is a further conceptual problem. I have suggested that institutions and identity are dual moments of counterhegemony. Much of the discussion about identity proceeds as if collective identity can be identified independently of the institutional infrastructure of the group. I prefer to think of identity as simply a restatement at a different conceptual level of patterns of group organization and structuration. Identity then becomes a principle of representation in a symbolic field, rather than an independent cause of, or reason for, action. Perhaps we need two-place predicates that include just institutions and practices, rather than three-place predicates extended to include identity.
ENABLING CONDITION: IDENTITY FORMATION

There is some support for this argument in the bivariate relationship in several cases between national identity and support for independence. The relationship suggests that the higher the degree of identification with the group, the greater the degree of decentralization that is supported.34 A recent survey in Quebec indicated that 62 percent of Francophones identified themselves as "Québécois."35 The political consequences of this new identity have been noted in several studies:36 self-identified Québécois are more likely to support the PQ and less likely to support renewed federalism.

At the same time, however, self-identified Québécois, even when they are strongly attached to Quebec, may still retain a sense of attachment to and identification with Canada. When they do, their support for sovereignty is lower.37 The effects of Canadian federalism thus run in two directions. Federalism has provided considerable institutional capacity, which has reinforced a distinctive collective identity. At the same time two hundred odd years of shared history and economies have also had an impact.38 The Québécois do not have the visceral memory of conquest and occupation that motivates Estonians and Lithuanians. Nor is the history of Quebec in Canada marked by a lengthy period of repression in the twentieth century,39 like that experienced by the Basques or Catalans in Spain. The result seems to be that the consequences of Québécois identity for support for sovereignty are weakened.

These mixed effects of federalism also can be understood historically

39 This relative absence of repression has meant that one source of grievance, rooted in the reaction to repression, is less relevant in Quebec. In other cases, authoritarian regimes provide a common focus and target that foster a basis for solidarity among diverse kinds of dissent. At the same time, the democratic regime in Canada opens up space for the expression of group identity and nationalist demands. In this pattern, political mobilization in the public sphere is easier, but there is likely greater division within the group over the degree of decentralization to demand.
as a result of the form of political incorporation of French Canadians. There are three central elements of this pattern of political incorporation. (1) The Canadian state was built on the earlier military conquest of the French. (2) The accommodation between English and French was federalist. (3) Canadian confederation also established a tacit and informal concordat between the state and the French Canadian Catholic church.\textsuperscript{40}

The first element provides the group with a genealogy that harks back to the original settlement of 1608 and to the Conquest of 1760. It marks a golden age for the group and points to the interrupted development of an emergent nation caused by defeat and occupation. The combination of (2) accommodation and (3) the tacit concordat devolved some informal public authority to the church, which preserved its organizational structure and its place in French Canadian society and became a key institutional support for conservative governments in Quebec. Because the religious and national projects were coextensive, the church became an institutional support for French Canadian nationalism.

Since this informal devolution of authority to the church was embedded in a federal state, political power located in the provincial state became in the 1950s the locus of activity for a modernizing coalition of intellectuals, trade unionists, lower clergy, and white-collar professionals. As a consequence, political and economic modernization in Quebec has been built on a nationalist project that has sought to complete the Quebec state by devolving powers to it from the central state.\textsuperscript{41} This is a distinctive feature of nationalism in Quebec. In other cases, by contrast, modernization was controlled and managed by the central state. Very simply, political debate in contemporary Quebec has been about the form and direction of modernization, but very little discourse in this debate has not been nationalist in some fashion or has not occurred against a nationalist backdrop.

This fusion of nationalism and modernity has produced a familiar

\textsuperscript{40} The mixed effects of federalism can also be seen in the Québécois reaction to the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. The symbolic politics of this issue engaged different elements of collective identity. On the one hand, the failure represented an unwillingness on the part of many Canadians to recognize the distinctiveness of Quebec within Canada. On the other hand, it represented Québécois the rejection of Quebec's contribution to Canada. See Charles Taylor, "Shared and Divergent Values," in Ronald Watts and David Brown, eds., \textit{Options for a New Canada} (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

\textsuperscript{41} Gérard Bergeron and Réjean Pelletier, \textit{L'État du Québec en devenir} (The evolving Quebec state) (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1980). There are several interesting similarities between the project of modernization associated with the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and economic modernization in postwar France. Both projects were tied to industrial strategies that were basically statist, growth-oriented, and characterized by increasing sectoral concentration and support for superﬁrms ("national champions"). Both were dependent on policy networks that linked bureaucrats and business. And both projects have involved important changes in foreign economic policy as economic openness came to be accepted in each case.
pattern of state-led economic modernization. Hydro-Quebec is a perfect illustration of this fusion. Originally established as a Crown corporation in 1944, Hydro-Quebec broadened its scope by nationalizing private hydroelectric companies in 1963, an initiative led by René Lévesque, then a minister in the provincial Liberal cabinet. In the early 1970s the corporation embarked on a huge hydroelectric project in northern Quebec. This project simultaneously expressed a commitment to industrial growth, greatly strengthened the Francophone engineering and construction sectors, and complemented the theme in French Canadian history and culture of the colonization of the North.

Hydro-Quebec is now politically contested in ways that reveal the tensions within the national project in late modernity. First, ecological concerns are set against the commitment to industrialism expressed in the intention, apparently shared by both Liberal and Parti québécois leaders, to extend hydroelectric development. Second, the rights to self-government of aboriginal communities (Cree, Naskapi, Inuit) of northern Quebec, the populations most directly affected by dam and road construction, are pitted against the provincial Quebec state.\(^{42}\) It seems clear that the core idea of the national project, which might be expressed as “Québec, un et indivisible,” is going to be increasingly difficult to sustain in the 1990s, whether Quebec remains in Canada or becomes independent. The political recognition of difference and diversity will require some modification of this core idea. But the power of the commitment to a unitary identity in the national project is demonstrated by the difficulty some Québécois have had in accepting a nonnationalist vision of an independent Quebec.\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) The interest in establishing provincial jurisdiction in the North was expressed by a provincial cabinet minister prior to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. “The Agreement has enabled us to accomplish two great tasks to which the government committed itself. It enables us to fulfill our obligations to the native peoples who inhabit our North and to affirm finally Quebec’s presence through its entire territory.” John Ciaccia, _Opening Remarks to the Standing Parliamentary Committee of the National Assembly of Quebec convened to examine the Agreement with the James Bay Cree and the Inuit of Quebec prior to its signature, November, 1975_, in The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (Quebec: Editeur Officiel du Québec, 1976).

\(^{43}\) Martin Masse, “Identités collectives et civilisation: pour une vision non-nationaliste d’un Québec indépendant” (Collective identity and civilization: For a non-nationalist vision of an independent Quebec) (Book manuscript, Montreal, 1991); Jacques Larose, “Crise de glu de la spécificité Québécoise” (Quebec specificity in a trap), in Larose, ed., _La petite noircœur_ (The little darkness) (Montreal: Boréal, 1987), 85–91. Quebec is undergoing some of the changes associated with the transition from “old” to “new” politics—to use the stylized language of work on new social movements. The politics of difference plays itself out in interesting ways in Quebec because of the nationalist context. On this transition, see, e.g., Hans Peter Kriesi, “New Social Movements and the New Class in the Netherlands,” _American Journal of Sociology_ 94 (March 1989); Claus Offe, “New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics,” _Social Research_ 52 (Winter 1985).
Viewed from a comparative perspective, Quebec has very high institutional capacity as a result of its pattern of incorporation. For example, neither the Statutes of Autonomy of 1979 for the Basque country and Catalonia nor the "federalization" of Belgium has created a territorial unit with the powers of the province of Quebec. The decentralization and deconcentration of territorial authority in more unitary states such as France or Italy are only minor changes in comparison with the situation in Quebec. Of course, many of these provincial powers have been won since 1867, over the course of more than a century of bargaining with the federal state and in the courts. Moreover, the territorial status quo that was built into confederation from the outset privileged Quebec. Canadian federalism is by far the most important component of this institutional capacity.

It is well known that federalism implemented for the purposes of accommodation or control can be quickly turned to more radical ends when a co-opted elite is replaced or changes its preferences. The Quebec case combines replacement and change associated with the Quiet Revolution. This transition is usually marked by the election of the Lesage government and the creation of provincial departments of health, education and welfare, but this only ended a long period of resistance within the Duplessis regime. The Asbestos Strike of 1949 was especially important in politicizing young intellectuals, who constituted an important element of the emerging political class. There was, however, no inevitable relationship between provincial political reform and independence. Reform was also compatible with some form of federalism, and the activists of the 1950s were neither all indépendantistes nor all federalists when they entered political life.


45 Hélène David, "La grève et le bon Dieu" (The strike and the good lord), in Fernand Harvey, ed., Le mouvement ouvrier au Québec (The worker's movement in Quebec) (Montreal: Boréal, 1980).

46 In 1949 there was a wildcat strike that lasted five months in the asbestos mines at Asbestos and Thetford. It engaged the attention and support of a group of intellectuals and trade union activists who would later become key players in the French Canadian political class. They included André Laurendeau, an editor at Le Devoir in the late 1940s, Gérard Pelletier, the reporter for Le Devoir who covered the strike, Jean Marchand, secretary-general of Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada, and Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, who had recently returned from doing graduate work at the London School of Economics and Ecole des sciences politiques in Paris. The strike was a major impetus for the founding of Cité Libre in 1950, the forum for a liberal critique of traditional French Canadian nationalism. Another line of criticism, expressed for example by Laurendeau, sought to disengage nationalism from the control of the Catholic church (at least from the conservative elements within the church) and from Premier Duplessis. See Michael D. Behiels, Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985).
Federalism has provided the political levers by which the political elite in Quebec has entrenched French language use and changed the cultural division of labor. Governments since Lesage have been unabashedly statist in these areas. The availability of these levers also provided incentives for the formation of a single province-oriented separatist party out of several smaller parties and associations. More generally, it seems clear from other cases that nationalist parties which elect candidates to legislatures in unitary states face a much more difficult task of implementing territorial change. They must be able to take advantage of short-term strategic opportunities to force governments to formulate changes (for example, Scottish and Welsh nationalists in the aftermath of the 1974 election of the Labour government). And they can be weakened when national parties take on board some of their nationalist programs, as British Labour has done with the Scottish National Party.

Federalism also has had a fundamental effect on the self-understanding of Francophones in Quebec. The nationalist movement in Quebec today is “Québécois”; it is not French Canadian. This redefinition of the boundaries of the group now parallels provincial boundaries and is rooted in the geographic distribution of Francophones in Canada and the federal structure of the Canadian state. Thus, political institutional capacity has contributed to collective identity.

Federalism has provided institutional capacity for mobilization within the group and for bargaining with the central state. However, the effects of federalism do not all run in one direction. Another genealogy of the group points to the importance of Quebec as a founding nation of Canada, harking back to 1867 and not to the Conquest of 1760 and emphasizing the protection for the French Canadian nation provided by the British Empire and within confederation. Further, federalism may have provided a set of semiautonomous political institutions, but it does not solve the problem of viability.

Counterhegemony has been an enabling condition for Quebec nationalism. Institution building has also underpinned collective identity in Quebec. However, nationalist mobilization in this case has repeatedly been constrained by the problem of economic viability, and it is to this constraint that I now turn.

47 The federal Bloc québécois, composed primarily of former Conservative members of Parliament from Quebec, may well be a temporary, unstable phenomenon created by the failure of Meech Lake. The party is unlikely to be able to create an activist base of support where local politics are centered in the province, and it may draw support only as a protest vote. This does not mean, however, that it could not have leverage in a hung parliament after the next federal election.

CONSTRAINING CONDITION: THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC VIABILITY

The historical solution to this problem in nationalist politics has been mercantilism. Economic viability has been closely associated with self-sufficiency, but self-sufficiency has become a less necessary and less attractive economic strategy as economic interdependence has stabilized in the postwar period. Small regional economies can now base economic viability on participation in an open regional or international economy. These changing opportunity structures have influenced the politics of nationalist movements in the developed West, including Quebec.

Jacques Parizeau has argued that increased openness in the international economy would allow Quebec to be politically independent and economically viable. If there were a free-trade area in North America, Quebec could substitute trade with the United States for commercial relations with Canada. Withdrawal from confederation would then more likely be perceived as economically viable, and voters in a future referendum would likely be less sensitive to the costs of independence. Parizeau’s argument is the culmination of an evolving position. In 1978, in the context of debate about the meaning of sovereignty-association, he argued that only a customs union with Canada (especially Ontario) was necessary for an independent Quebec. A monetary union was not as essential. By 1981 Parizeau was arguing that the necessity of a customs union with Canada could be rethought and he cited as reason for the reevaluation the lowering of tariffs under GATT. In the aftermath of Meech Lake, however, Parizeau has proposed that Quebec use the Canadian dollar as its currency.

Parizeau’s early position was the extension of an argument present in the nationalist movement since the early 1970s, when Tremblay explicitly introduced the idea of a Quebec-American common market into the nationalist debate. There has been interest as well in the experience of Norway and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). Parizeau’s argument certainly opens up Quebec nationalism to the rest of the world in ways that would have been unfamiliar to earlier generations of nation-

50 Le Devoir, July 15, 1978; La Presse, January 12, 1981.
alists. For them the maintenance of cultural distinctiveness acted as a restriction on the movement of factors of production.\textsuperscript{53}

The earlier mercantilist ("conservative") nationalism\textsuperscript{54} had specific implications for behavior: individuals should be willing to pay more for services and products that were supplied by other members of the cultural group. The preservation of cultural distinctiveness sometimes demanded the subsidization of existing price differentials in the name of investment in the group. Parizeau's position, however, is much closer to the arguments of those French Canadians who opposed "achat chez les notres" (buy at home) in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{55}

More recently Parizeau has emphasized the importance of maintaining economic association with Canada after political separation. First, the polls show strong support for sovereignty-association. Second and more important, the necessity of economic ties with Canada was stressed or acknowledged in many of the depositions to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, including those in support of independence (for example, those made by trade unions). In response, Parizeau emphasized the economic costs to Canada if the federal government were to sever economic ties, and therefore he has discounted the vulnerability of Quebec to federal threats that might arise because of its dependence on Canadian markets.

But not all supporters of independence are free traders. The Quebec labor movement has long been a supporter of independence. It also opposed the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, and its support for a parallel Quebec-American agreement under independence would likely be qualified. The trade unions are willing for the moment to bracket the class question in order to achieve independence. The presentation of the FTQ (Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec) at the Bélanger-Campeau hearings was most clear on that point: "We must avoid confusing the constitutional statute and the social project. When sovereignty is achieved, Quebec will in effect be an open political field."\textsuperscript{56} The CÉQ (Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec) made a similar

\textsuperscript{53} Meadwell (fn. 4); Yves Roby, _Les Québécois et les investissements américains, 1918–1929_ (The Québécois and American investments, 1918–1929) (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1976).

\textsuperscript{54} Susan M. Trofimenkoff, _The Dream of Nation_ (Toronto: Gage, 1983).


\textsuperscript{56} Assemblée Nationale, Journal des débats, _Commission sur l'Avenir Politique et Constitutionnel du Québec_ (Commission on the political and constitutional future of Quebec) (Bélanger-Campeau Commission), November 1990, 3:140.
distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions for economic and social development. Independence provides the political levers, but development depends on the priorities to which these levers are joined. Debates about the social project can be left until full control of local political institutions is achieved.

Nor are all free traders also indépendantistes. Francophone businesspersons who wanted access to larger markets have now had this supplied by the federal government through the North American Free Trade Agreement. They need not support an independent Quebec state to gain freer trade, especially since the gains won by Canada in the Free Trade Agreement may not be extended to an independent Quebec. What is interesting about the pq position is that its support for free trade is in part a strategy of mobilization. It assumes that there is a pool of soft supporters of independence who are averse to the economic risks of transition and statehood. Individuals in this subgroup are predisposed to support independence. If they can be assured that independence is viable, their support will harden.

Some indication of the dual orientations of organized interests (ten business associations and one financial institution [Mouvement Desjardins]) that appeared before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission is provided in Table 2. Five of these associations supported some form of renewed federalism, and four rejected the constitutional status quo but made no specific recommendations. These latter associations tended not to be concerned about the overall structure of the new constitutional regime as long as their corporate interests could be satisfied within it. Their interest in decentralization is a response to federal economic and monetary policies, especially the federal debt, interest rates set by the central government, and the duplication of services. Two others (Union des producteurs agricoles, Mouvement Desjardins) supported sovereignty. Moreover, all associations emphasized the importance of economic ties with Canada. (In the case of Mouvement Desjardins, the economic relationship was acknowledged but not stressed.) In the cases of nonspecific demands for constitutional change, representatives before the commission implied that sovereignty without an economic entente would be unacceptable (for example, "Independence without an eco-

57 Ibid., December 11, 1990, 18:1261.
58 This is implied in the way Parizeau places the issue of free trade in the context of a referendum: "Once a free trade area in North America has been set up, no premier of other provinces could come to Québec in the midst of a referendum campaign and say, 'If you vote this way, no commercial deal with us.' I suppose we'd say, 'It really doesn't matter, old boy.' " Parizeau (fn. 49).
Table 2
CONSTITUTIONAL POSITIONS AND TRADE POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federalist</th>
<th>Reject Status Quo</th>
<th>Sovereignty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support for free</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conseil du patronat du</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chambre de commerce du</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trade</td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td>Québec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Association</strong></td>
<td><strong>Association des manufacturiers du Québec</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ministre du</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Québec</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Montreal Board of</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trade</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Institute des manufacturiers de vêtements du Québec</strong></td>
<td><strong>Coopérative fédérée du Québec</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Association des</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Association provinciale de l’industrie ouvrière</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>fabricants de</strong></td>
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<td><strong>meubles du</strong></td>
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<td>Québec</td>
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Source: Constructed by author from depositions and hearings of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec.

An economic link is not recognized by anyone," and "The reality of the Canadian geographic space must be maintained.") These positions imply that either sovereignty with economic union or renewed federalism would be preferable to sovereignty without economic union.

The available evidence that individual businesspersons in Quebec have become more favorably disposed toward sovereignty-association also needs to be qualified. In a survey in early 1991 of "business leaders" in Canada (N = 1,711), 72 percent of the Quebec respondents preferred sovereignty-association to independence, the status quo, or new constitutional negotiations. Only 7 percent wanted full independence without economic ties with Canada. Although the report of the results was sketchy, the commentary suggests that the government’s poor perfor-

60 Ibid., December 11, 1990, 18:1297. Deposition from the Association provinciale de l’industrie du bois ouvrière du Québec (Provincial association of the woodworking industry of Quebec).
61 The Globe and Mail Report on Business, April 1991. There is some reason for caution because the support for sovereignty-association is likely inflated. The survey polls subscribers to Affaires Plus, a business magazine. Not all subscribers are businesspersons, and many may have owned small businesses.
Table 3
Destination of Shipments of Goods Manufactured in Quebec (percentage)

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Canada</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Les échanges de produits manufacturiers entre le Québec et les provinces Canadiennes.

Table 4
Quebec Exports to the United States (percentage of all exports outside of Canada)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, Export by Countries, various years.

mance in economic management contributed to a desire for greater political autonomy. Yet despite this evaluation of the economic program of the federal government, respondents overwhelmingly preferred a customs and monetary union with Canada. The level of support for sovereignty-association also was higher than levels reported for surveys of the Francophone mass public, but the gap between this option and support for independence was much larger for the business sample. (In popular polls, the gap is typically 10–20 percent.) But in another poll conducted in November 1991 of 205 “decision makers” (7 percent women), 38 percent supported political sovereignty with economic association with the rest of Canada, 48 percent supported federalism with greater autonomy for Quebec, 5 percent supported independence, and 3 percent supported the status quo. (Of this sample 83 percent had annual incomes of $75,000 or more.) Business is sensitive to the economic implications of independence. These attitudes are an accurate reflection of the continuing importance of the Canadian market for Quebec (see Tables 3 and 4). Although the evidence in Table 2 is limited, it does suggest that organized business is hedging its bets on sovereignty.

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63 Most importantly, this evidence probably does not pick up the full effects of production for the American market. However, four of the associations are large and diversified enough for many of their members to have American markets. A more detailed analysis would take into account the fact that some of these associations are sectoral, while others are multi-sectoral.
The federalists seem to be in a better position than indépendantistes. They can offer business guaranteed access to Canadian markets. This is, of course, an assurance that indépendantistes cannot provide. Instead Parizeau (and the representatives of the Union des producteurs agricoles) have argued that economic interdependence between Canada and Quebec precludes the use of the threat of Canadian economic withdrawal from Quebec in any attempts by the federal government to weaken support for sovereignty.

There are, as well, issues other than access to Canadian markets that shape the attitudes of business. Monetary policy (especially the question of a Quebec currency and the possibility and implications of a shared currency with Canada) and the consequences of these arrangements for international borrowing by Quebec governments are also factors. Uncertainty about the transition extends also to the issue of the division of the national debt. Indeed, since the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in June 1990 and especially after the tabling of constitutional proposals by the Canadian government in September 1991, the issue of the transition and the final institutional arrangements between Canada and Quebec, should Quebec separate, have become increasingly politicized. The federal government and supporters of renewed federalism have an interest in taking a hard line, whereas indépendantistes have an interest in downplaying the economic costs of transition.64

Finally, the current constitutional debate has occurred during an economic recession, which has worsened since June 1990. The unemployment rate is over 10 percent in Quebec province, and it approaches 20 percent in Montreal. Several prominent businesses (including Lavalin, the flagship of the Francophone engineering sector) have declared bankruptcy. Indeed, one trade union leader and indépendantiste (Gérald Larose) accused the federal government of fomenting recession to keep Quebec in confederation.

It seems fair to say that the issue of the economic viability of a politically independent Quebec and the possible costs of transition to independence are a constraint on the mobilization of support at the popular level and among organized business. It is a problem recognized by the leadership of the Parti québécois. In the next section, I consider some of the consequences of these economic constraints on mobilization for some of the strategic choices of organizational leaders.

IV. Independence, Decentralization, and Viability

Equation (3) shows when the problem of viability establishes an upper limit to support for independence. Taking into account the effect of risk aversion is then the only way for a nationalist organization to increase its support in the cultural group. In seeking to mobilize support among risk-averse individuals, however, the organization may lose support among collectivists who are not risk averse. Thus, there is a trade-off between gains and losses in the two subsets when the organization changes its political goal from independence to decentralization. Regionalism will mobilize more supporters than will independence when this trade-off is relatively low. Under these circumstances, there should be recurrent conflicts within nationalist parties over the kinds of concessions to be made in exchange for electoral success.

Consider the case when the group is divided into two subsets: those who support the organization and those who do not. By construction, those who are supporters accept the risks of independence. By hypothesis, the reason for this is that to do otherwise would violate their identity. Those who do not support independence do not accept the risks of independence. Suppose, further, that the actual level of support is lower than the support preferred by the organizational leadership. For my purposes, the reasons for the gap between actual and preferred levels of support are less important than the gap itself. When there is a gap, however, leaders can recruit support in the second subset. In other words, the organization has a core base of support ($\hat{Y}$) and may build on this base by recruiting outside $Y$. Its level of support in these circumstances can be represented as

$$\hat{Y} = \hat{Y} + aY^*$$  \hspace{1cm} (4)

where $a$ is the relative efficiency of mobilization in $Y^*$, $\hat{Y}$ is simply the level of combined support from the two subsets, and $\hat{Y}$ is the level of support in $Y$ after recruitment in $Y^*$.

Two features of the model and of equation (4) remain to be demonstrated. The first is the effect of recruitment in $Y^*$ on the level of support in $Y$. The second is the extent of recruitment in $Y^*$. Both come down to specifying linear equations for $\hat{Y}$ and $Y^*$ that are consistent with (4).

Support in $Y^*$ under a program of independence is impossible, because individuals in $Y^*$ are averse to the risks of independence. The organization must modify its program in order to recruit in $Y^*$. As it modifies its program, however, the organization may lose support
among the individuals in $Y$. Therefore, any gains in $Y^*$ must be dis-
counted by a parameter $d$.

$$\hat{Y} = sY - dY^* \quad (5)$$

According to equation (5), the only costs to a strategy of recruitment
in $Y^*$ are the supporters lost in $Y$. As it stands, however, this model
represents recruitment when support is all of one kind—whether, say,
votes, membership, turnout for street demonstrations, or financial con-
tributions. It must be modified for organizations such as political parties
that can be constrained by their internal structure in ways that are not
picked up in equation (5). This equation represents the recruitment func-
tion for an office-seeking leadership that will accept as many votes in $Y^*$
as are needed for electoral success. But in some circumstances leaders
will pay a price if they seek to increase their support in this way. When
activists prefer some constraint on mobilization in $Y^*$, the result of office
seeking in the electoral arena is intraorganizational conflict that weakens
the activist base and the mobilizational capacity of the party.

When leaders do not enjoy autonomy from party activists and leaders
and activists have different preferences over recruitment in $Y^*$, external
(electoral) and internal (organizational) strategies are interdependent.
Leaders may not pursue their opportunity in $Y^*$ because of the cost of
this move within the party.\(^{65}\) When we consider the mobilization of sup-
port in $Y^*$, a parameter, $k$, takes this set of issues into account and rep-
resents how deep into $Y^*$ the leadership is able to go.\(^{66}\) We can consider
$k$ as a parameter set by internal party debate between purists and prag-
matists. Purists prefer not to recruit support outside of $Y$. Pragmatists
are willing to recruit in $Y^*$. These preferences can be treated as prefer-
ences over the proportions of total support drawn from these two subsets.
The parameter represents the result of bargaining within the party over
the appropriate mix of supporters. When $k = \frac{1}{2}$, leaders are relatively
unconstrained in their move to $Y^*$ when $k \geq 1$. As $k$ approaches zero,

\(^{65}\) George Tsebelis, \textit{Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics} (Berkeley and

\(^{66}\) I have not discussed the consequences of varying levels of difference between $Y$ and
some preferred level of support. So I would argue that the model can hold at different levels
of difference. The recruitment history of the organization and the history of the stability of
political preferences in the group may be more important than the size of the difference.
Even when the gap between $Y$ and some target level of support is large, purists may resist
ideological change (and carry the day within the organization) when the history of the group
is punctuated by periods of preference volatility and dealignment. When the gap is small,
even purists may tolerate some recruitment based on the modification of the political pro-
gram, when the organization has had a relatively constant level of support for some time and
the group has demonstrated relatively stable political preferences.
leaders are increasingly constrained. It follows from the definition of this parameter that the level of support in $Y^*$ is

$$Y^* = kY$$

(6)

Support in $Y^*$ varies also with the efficiency of mobilization, so

$$Y^* = a(kY)$$

(7)

Equations (5) and (7) can be used to determine the levels of support\(^{67}\) in $\hat{Y}$, $Y^*$ and the total level $\bar{Y}$.

The factionalism within the Parti québécois is consistent with this model of mobilization. Tactically, there were early differences over the timing of separation from Canada: whether all at once or in stages.\(^{68}\) There have been recurrent conflicts within the party over the kinds of concessions to be made in exchange for electoral success. These are very common issues in nationalist movements once nationalists decide to contest elections.

Sovereignty-association is the strategy that the Parti québécois devised in anticipation of its electoral dilemma. It is certain that support for sovereignty-association is higher than for independence.\(^{69}\) The commitment to sovereignty-association in the early 1970s was a recognition of electoral reality. Activists in the PQ have supported a greater degree of decentralization than has the rank and file, and this created electoral incentives to modify the program of the party in order to increase support. Survey research indicates that there has been a gap between the preferences of activists and the average individual in the group. In 1962 support for independence was 8 percent among adult French Canadians. By the election of 1976 it had grown to 20 percent, and by prereferendum 1980 to about 25 percent.\(^{70}\) Support for sovereignty-association, moreover, is higher than for independence, and support for sovereignty declines when the economic association is in doubt. This holds even in the post–Meech Lake period.

Moreover the most important change in the platform of the PQ occurred when its leader, René Lévesque, overruled the resolution of a party congress in June 1984 that a vote for the PQ in the next provincial

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\(^{67}\) This result assumes no protest vote for the party in $Y^*$. This could be taken into account with no loss in generality.


\(^{70}\) Hamilton and Pinard (fn. 69), 211, Table I.
election was a vote for independence. Seven provincial cabinet ministers and many activists resigned. When Pierre-Marc Johnson and the moderates took over the party in late summer 1985, the moved away from sovereignty-association and toward “national affirmation,” a program that was deliberately ambiguous so as not to imply a commitment to political independence. “National affirmation” implicitly represented a decision to change the relative proportion of supporters drawn from outside the core, indépendantiste constituency of the party.

As was seen with such other parties as the Scottish National Party in the 1980s\(^{71}\) or the Parti Autonomiste Breton in the 1930s,\(^{72}\) factional conflicts of this kind usually worsen after perceived popular defeat on significant issues. Purists will consider the decision to participate as premature and will want to retreat from a moderate position. Pragmatists will blame the platform of the party as still too extreme, and they may want to move to an even more moderate position. In the case of the Parti québécois, the referendum failure and electoral defeat in 1985 lowered morale and increased mutual blame among both hard-liners and soft-liners, pushed the leadership to table sovereignty-association, and thus alienated more fundamentalist activists and leaders. They left the party and only returned to help oust Pierre-Marc Johnson in 1987.

V. The Meech Lake/Langevin Accord

The current state of constitutional debate in Quebec and Canada is a result of the failure to ratify the Meech Lake Accord. This agreement was signed by the first ministers (the Canadian prime minister and provincial premiers) in June 1987. Ratification required legislative approval by all provincial legislatures and by the federal parliament within three years. The provincial legislature of Manitoba did not ratify the accord by June 1990 (and ratification by the legislature of Newfoundland was rescinded when Clyde Wells became premier), and the agreement became null and void. This failure had momentous consequences for Quebec: it strengthened the political position of indépendantistes and weakened the position of Quebec federalists.

The origins of the Meech Lake Accord, however, lie in the constitutional negotiations that led to the Constitution Act of 1982. This act, in turn, has at least its proximate roots in the period leading up to the Que-


\(^{72}\) Hudson Meadwell, “Nationalism and Rationality” (Manuscript, McGill University, 1993).
bec referendum on sovereignty-association in 1980. The referendum asked voters to give the provincial government “the mandate to negotiate” a proposed agreement between Quebec and Canada that

would enable Quebec to acquire the exclusive power to make its laws, administer its taxes, and establish relations abroad—in other words, sovereignty—and, at the same time, to maintain with Canada an economic association including a common currency. Any change in political status resulting from these negotiations will be submitted to the people through a referendum.

While there has been considerable rhetorical maneuvering around the meaning of this arrangement, it has two core components. The first is the political independence of Quebec. This has meant minimally that no directly elected national parliament would have powers to tax and regulate.\(^3\) The second component is a continued economic relationship between Quebec and Canada. Exactly what this relationship would be and how it might be negotiated are key issues in Quebec-Ottawa gamesmanship.

Speaking four days before the referendum in Montreal, Pierre Trudeau promised “renewed federalism” if the referendum was defeated.\(^4\) This promise was made against the backdrop of constitutional negotiations in the late 1970s in which the federal agenda for constitutional change emphasized patriation (according to which the formal power of constitutional amendment still resided in the British parliament) and procedures for constitutional amendment. The division of powers in social policy, communication, and immigration was to be settled later through federal-provincial agreements rather than through formal constitutional reform.\(^5\) The Parti québécois, in power in Quebec in 1976, opposed this sequential approach because it hoped to trade support for patriation for concessions on division of powers. It would not accept any agreement to patriation on the promise of later concessions. The decision to hold a referendum was designed to demonstrate popular support in Quebec for fundamental constitutional change, a demonstration that could be used in later negotiations.\(^6\) A referendum, though a calculated gamble, was considered a less risky way to mobilize support than an


\(^{5}\) Gagnon and Montcalm (fn. 25), 158.

election. The referendum was defeated: 60 percent voted against, and it did not receive majority support even among Francophones.

After the referendum Trudeau began the "patriation round" of constitutional talks. He initially threatened unilateral repatriation after discussion with provincial premiers ended without agreement in September 1980. This initiative was challenged in the courts by Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland. In September 1981 the Supreme Court held that there was a constitutional convention requiring "a substantial degree of provincial consent" in the patriation of the constitution but that observance of the convention was not "legally required." This mixed decision created incentives for both the federal and provincial governments to reopen discussion. Debate developed around two proposals. The proposal of the central government (also supported by Ontario and New Brunswick), described by one observer as a "nation-building offensive," sought to include a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the patriated constitution. The principle of the charter is antifederal and nonterritorial. Its language recognizes individual rights and social pluralism, a discourse that runs counter to the Canadian federal tradition of provincial governments representing territorial identities. The other proposal supported by the remaining provinces (the "Gang of Eight") sought to maintain provincial power by eliminating the charter and by instituting an amending formula that provided for provincial withdrawal, with financial compensation, from transfers of power to the federal government.

Since Lévesque came to the bargaining table already weakened by the referendum, the common front he formed with the other provinces cost him several concessions. He consented to patriation with an amending formula without a concomitant agreement on division of powers. He also dropped his demand for a Quebec veto on constitutional amendments. Quebec, however, had a distinctive preference with regard to constitu-

77 Gagnon and Montcalm (fn. 25), 159.
79 Guy Laforest, "Interpreting the Political Heritage of André Laurendeau," in Smith, MacKinnon, and Courtney (fn. 74), 104.
80 Cairns (fn. 76).
81 The 1982 Constitution Act allowed withdrawal with compensation only with respect to education and "other cultural matters." The Meech Lake Accord would have extended this possibility to all jurisdictional transfers from the provinces to the federal government. Louis Imbeau, "Voting Games and Constitutional Decision: The 1981 Constitutional Negotiation in Canada," Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 28 (March 1990), 93.
82 For Quebec's point of view on the November 1981 constitutional talks, see Claude Morin, Lendemains piégés: du referendum à la nuit des longs couteaux (Ambushed future: From the referendum to the night of the long knives) (Montreal: Boréal, 1988).
tional change. If both proposals failed, Lévesque could return to Quebec and claim that no agreement with the federal government or the other provinces was possible.83 But the other provinces in the Gang of Eight preferred patriation to the status quo. Their sticking point was the charter, although they were under a great deal of pressure to accept one. Trudeau had managed to present the federal proposal as the “people’s package,” which left the premiers in an awkward political position. Their rejection of the charter could have been taken as a rejection of popular principles. There was also the possibility that Trudeau might proceed unilaterally, despite the political cost, leaving them with no influence in the patriation package. When they were offered a “notwithstanding clause” (legislative review of judicial review), which provided a legislative override with respect to certain provisions of the charter, the common front fell apart. As a result, the Constitution Act of 1982 was not signed by Quebec, although it was legally binding within the province. This set the stage for the Quebec round to “bring Quebec back in.”

Two features of the Act profoundly affected the ability to include Quebec. The first was the entrenchment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This institutionalized a nonterritorial principle in constitutional politics, although the political consequences of entrenching this principle were largely unanticipated at the time of signing. The second was the amending formula. Depending on the amendment, it required the consent of seven or ten provinces and ratification by provincial and federal legislatures. It also established a three-year time limit for ratification of certain amendments.

The Quebec round really began after changes in government at the federal level and in Quebec. The Liberals and Trudeau were replaced by the Conservatives and Mulroney in 1984; the Parti québécois was defeated by the provincial Liberal Party and Bourassa in 1985. Bourassa’s room for maneuver, however, was very limited. No Quebec government could sign the Constitution Act as it stood and maintain popular support. Yet a constitution without Quebec’s consent was also unacceptable, in

83 This point needs more discussion than can be provided here. One interpretation suggests that the Gang of Eight broke apart because Quebec had no sincere interest in an agreement. When the other provinces in this group had an opportunity to make a deal that would produce an agreement, they took it because they preferred a deal to no agreement at all. Another interpretation suggests that Quebec had a sincere interest in the proposal of the Gang of Eight but was unable to convince the others of their sincerity; Imbeau (fn. 81). The argument for insincerity on the part of Quebec in the first interpretation is the argument for uncertainty among the other provinces in the second interpretation. Both depend on the fact that the Quebec government supported sovereignty-association. This can account for both why they were insincere, preferring no agreement at all, and why it was difficult to convince others that they were sincere.
part because amendments to it, especially with regard to aboriginal issues, were close to impossible without Quebec's participation. At the same time, Liberal participation in negotiations was risky. If negotiations failed because the demands of Quebec were not accepted by Ottawa or the provinces, the arguments of indépendantistes—that no agreement was possible—would be reinforced. If negotiations succeeded because of concessions by the Quebec Liberal government, the provincial Liberals would have great difficulty selling an agreement in Quebec. The Liberals opened in 1986 by presenting a list of minimum conditions, which were consistently described by Liberal leaders as a final, rather than a negotiating, position.84

The Meech Lake Accord of 1987 extended to Quebec constitutional recognition as a “distinct society,” control over candidates for the Supreme Court and Senate, the right to opt out of national shared-cost programs, constitutional recognition of bilateral Quebec-Ottawa agreements on immigration, and a limited veto over constitutional amendments.85 However, the accord, which was not ratified within the three-year time limit,86 foundered on three kinds of opposition in Canada, all of which “had developed a political allergy to activity organized around French-English lines.”87 supporters of provincial equality, interests institutionalized in the charter since 1982, and aboriginal peoples.88

The failure of Meech Lake has had dramatic consequences in Quebec, and any discussion of nationalist politics and mobilization must take them into account. With regard to the PQ, the changes in public opinion since Meech Lake have had the important consequence of decoupling the party's internal and external strategies. The party has not had to confront internal dissent because of its programmatic position, nor has it had to change its program to increase support. Polls and surveys since the failure of the accord have shown both an increase in support for

84 Monahan (fn. 73), 26.
85 Since this limited veto arose in a section expanding the number of items requiring unanimous consent, it meant that the other provinces would have had the same veto as Quebec.
86 The likelihood of ratification declined sharply in December 1988, when Bourassa used the notwithstanding clause to override a Supreme Court decision that held that provincial legislation on public language use violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
87 Monahan (fn. 73), 27.
88 The aboriginal peoples are now key participants in Canadian constitutional politics. Generally, they opposed both the “distinct society” definition of Quebec in the absence of similar recognition for their communities and the language of the accord that referred to French- and English-speaking Canadians as “a fundamental characteristic of Canada.” They have also exploited the use by Quebec of the right to self-determination as a legitimating convention by broadening the extension of this right to their communities. Aboriginal politics played a very direct role in the failure of Meech Lake. In the process of ratification in Manitoba, the government needed unanimous consent in the legislature to hold a series of public hearings. A native member of the provincial legislature voted against the motion to send the issue to a committee for public hearings.
independence and sovereignty-association and a continuing gap between the two. In June 1990, 57 percent of Quebec residents (63 percent of Francophones) were somewhat or very favorable to Quebec sovereignty; 40 percent were somewhat/very favorable to Quebec separation.\(^{89}\) In mid-November of the same year 66 percent had similar attitudes toward sovereignty; 58 percent supported Quebec independence.\(^{90}\) A more recent survey indicated that 52 percent of Quebec residents (61 percent of Francophones) support sovereignty even without a political association; 64 percent (71 percent of Francophones) support sovereignty-association.\(^{91}\)

These results, however, overstated the support for some form of sovereignty because of the way the question was posed. When respondents were asked, not whether they did or did not support a single option, but to choose between options, support for sovereignty-association dropped to 37 percent of Quebec residents, for outright independence to 10 percent, for the status quo to 16 percent, and to 36 percent for a federal structure with strengthened provinces.\(^{92}\) Nevertheless, these results were consequential, and the change left the provincial Liberals scrambling to find some room for political maneuver. At the time federalism was electorally less viable than before Meech Lake, and the Parti québécois already occupied the more extreme position on the issue of territorial change.

Much of the jostling for position by the PQ and the provincial Liberals, however, seems to have been premised on the fear or hope that the changes were temporary. The goal of the Parti québécois and the Bloc québécois was to transform this conjunctural change into an enduring advantage. They argued for an early referendum on independence.\(^{93}\) Lucien Bouchard, for example, had at one point threatened to force the government’s hand by mobilizing protest demonstrations in the early spring and summer of 1990 in support of a 1991 referendum. Bourassa attempted to buy time and to delay the referendum, expecting that public support for independence would decline to a level that made some form of renewed federalism a politically feasible Liberal policy.\(^{94}\)

\(^{93}\) Bourassa is required to hold a referendum by October 26, 1992, and must table a question in the National Assembly by September 9, 1992, either on Quebec sovereignty or constitutional offers from the rest of Canada. A postponement would require debate and a vote in the National Assembly. It is clear that Bourassa would prefer a referendum on constitutional proposals from Canada.
\(^{94}\) However, as the recession deepened since the failure of Meech Lake, Parizeau acknowledged in an interview in the late spring of 1992 that he would prefer a referendum “in a year or two,” because he expected the Quebec economy to be in an upturn by that time. He was
The failure of the Meech Lake Accord has affected two central parameters of the model of mobilization I outlined earlier. First, the constant \( sY \) in equation (5) is larger after Meech Lake. And \( Y^* \) in (6) is larger because \( Y^* \) is directly dependent on the value of \( Y \). This is illustrated in Figure 1. This suggests that the PQ, as the core indépendantiste organization, has mobilized new support among supporters of independence who were not politically active or sympathizers who were previously held back by risk-averse attitudes and also among federalists who took a more radical position after Meech Lake.

The changes in attitude that moved public opinion toward the position of the PQ obviously have left the party in a much stronger position. It has gained support without having to modify its program of sovereignty-association. As a result, the party has maintained support among those who might have abstained if it had changed its program. And at the same time the party has maintained its organizational capacity and activist base because it is less dependent on recruitment outside its constituency of sovereignists and thus can avoid the organizational costs (factionalism, resignations) associated with such recruitment. Instead, it has been the Liberal Party that has experienced factionalism.

Attitudinal changes have weakened the position of the provincial Liberal Party and have provided the party with incentives to move away from a federalist position. These incentives have in turn created factions. Divisions on the national question are not new among provincial Liberals: Paul Gouin formed Action liberale nationale in 1934; Lévesque left the party in 1967. Bourassa tried to placate activists dissatisfied with federalism by providing them with a party forum—the Allaire Committee and the report it subsequently produced. He also tried to satisfy federalists in the party by delaying the referendum on sovereignty. At the same time there is a narrow range of maneuverability available to Bourassa; if he can exploit it, he may actually be able to strengthen his local position. He can use the presence of a powerful indépendantiste network in Quebec to exact concessions from the federal government. Any concessions will also have to be accepted in the rest of Canada, however, or his position in Quebec will be greatly weakened. Concessions have to

confident enough, however, to have supported the circulation of a provincwide petition demanding a referendum as scheduled for the fall of 1992, as a means of continuing to pressure Bourassa. There is therefore an interesting dilemma built into the time horizons of federalists and indépendantistes as they consider the joint effects of the failure of Meech Lake and the economic recession: each of these factors pushes them in different directions. For the federalists, an ideal time for a referendum would be long enough after Meech Lake for its symbolic effects to be weakened, but not so late that the referendum is held in a period of economic expansion.

If a referendum on sovereignty is held and sovereignty is supported, Bourassa may have a fallback. He may be able to accept this statement of the attitudes of Québécois and
be substantial enough to appeal to Quebeckers but not so substantial that the package cannot be sold in Canada. That current constitutional discussions have been broadened to include issues other than Quebec is not simply a result of political pressure from groups in civil society; the federal government fears that the Quebec problem cannot be resolved as a single issue and is attempting to provide the basis for logrolling among groups across issues.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{align*}
\text{Pre-Meech Lake Support} & = \hat{Y} + Y^* \\
\text{Post-Meech Lake Support} & = \hat{Y}_1 + Y^*_{1}
\end{align*}

Figure I

\begin{flushright}
\text{argue that the provincial Liberal Party is simply the best choice of party to lead Quebec (part of the way) out of confederation and also the most suitable party of government in a politically independent Quebec.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\text{\textsuperscript{96} As of August 3, 1992, it appears that the federal government will present a constitutional package designed to satisfy a wide range of territorial and nonterritorial interests in the early fall of 1992, and there is a strong possibility that a national referendum on these constitutional reforms will follow. Aside from the question of Quebec’s status, the constitutional proposals}
\end{flushright}
The factionalism in the provincial Liberal Party is generational as well as issue-driven. The key base of support for sovereignty is the youth wing of the party. Federalists are drawn from an older cohort whose commitments and identifications were formed in the heyday of Canadian federalism. The divisions also do not fall exactly along leader/activist lines. Not all elected leaders (for example, Claude Ryan) are electoral pragmatists, and neither are all activists driven to maintain the party program. Liberal youth, which control one-third of the votes at the party convention, have pushed especially hard for a tougher line. They have been supported by some Members of the National Assembly (MNA) or riding associations that face strong PQ candidates and constituency organizations. Others in the parliamentary wing of the party saw a declaration of sovereignty as a useful negotiation strategy for bargaining with the Canadian state. Others, both elected MNAs and activists, have remained basically federalist and hence unwilling to use sovereignty as a bargaining position.

The state of public opinion in Canada has further constrained the provincial Liberals because it signals an unwillingness in Canada to accept a distinct constitutional status for Quebec. At the same time, the process of constitutional negotiation in Canada has become more open and more complex: the Quebec question is only one of several issues and constituencies that are now a part of constitutional change. Elites are much less insulated from their publics and have less freedom to make deals. Hence attitudes in Canada and the declining degree of elite autonomy thus have contributed to the local dilemma of the Liberals in Quebec and strengthened the position of the PQ.

Conclusion

The process of nationalist mobilization in Quebec cannot be determined simply from the size or the interests of the new middle class. Nor does
the capitalist state thesis provide a useful theoretical framework for explaining mobilization. However, a model of mobilization that emphasizes the interplay of counterhegemony and the problem of economic viability provides a compelling interpretation that systematically incorporates macro- and micro-level evidence. The model also has the advantage of being applicable to other cases, thus allowing the Quebec case to be situated in a broader comparative context.102

By considering counterhegemony as a strategy of activists, this model can account for the origins of nationalist organizations. The life cycle of organizations can be explained by the interaction over time of institution building and identity formation, on the one hand, and by the transition to independence and future economic viability, on the other. These two moments of counterhegemony—institutions and identity—are not determined exclusively by their mutual effects. The success of identity formation will vary with preexisting patterns of political alignments and subsequent changes in these patterns. Organizational encapsulation will vary with both the institutional infrastructure of the group and the territorial distribution of power. The effects of transition should vary with both structural features of the local economy's interaction with the world economy and with cyclical trends in particular conjunctures.

Two types of ethnic mobilization are usually distinguished in the literature on ethnic nationalism. The first develops when the position of the nationalist organization is more extreme than that of the average individual. This relationship—the classic model of political mobilization in the developed West—creates incentives for the organization to moderate its position. The second type of mobilization develops when the position of the average individual is more extreme than the program of the organization. Moderation can then be costly in terms of support for the party position. Group leaders have less incentive to engage in accommodation when there are rival leaders in their group and when leaders do not enjoy autonomy vis-à-vis their followers. Intergroup agreement on moderate positions is difficult to achieve and enforce because of the incentives for leaders within groups to defect to more extreme positions. The nationalist movement in Quebec historically has resembled the first model, but the changes since the failure of Meech Lake have introduced some of the dynamics of the second model. Quebec and Canadian societies will likely experience important changes in the next few years. This article provides a model to make sense of some of them.103

102 Meadwell (fn. 32).
103 The final draft of this article was completed on August 3, 1992.