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Quebec and Canada at the crossroads: a nation within a nation*

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ABSTRACT. I argue first that there are many different concepts of the nation, and advocate a certain conceptual pluralism. I also argue that a population as a whole cannot constitute a nation unless it has a certain national consciousness. I then show that we must adopt a fundamental principle of tolerance. I also try to attend to the complexities of the relations between Quebec and Canada, and argue that different populations represent themselves as nations in different ways and with different concepts. I show that Quebec constitutes a nation within a nation. I then wonder what it would mean for Canadians to accept a Quebec nation. Finally, I try to explain why a very large proportion of the population of Quebec has increasingly been favourable to sovereignty, and favourable to making a partnership proposal to Canada.

Introduction

In this article, I wish to raise three separate questions. I shall first make some general philosophical remarks about nations and nationalism. I shall then speak as someone interested in applying these ideas to the Canadian case. I will try to attend to the complexities of the relationship between Quebec and Canada. Finally, I will try to explain why a very large proportion of the population of Quebec has increasingly been favourable to sovereignty, and favourable to making a partnership proposal to Canada.

Methodological Questions

Let me begin by very briefly making some general philosophical remarks. I am perfectly aware that these remarks should be supported by arguments and should require a more careful examination than the one I can provide within the confines of this article. Nevertheless, I think that they are crucial

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for the discussion of the Canadian case, and this is why I find it important to make them at the outset of the article.

I am concerned to recognise the existence of a very wide range of concepts dealing with the nation. I find it important to develop a liberal approach toward different definitions of the word 'nation'. As we shall see, the reason for such a liberal approach is that these different concepts very often play a role in shaping different national experiences, expressing different traditions, and articulating different self-representations.

Too often, philosophers, sociologists, historians and political scientists are not aware that their particular conception of the nation is to a very large extent the result of their own particular national experiences. It is perhaps for this reason extremely difficult to accept that there could be different ways of approaching the nature of national identity. It is very hard to admit that we should acknowledge an irreducible pluralism on how to define the word 'nation'. The literature is replete with disagreements over the origin of nations and nationalism, and concerning the appropriate definition. Each time, authors begin their work either by proposing their own particular definition, or by suggesting that the word cannot be defined. In my view, these two attitudes stem from the same presupposition. We are wrongly inclined to believe that there can only be one good definition, if any. Many authors agree that nationalism is a very complex and multifarious phenomenon, but they seldom consider the possibility that there could be many perfectly legitimate concepts of the nation. They fail to notice that if the concept is so hard to define, it is because there is no such thing as *the* concept of the nation, since there are many such concepts. Even those authors who acknowledge the existence of different concepts endorse most of the time only one of them. They choose to discriminate normatively between different definitions and decide to adopt only one.[1]

And yet, our inability to understand nationalism may partly be the result of our inability to develop a tolerant attitude toward different conceptions. This inability may even lead to an intolerance toward nationalism itself and, even worse, to an intolerant nationalism. Indeed, nationalism may sometimes paradoxically take the form of an intolerance directed against particular nationalist groups, and it can then partly be explained by an inability to put oneself in the shoes of the individuals who entertain a different national consciousness (see Guy Laforest's conclusions in Laforest and Gibbons 1997).

By failing to conceptualise nations in different ways, one can then be led to adopt a negative attitude toward legitimate forms of nationalism, and these attitudes may in turn have enormous political consequences, sometimes even leading to violence. Of course, it would be wrong to try to explain all forms of intolerant nationalisms just by postulating a dogmatic or essentialist conceptual bent in the minds of those who perform these wrongful behaviours. I am only claiming that the inability to reflect properly upon the complexity and diversified nature of nations and nationalism

partly explains why so many individuals adopt an intolerant attitude towards other nationalities. It is not the only form of intolerance but it is an important one. Our conceptual failings not only lead to a weak understanding of nationalism; more disturbingly, they sometimes lead to intolerance, such as the one that conceals itself as a denunciation of other nationalisms. A dogmatic attitude toward nations and nationalism can be the beginning of a nationalist sentiment leading to morally reprehensible behaviour.

Others will be reluctant to accept a conceptual pluralism in such matters, because it seems to suggest that all nationalisms are acceptable. If we have to be tolerant towards a very wide variety of conceptions of the nations, there will appear to be no possible constraints on nationalist behaviours, and thus no room for an ethics of nationalism or for a law of peoples. But I want to remove immediately that impression in the minds of the readers, for I am precisely arguing for a principle of tolerance which is at the very heart of an ethics of nationalism. There are of course unacceptable forms of nationalism which are based upon agressive behaviours towards other nations, whether they take the shape of exclusion, discrimination, expansionism, ethnocentrism, racism, chauvinism, political domination or various other forms of antagonism. But I believe that it is only by allowing to consider the irreducible variety of national consciousness that we shall be able to formulate an adequate ethics.

So, I want to suggest that there are many different concepts of the nation. The concepts that I shall introduce form an incomplete list of 'stereotypes', in Hilary Putnam's sense of the word (Putnam 1975: 249). Real nations never fully realise just one of those concepts. In the real world, national communities never perfectly exemplify only one sort of nation. The international arena offers a continuum of national communities, and it is a very wide spectrum indeed. Almost all cases inevitably fall between the stereootypes I am about to consider.

Moreover, the concepts that I am about to introduce capture a constantly changing reality. National communities change since their existence is intimately tied to the self-representations of their members. One should not understand nations as though they had some kind of fixed essence. In order to become a national community, there must certainly be an enduring self-representation entertained by a critical mass of individuals within the population, but important changes may appear after a while within that self-representation. Furthermore, one can never really talk about the self-representation of the population as a whole, since there can be disagreements concerning the way to represent one's identity. The population as a whole does not form a homogeneous ideological group. There are always members who are trying to force some changes in the national self-representation of the group.

In sum, one must not be under the illusion that we can very easily apprehend that very complex reality which we call 'national identity'. We

can at best be in a position to throw a 'conceptual net' and capture some of its most important features. However, the fact that nationalism is more complex than the conceptual tools we have at our disposal is not a reason for abandoning the project of trying to understand this phenomenon. It is rather a reason for trying to develop more complex tools. We need to develop many different concepts if we want to begin to understand the complexities of nationalism itself.

Beyond the civic/ethnic dichotomy

If it appears important to reject the simplistic and dangerous ethnic conception of the nation, it is mainly because this concept is very often used by individuals whose ideology is motivated by exclusion, racism or xenophobia. But the worst form of intolerance is the one explicitly directed against other nations, and it must be admitted that the exclusion begins with an intolerance towards different self-representations held by different populations. And so even if it must be admitted that ethnic nationalists very often practise such an exclusion, one must not draw hasty conclusions and throw away the ethnic conception itself.

It is also important to criticise a civic account which would simply identify nations with sovereign countries, if such an account is to go hand in hand with the rejection of any other self-representations. It is true that the use of a civic account very often generates a certain form of exclusion. Paradoxically, it achieves this exclusion by being too inclusive, i.e. by ignoring differences among citizens of the same country, even if these differences include language, culture, history and political community. Intuitively, if you have within a single country many political communities, each one composed of different linguistic, cultural and historical groups, chances are that the individuals belonging to these groups will represent themselves as different national communities, even if these communities are situated on the territory of the same sovereign state. But the defenders of the civic account of the nation are very often unable or unwilling to recognise that. Be that as it may, one must not throw away the civic conception, for it remains a vital part of the national consciousness entertained by many different populations.

There are good reasons for allowing many irreducible concepts of the nation. However, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Seymour 1996: 1–61) most authors make only one important dichotomy: it is the one that holds between the ethnic and the civic conceptions of the nation. Now this dichotomy is deeply unsatisfactory not only because it offers a very incomplete list of concepts. It is problematic also because the two concepts are most of the time held as two different and mutually exclusive options. Accepting one entails that you reject the other. Thus, while the dichotomy acknowledges the existence of at least two different conceptions, almost

nobody would embrace these two different conceptions simultaneously. Most of those who make the distinction between the ethnic and the civic conceptions of the nation thus continue to advocate normatively a conceptual monism. Of course, there are also those who are in some way opposed to the dichotomy because they hate to have to choose between the ethnic or civic accounts, but it is most of the time because they wish to embrace a third account, for instance, a hybrid conception which would be a compound of ethnic and civic features.

If I am right, the mistake is not to defend this or that conception. The mistake is more importantly to be found in the intolerance that goes with a systematic defence of a particular view at the expense of all others. In such delicate matters, one needs to practise tolerance. We should be extremely unhappy to have to choose between the ethnic and the civic account of the nation, but it is mostly because each of those options offers itself as the only account. If you accept the dichotomy, you have to be either an ethnic or a civic nationalist. To repeat, the problem is the conceptual monism that accompanies most of the time all views about the nation.

Of course, one must not exaggerate the importance of developing philosophical concepts, but neither can we avoid our responsability to fight against intolerance, exclusion and mutual ignorance. Whether we like it or not, we often find ourselves entangled in prejudice, and influenced by simplistic dichotomies. Those authors who think about the different concepts of the nation by relying solely on the dichotomy between the ethnic and civic conceptions are unable to distinguish more than two forms of nationalism: ethnic and civic. This means that, for them, nationalism is either the result of a movement subscribing to the 'nationalist principle' (i.e. the principle according to which each ethnic nation should have its own state) or the result of a policy of 'nation-building' held by a particular sovereign state. Since these are the only forms of nationalism, and since both emphasise in different ways a homogeneous nation-state, these arguments lead to a condemnation of nationalism and to the rejection of the nation-state model.

But there are other concepts of the nation aside from the ethnic and civic concepts, and we should therefore refrain from drawing hasty conclusions against nationalism in general, or against the nation-state model. Just as there are many different concepts of the nation, there are many different political models that can accomodate different sorts of arrangements between nations. As we shall see, there are other concepts of the nation, including the sociopolitical concept, which involves all at once a (not necessarily sovereign) political community containing a national majority and, very often, national minorities and various other ethnic communities. The sociopolitical concept of the nation is thus a multiethnic and pluricultural political community. In this case, nationalism can no longer be described as based upon the nationalist principle, nor can it be described as a policy of nation-building in the traditional sense of the words. It should

rather be construed as the defence of the collective rights of a pluricultural and multiethnic political community. In this case, nationalism is of course compatible with a multination state, but it is also compatible with the nation-state model.

A conceptual pluralism

Let me try to provide a rough picture of this conceptual pluralism affecting the word 'nation'.

There is, first, the ethnic concept of the nation. According to that view, a nation involves only individuals who have the same ancestry or who *believe* that they have the same ancestry. What is crucial in the account is that the belief is constitutive of their national consciousness. This conception is very often associated with the name of Johann Herder (1800), but it is not clear if we are entitled to ascribe to him such a view. Herder might perhaps better be described as a proponent of what we shall call the cultural account of the nation. It is true that very few authors nowadays expound a purely ethnic view, but many have argued that there is an ethnic core involved in any nation (see e.g. Smith 1986, 1991; Geertz 1963; Connor 1994; Van Den Berghe 1978, 1979).

In any case, one must not confuse the ethnic concept of the nation with an ethnic nationalism that would be based upon the biological superiority of one group over the others. There are many aboriginal populations, for instance, who quite understandibly still entertain an ethnic conception of their nation, for renouncing such a view in their case would amount to allowing complete assimilation within an encompassing community. For those populations indeed, the only way to stop the process of complete extinction requires being extremely careful about their ancestral roots. Such an ethnic conception can be defended by individuals who do not intend to adopt agressive behaviour towards other nationalities. And it can also be held by populations who are willing to share citizenship with individuals having a different ethnic origin. The advocates of an ethnic conception of the nation can sometimes accept a distinction between nationality and citizenship within the confines of their own territory, or can allow sharing citizenship with others within a larger encompassing territory.

I shall not have a lot more to say in this article concerning the ethnic concept of the nation. It should however be immediately noted that the above sketch is extremely simplistic, for there can be a very wide variety of accounts that argue for the presence of an ethnic component in any national community. Indeed there are many different accounts presently available in the literature which argue for a sophisticated version of the ethnic conception.

We must also accept what could be described as the civic account of the nation. In this case, the nation is equated with a sovereign state, a country.

It is in this sense of the word 'nation' that we talk about the 'United Nations'. Very often, in arguing for a view according to which the only acceptable form of nationalism is civic, we suggest that patriotism toward one's country is the only nationalism that can be tolerated. Some proponents of that view will even find it difficult to characterise this civic account of the nation in a way which would allow for a certain form of 'nationalism'. In the case of authors like Jürgen Habermas (1992), for instance, the correct account should rather be described as 'constitutional patriotism'. This is a view which does not tolerate political recognition of the collective rights of national minorities. It is also a view that can be implemented not only at the level of a particular country, but also at the supranational level (e.g. the European Union) (see e.g. Habermas 1998).

Other nationalists will adopt a civic account of the nation, but they will be less reluctant concerning the protection of the rights of cultural minorities. Their account will allow for policies of multiculturalism. These are the so-called Canadian Charter nationalists whose main figure is Pierre Elliott Trudeau (for a critical assessment of these views, see Mandel 1994). Finally, there are those who could argue for a civic account of their own nation, but who would at the same time accept that some groups within the state entertain another national consciousness. These will allow for the recognition of nations within their own nation (see e.g. Taylor 1993).

It is sometimes argued that there is no such thing as a purely civic nation. It is claimed that all nations involve some 'ethnic' component. According to that view, a purely civic concept ignores the very existence of a cultural majority in order to conceal its domination within the country. The very concept of a civic nation thus is seen as illusory and controversial. How can we ascertain these claims? Well, it may be granted that within each civic nation, there is a cultural majority. It may also be acknowledged that this cultural majority very often exercises a certain domination over minorities. Even worse, the national consciousness entertained by the members of this cultural majority may very often involve a civic concept of the nation precisely because it conveniently conceals the presence of a dominant group. Be that as it may, these abusive uses of the concept must not lead us to a condemnation of the concept as such, for it is constitutive of many self-representations. Our principle of tolerance must be applied in this case as well, and we must be careful to distinguish between some uses of the concept and the concept itself.

Then there is the purely cultural definition of the nation which is perhaps the most popular account in the literature right now (see Tamir 1993; Kymlicka 1995; Miller 1995; Nielsen 1996–7). According to that view, being part of the nation requires sharing the same language and culture and sharing an attachment to the same history. What turns these features into a nation is the fact that they enter into the national consciousness of the members. In short, individuals see their nation as characterised by these features. Those who belong to the same cultural

nation may have very different ancestral roots, and think that sharing the same ancestral roots is not constitutive of their identity, but they are also individuals who are totally assimilated to a definite linguistic, cultural and historical community. This is perhaps, by the way, the account that should be ascribed to Herder.

In addition, although cultural nations are not necessarily concentrated on one legally recognised territory, their population is always located within a certain region (perhaps on different contiguous territories). And, in its prototypical form, there is a legally recognised territory on which it forms the majority of the population. An illustration of this could be Scotland or Wales, before they were transformed through devolution into true political communities. Both could have been described then as cultural nations. Be that as it may, the region where the whole cultural nation is located need not necessarily be confined to one territory (e.g. the Kurds in Kurdistan, or the Roma in East and Central Europe).

Here also, there are many different versions. There may be sovereign and non-sovereign cultural nations. In addition, some cultural nations may include many different sub-cultural groups. According to some, Great Britain, for instance, may be described as a multinational cultural nation, since it contains many different nations (the English, the Scottish and the Welsh), sharing up to a certain point a common language, culture and history.

There is also the diaspora nation which supposes the existence of many groups having roughly the same culture. But contrary to the purely cultural account, the *majority* of all the members of a diaspora nation are disseminated on many different discontinuous territories, and do not constitute a majority on any of those territories. One could perhaps treat the diaspora nation just as a special case of the cultural nation. But I choose to create a different category because it has important features of its own, and it creates difficulties which are very different from those of the cultural nation. For instance, it challenges in a distinctive way our ability to offer it a political recognition, and recognise its collective rights. It differs from the purely cultural account mentioned above mainly because it is not occupying a uniform territory, because it is not a majority on any territory, and because the majority of the population is dispersed on different territories.

The diaspora nation must not be confused with immigrant populations having the same national origin. In a way, individuals of a given country who have emigrated from that country might be considered as forming the 'diaspora' of that country. But here, by the words 'diaspora nation', I am referring to the case of a nation whose population would not be located mostly on one particular territory and which would not form a majority on any territory. As an illustration, one could want to mention the case of the Roma people in Europe. However, most of them (perhaps 3 million?) live in Romania, and this population forms the largest concentration of Roma people in Europe. It is thus not a case where the *majority* of the population

finds itself on many discontinuous territories. Consequently, we should not postulate a diaspora nation of Roma people in Europe. As suggested above, it is more like a cultural nation.

A better example would be provided by the Jews. Even if Israel is a civic nation and is composed mostly of a Jewish population, most Jews are not concentrated in Israel. But we should perhaps say that the Jewish nation is simultaneously a purely civic nation composed of Jews and Palestinians, and a diaspora. Although there may still be in a sense a Jewish 'diaspora', the Jewish nation is no longer *just* a diaspora nation.

The best examples of diaspora nations are the aboriginal populations which find themselves dispersed into cities. Many individuals belonging to the aboriginal populations of Canada live in cities and their nations do not occupy a specific territory. And so there are no legally recognised territories on which they form a certain majority. In this case, we truly are confronted with diaspora nations.

Finally, there is what I would like to call the sociopolitical concept of the nation. According to that account, a nation is, as in the traditional civic definition, a certain sort of political community. But unlike this civic account, the political community involved may or may not be a sovereign state. Another important difference with the purely civic definition is that this account is not strictly political. It is also partly sociological. According to that view, the political community must contain at least a *majority* of individuals who share the same language, culture and history. This majority must also be the largest concentration in the world of a group of people sharing these different features. Moreover, it is in a second sense also a majority, since the majority of the people sharing these features must be located on the same territory. I call such a majority a national majority.[2] If it were not for that majority, the political community would not be a sociopolitical nation. Thus, the sociopolitical nation is up to a certain point similar to the cultural nation. But unlike the purely cultural account, it is not strictly sociological, for it is also political. The sociopolitical nation is a certain sort of political community, and this political community may contain, in addition to the national majority, national minorities (i.e. extensions of neighbouring nations) and communities having other national origins. So contrary to the purely cultural account, the sociopolitical nation may also be pluricultural.

We must accept an account which can all at once be inclusive and capture a certain sociological reality. Sociopolitical nations are political communities that may be existing at a lower level than the nation-state. But they are not just political communities. For there are federated states, provinces, landers and cantons which form distinctive political communities and which are not nations. So it is not enough to be a political community in order to become a sociopolitical nation. The sociopolitical nation must be some kind of inclusive political community, but it must also involve what I call a national majority, i.e. an absolute majority of a group of people

sharing a specific language, history and culture. So in a nutshell, according to this sociopolitical account, a nation may be a political community most often composed of a national majority, of national minorities and of communities having other national origins. A political community which would not have these sociological features could not be a nation in the sociopolitical sense.[3]

In a way, this last concept of the nation is one which exemplifies the idea of tolerance, for the principle of tolerance is built in the very concept of such a nation. It is an inclusive pluricultural political community which recognises that it would not be a nation were it not for the existence of a national majority. We can mention a few examples of peoples which could or should advantageously try to adopt a self-representation of themselves as sociopolitical nations. The population of Israel is composed of all Israeli citizens, including a national minority of Palestinians, but it would not be a nation (in the sociopolitical sense) if there were not a Jewish national majority. All the citizens of Slovakia belong to the Slovakian nation, including the Hungarian national minority, but it would not be a sociopolitical nation without the Slovakian national majority. The same remark applies to the Catalonian nation which is composed of all the citizens of Catalonia (including a Spanish-speaking minority), but which requires for its existence the presence of a Catalonian national majority. It is important to develop a concept like the sociopolitical nation in an argument that purports to articulate the principle of tolerance as a fundamental principle for the ethics of nationalism. If we are to find a way to live in harmony side by side in spite of our different national allegiances, we better find a way to apply the principle of tolerance within the nation itself, by allowing for multiethnic and pluricultural nations.

Some might want to argue that the concept of a sociopolitical nation is not needed because a nation need not be constituted by a national majority in order to become a nation. The population of Israel might not contain a Jewish national majority and still be a nation in the civic sense or in the sense of a diaspora nation. These facts about Israel might be perfectly true, but we should not conclude on that basis that the concept of a sociopolitical nation is not useful. On the contrary, those political communities which are not sovereign but which contain a national majority cannot be confused with immigrant groups or diaspora nations, nor can they be equated with ethnic or purely cultural nations. And even more importantly, they share an important feature for they are pluricultural and are based upon the recognition of their pluricultural character.

So there are many different concepts of the nation, and, as I suggested earlier, I wish to advocate a certain conceptual pluralism. The concepts that I have discussed so far are in my view perfectly legitimate and none of them should supersede the others. We can and should accept the ethnic, civic, purely cultural, diaspora and sociopolitical concepts of the nation. There are no such things as the essential features of the nation. There are at best

certain family resemblances. In all cases, nations are constituted by one or many linguistic communities, by a certain number of basic institutions (that can range from rituals up to a complete societal culture or political community), and all of them involve a certain national consciousness. Still, the concept of the nation may vary from one community to the other, and there might thus be variations on what is to count as a 'national feature'. Once again, some concepts of the nation may be problematic in part because those who advocate them mistakenly reject any other concepts. However, I believe that we must accept an irreducible conceptual diversity in these matters. We must perhaps make use of many different concepts of the nation if we want to have a grasp on a phenomenon as complex as nationalism. So I recommend that we endorse a conceptual pluralism.

Neither objective nor entirely subjective

I wish to make one last philosophical observation. I wish to argue that there is no such thing as an entirely objective nation that could be described as if it were a scientific phenomenon to be investigated like we investigate atoms or galaxies. Nations involve important subjective features, such as national consciousness and the will to live together. Whether we use an ethnic, civic, cultural, diaspora or sociopolitical concept of the nation, it must be emphasised that any legitimate account must treat it not as if it were an entirely objective phenomenon. It is to a very large extent subjective. A group cannot constitute a nation unless there is a certain national consciousness entertained by a large number of individuals within the population. These individuals must represent themselves as forming a nation in order to become one. This self-representation not only involves a description of itself as a nation but also an expression of what it wants to become as a nation.

I said that nations incorporate some crucial subjective features, but becoming a nation is not something that a group can improvise; it is not only a matter of will, and we must not immediately recognise a group as a nation just because that group suddenly decides that it is to become a nation. In each case that I have discussed so far, there are subjective and objective features involved. For instance, I have argued that civic nations are countries and this is certainly an objective feature. I have also suggested that language, culture and history form relatively objective features that can play a role in the creation of the cultural nation. In the case of the sociopolitical nation, I have used notions such as national majorities and national minorities, and these notions can receive sociological characterisations. So it would be wrong to suggest that a group becomes a nation as soon as it represents itself as a nation. Nations, after all, are not just imagined communities, *pace* Benedict Anderson (1983).

It must also be emphasised that the self-representation crucially involved

in the very concept of the nation should not be construed as a mere belief that one belongs to this or that *nation*. It would be circular to try to define the concept of the nation by invoking as a constitutive element the belief that there is such a nation. We would then be presupposing the concept we wish to define. Of course, we could also want to claim that nations, as social entities, exist only when individuals entertain beliefs involving the *concept* of the nation. The ontological reality of nations would then be explained merely by recourse to the presence in the minds of individuals of a certain conceptual item. We would then be arguing for a fictionalist account of the nation since its ontological reality would then be reduced to the occurrence of a concept in the minds of certain individuals. In order to avoid a circular definition and a fictional explanation, it is important to specify the self-representations without using the concept of a nation. For instance, the concept of an ethnic nation requires people to perceive themselves as being of the same ancestral origin. The concept of a cultural nation rejects that last feature, but requires that each individual perceive herself as assimilated to the same linguistic, cultural and historical group. A civic nation supposes that each individual represents herself as part of the same country. And a sociopolitical nation supposes that each individual represents herself as part of a political community containing a majority of individuals who also happen to be the majority of individuals in the world who share the same language, culture and history.

I said that a self-representation is a crucial element involved in the existence of a nation, but this should not be confused with national sentiment. Individuals are very different in their emotional allegiances. The importance of particular group affiliations may vary from one person to the other and may vary through time even for a single individual. We all have different affective links and different ways of ordering the importance of our group affiliations. This emotional or affective ranking is not relevant for determining whether we belong to this or that nation. I may belong to a nation even though I fail to experience any national sentiment or any national pride. Individuals may fail to consider their national affiliation as a 'primary good' in Rawls' sense.[4] Nevertheless, they can still be part of a particular nation, for they entertain the relevant self-representation.

A multinational Canada

From the above remarks, it is easy to draw one important conclusion. Since nations are at least in part subjective, and since there are many concepts of the nation, one can expect that different concepts could be used by different communities and could contribute to a different national self-representation. And the obvious conclusion is that we must tolerate these different national identities and self-representations, and afford them all a political recognition in the public sphere.

We can turn that point into a philosophical argument. Let us suppose that we accept, as a first premise, the principle of the intrinsic value of cultural diversity (or its instrumental value relative to the human species).[5] Let us also accept as a second premise what I have called a conceptual pluralism. If we add, as a third premise, the claim that nationhood is at least in part a matter of self-representation and then also note, as an empirical observation, that many different populations entertain different self-representations involving different concepts of the nation, then we must accept, in conclusion, a fundamental principle of tolerance. This conclusion is a crucial normative claim that should be kept in mind in what follows. It is a background assumption that I am going to take for granted in what I have to say concerning the Canadian case.

So let me now turn to an application of these ideas to the Canadian case. We must be aware that, in Canada, there are different populations representing themselves as nations in different ways and with different concepts. I leave aside for the sake of simplicity aboriginal nations and the Acadian nation and I shall discuss only the case of Quebec and Canada. By restricting my considerations to the relations between Canada and Quebec, I do not mean to suggest that the aboriginal nations are less important. It is only for methodological reasons that I choose to concentrate on Quebec and Canada. The Acadian nation is according to my account a purely cultural nation, while Aboriginal peoples within Canada belong to different categories. They may be ethnic nations, sociopolitical nations or diasporas.

Quebeckers used to represent themselves as members of a purely cultural French Canadian nation, and they now see themselves as part of a Quebec nation understood in the sociopolitical sense. As far as English Canadians are concerned, there are some who think that Canada is a post-national community of communities (see Webber 1994). Others think of Canada as a multination state composed of many different cultural or sociopolitical nations. According to that view, there would be an English Canadian nation (see Resnick 1994). But the majority now thinks of Canada as constituting a single civic nation. The Canadian nation for them is the country as a whole.[6]

Within that last group, we then find a variety of individuals entertaining different attitudes toward the multinational character of Canada. Some accept the existence of two linguistic communities. Others recognise the existence of a multicultural society. Finally, there are some who are willing to accept the existence of a deep diversity, and who are willing to recognise the existence of a Quebec nation and of Aboriginal nations within the Canadian nation.

So there is a vast array of political positions held by politicians, political scientists and intellectuals within Canada. But in spite of all these differences, most agree on the existence of a civic Canadian nation. Their nation is the country as a whole. So if we are to respect the self-representation of Canadians, we should accept the idea of a Canadian nation.

Quebec as a sociopolitical nation

Let me just say a few words about the Quebec sociopolitical nation, since the sociopolitical nation is apparently a fairly new and original conception. Even if there are French-speaking Canadians living outside Quebec who roughly share the same language, history and culture, they are less numerous than those living inside Quebec. Francophones living outside Quebec form a 'national minority', i.e. an extension of the French national majority within Quebec. French Canadians living outside Quebec do not represent themselves just as any other minority. They form an 'historical minority', that is, they are a part of what used to be one of the 'two founding peoples of Canada'. This is why they must be considered as a national minority of French Canadians. However, the French Canadian nation no longer exists, for it has been replaced by a cultural Acadian nation within the province of New Brunswick and by a Quebec nation within Quebec. And so the French Canadian founding people no longer exists, for it has paved the way to new forms of national consciousness emerging within New Brunswick and Quebec. Be that as it may, French Canadians living outside Quebec form a national minority that must be respected as such.

Now since the francophones who are living inside Quebec form a majority, and since they are also the majority of those individuals who, around the world, share the same language, history and culture, they are what I call a 'national majority'. So the Quebec nation can be understood as a political community, containing a national majority of French Quebeckers, a national minority of Anglo-Quebeckers and individuals having, for instance, Italian, Jewish, Greek, Portuguese, Haitian, Libanese or Latino-American national origins.

According to that view, we cannot automatically include the members of the eleven Aboriginal nations that we find on the territory of Quebec within the Quebec nation because these groups also contain national majorities. They are part of the Quebec state and Quebec is in that sense a multinational state containing the Quebec nation and the eleven Aboriginal nations (comprising a population of 74,000 individuals). The members of these Aboriginal nations may be described as Quebec citizens in the juridical sense, but they are not part of the Quebec nation as such, for they are part of other nations (ethnic, sociopolitical or diaspora nations). These eleven nations might eventually be part of a Quebec 'nation' understood in the civic sense, if Quebec ever becomes a sovereign state, but they would still be distinct nations (within an encompassing nation).

The same remarks apply to the Quebec nation within Canada. It is part of a larger political community, but it constitutes a distinct nation. It can be treated as part of the Canadian nation only if we use the word in a civic sense, but it still constitutes a distinct nation in the sociopolitical sense. Canada cannot be understood as a sociopolitical nation containing

a national majority of Canadians and a national minority of Quebeckers, for Quebeckers are not a national minority at all, in the strict sense of being 'the extension of a neighbouring nation'. They are perhaps a 'national minority' only in the sense of being a minority nation within Canada.

The problem with that conception is that Anglo-Quebeckers become part of the Quebec nation. Indeed, according to that view, Anglo-Quebeckers are described as full active members and as equal citizens within the Quebec nation. Some Anglo-Quebeckers might be shocked by such an inclusive account, but I believe that this is largely due to misunderstandings.

Let me try to remove some of these misunderstandings. The view of an inclusive Quebec nation in which Anglo-Quebeckers would participate does not entail that they should subscribe to the sovereignty of Quebec. Of course, one must not ignore the fact that the self-exclusion of many English Quebeckers can be motivated partly by such political reasons. They do not want to recognise the existence of a Quebec nation including all Quebec citizens because this would, according to them, give fuel to the sovereignist option. If this is their worry, then it should not have a baring on the main issue we are now raising. Questions of national identity must be disentangled from political questions. One need not be a sovereignist in order to be part of the Quebec sociopolitical nation.

Another reason is that they might wrongly be led to think that they have to choose between being part of the Quebec nation and being part of the Canadian nation. But under the present approach, it is perfectly coherent to be part of a nation within a nation. And so Anglo-Quebeckers can be part of a Quebec nation within the Canadian nation understood in the civic sense, just like all French Quebeckers. It is also compatible with the fact that their most important allegiance would be to the Canadian nation. There is no reason to object to having simultaneously different national affiliations.

Moreover, the inclusion of Anglo-Quebeckers within the Quebec sociopolitical nation is compatible with having the status of a national minority within the Quebec nation. As a minority extension on the territory of Quebec of a national majority of English Canadians, English Quebeckers form a national minority. Quebeckers as a whole should respect these special ties that Anglo-Quebeckers entertain towards the language and culture of English Canada.

Sovereignists, by the way, are now even willing to move a step further. They propose a political partnership with Canada so that, among other things, English Quebeckers could keep a strong political link with Canada, even if Quebec becomes sovereign. We could also imagine the possibility of keeping a dual citizenship after sovereignty. This would be possible since Canada already accepts dual citizenship. If Quebec adopts the same policy, then nothing prevents Quebeckers from asking for dual citizenship. We could finally also imagine the creation of a citizenship of the union in the

event of sovereignty. So whether Quebec becomes sovereign or not, Anglo-Quebeckers would not lose their identity within Quebec.

But what do we require from Anglo-Quebeckers when we are suggesting that they are part of the Quebec nation? We ask them to accept the fact that they belong to a political community containing a national majority of individuals having a specific language, history and culture. It means also that they should accept French as a common public language and accept the institutions of Quebec as providing the common public culture for all Quebeckers. But these requirements must be accepted whether Quebec becomes sovereign or not.

So why should some Anglo-Quebeckers object to being included in the Quebec nation? It could be because they wrongly perceive Quebec nationalism as ethnic. If so, their self-exclusion cannot be accepted as such, because it violates the principle of tolerance. It is certainly crucial to respect the self-representations of English Quebeckers, but not if their own self-representation presupposes a view of the Quebec nation which violates the self-representation entertained by the majority of the population. Indeed, why should we be tolerant toward a self-representation which offends the self-representation of the majority by describing the Quebec nation as ethnolinguistic? If they apply a principle of tolerance, those English Quebeckers should respect the self-representations of the majority of Quebeckers. Most Quebeckers happen to perceive themselves as members of a sociopolitical nation. If English Quebeckers respect that, then they should perhaps modify their initial judgement. So even if I said that we should in general be tolerant towards different self-representations, I feel unable to accept the claim held by some English Quebeckers that they do not belong to the *ethnic or cultural nation* of Quebec, and the reason, to repeat, is that this judgement already reflects a failure to apply a principle of tolerance towards the self-representation of Quebeckers in general.

But does it mean that I am ignoring the self-representation of English Quebeckers? On the contrary, we must be respectful of their self-representation, but this self-representation can only be measured by objective criteria. Those members of the Quebec political community who are Canadian citizens and who have decided to reside in Quebec have become citizens of Quebec in the juridical sense. In addition to that, if they all participate within the political community and want to be recognised as full Quebec citizens, this serves as an objective criterion for determining that they represent themselves as part of the Quebec nation. As full participants in Quebec society, they become full 'citizens' in the political sense of the word, and this is all we need in order to be able to treat them as members of the Quebec nation. If someone enters into various associations, pays her taxes, expresses her views, votes during elections and referendums, conforms to the rules and regulations governing Quebec institutions, and asks to be treated as a full Quebec citizen, then that person represents herself as part of the Quebec nation.

Some might object that many Quebeckers see their own nation as including francophones only.[7] It is true that there are still some Quebeckers describing themselves as French Canadians, but all the polls confirm that these are a very small minority within the population. Recent polls have confirmed that the vast majority of Quebeckers (77 per cent) admit the existence of a Quebec people.[8] Of course, there are also French Quebeckers who are tempted to endorse a cultural view of the Quebec nation, but this is because they are rightly reluctant to accept a civic account based only on citizenship. This by the way reveals more than anything else the adequacy of the sociopolitical account for the Quebec people. Quebeckers wish to embrace an inclusive conception of their nation, but they also believe that there would not be a Quebec nation if it were not for the French national majority. But it is precisely this twofold dimension which is captured by the sociopolitical account of the nation.

Other French Quebeckers are reluctant to include English Quebeckers, but it is because they believe that English Quebeckers want to exclude themselves from the nation. In other words, many French and English Quebeckers express their desire for inclusion into a single society, but both believe that this desire is not shared by the other group. We need not avoid facing these mutual exclusions, for they do not constitute a counter-example to the claims that I am making. On the contrary, they reveal that there is a desire for inclusion on both sides. Since the self-representation of Quebeckers not only involves a description of what they are but also an expression of what they want to be, and since their desire is to remain an open society, the national consciousness of Quebeckers is thus slowly turning the Quebec people into a sociopolitical nation.

Some argue that Quebeckers are committed to a form of cultural nationalism because the main arguments of nationalists have been based upon the protection of language and culture and based upon a particular historical argument concerning the existence of two founding peoples. Now it is true that Quebec nationalism has always involved the defence of French language, the promotion of Quebec culture and the use of such an historical argument. But this should not be seen as favouring one particular group over the others within Quebec society, for French is now the common public language of all Quebeckers and the Quebec culture is nothing over and above common public institutions (government, laws, system of education, libraries, museums, television, newspapers, radios, etc.) belonging to all Quebeckers. To use Will Kymlicka's happy phrase, it is a 'societal culture' understood as a 'structure of culture in a context of choice' and it should not be confined to the particular 'character of culture' held by a certain group during a certain period of time (Kymlicka 1995: 76–9, 101–5). Finally, the history of Francophones must be at the heart of the common public history shared by all Quebec citizens.

Some English Quebeckers reject an allegiance to the Quebec nation because they cannot imagine having multiple identities. But why not be part

of a Quebec nation (in my sociopolitical sense) within a Canadian nation (in the civic sense)? French Quebeckers have accepted that idea since the very beginning of the federation. If they are now increasingly favourable to sovereignty, it is because Canadians do not accept to recognise one of their two national identities, namely their allegiance to the Quebec nation.

A nation within a nation

So we have, on the one hand, a civic conception of the Canadian nation, held by most Canadians, and a sociopolitical conception of the Quebec nation, held by most Quebeckers. As I said, I have ignored for the sake of simplicity the Acadian nation which is more like a purely cultural nation and the sixty or eighty Aboriginal nations which can sometimes be identified as ethnic nations, sometimes as diaspora nations and sometimes as sociopolitical nations.

We must try to find a way of coping with this complex reality and show how these two different nations (the Quebec nation and the Canadian nation) could live in harmony. In my view, the only way is to defend a basic principle of tolerance. We must respect the self-representations of others. For the minority nation of Quebeckers, this could mean that they have to accept in principle to be part of a civic Canadian nation. They must, in principle, accept their plural identity as Quebeckers and Canadians. And for Canadians, it could mean that they should accept the existence of a Quebec sociopolitical nation within the Canadian nation. In other words, we should accept an idea similar to the one that was once put forward by Lester B. Pearson and according to which Quebec constitutes a nation within a nation.[9]

Some will argue that it is not possible for a civic Canadian nationalist to recognise the existence of many different nations within Canada. The reason is apparently that a civic nationalist sees the nation from an individualistic perspective. The civic nation is nothing more than a community of individual citizens, and therefore it looks as though the civic nationalist must be an ethical individualist. Consequently, for anyone who holds such a conception, there appears to be no room for the recognition of collective rights for minority groups, and so no room for accomodating a Quebec nation within Canada. However, I do not think that this objection is sound. One must not confuse the civic account with ethical individualism. It is possible to be a civic nationalist and to recognise at the same time the existence of a nation within the civic nation. It is true that when the perspective is that of the civic account, the components of the nation are the individual citizens and nothing else. This remains true under the proposed account. But even if the civic account is one in which the main participants are individuals, it need not be committed to ethical individualism, and the reason is that the civic perspective is not the unique perspective available. If

we reject ethical individualism, i.e. the view that the individual must under all circumstances have an absolute priority over the group, and if we no longer believe that the civic perspective about the nation is the only good perspective, it then becomes possible to recognise the collective rights of a nation within the civic nation.

By requiring a political recognition of the Quebec sociopolitical nation within the civic nation, I am thus not asking Canadians to abandon their civic account. I am simply asking them to apply a principle of tolerance. Of course, if civic Canadian nationalists were to accept the existence of a Quebec nation within their nation, they would have to recognise collective rights for that nation. The Quebec nation would enter the public space and this seems, first, to be contradicting the very essence of the civic account. But the recognition of the Quebec nation is not meant to be interpreted as an amendment to their civic account, but rather as an application of a principle of tolerance. When we correctly understand and apply a principle of tolerance in these matters, we come to realise that there is nothing preventing the civic nationalists from recognising different nations within the civic nation. The tolerant civic Canadian nationalist may accomodate the Quebec nation, because she need not be an ethical individualist.

A renewed social contract between nations

I now turn to more concrete matters. I shall wonder what it would mean for Canadians to accept a Quebec nation. I shall list what is often described as the main traditional demands of Quebeckers. All of these demands presuppose that there is a Quebec people. What would it mean for Canada to recognize the existence of a Quebec people?

(i) It would mean, first, accepting formally to recognise its existence in the Constitution. The Aboriginal peoples are recognised in provisions 25 and 35 of the 1982 constitution, and there is no reason why Canadians should resist amending the constitution in a way that would allow for a formal recognition of the Quebec people.[10]

(ii) Canadians would also have to accept that the principle of equality of status between the provinces cannot be applied to Quebec. If national recognition is to mean anything, there should be a special status given to the province of Quebec within the federation.

(iii) This would in turn entail an acceptance of a general principle of asymmetry in the distribution of powers. Some powers could be offered to the Quebec government without having to offer them to the nine other provinces. In practice, there is already a certain asymmetry involved. Quebec is the only province that has its own income tax, its own civil code, its linguistic laws, and a certain control over immigration policies. The idea is now to accept such kind of asymmetry as a

matter of principle and to increase it in order to meet Quebec's traditional demands.

(iv) There should also be a formal recognition that the Quebec government has the responsibility to protect and promote the French language in Quebec, as long as it is done in harmony with the requirement to protect the individual rights of all citizens and the collective rights of the Anglophone community within Quebec. The linguistic laws of the Quebec government have constantly been under attack, and a formal recognition of Quebec's distinctly French society should for that reason be entrenched in the constitution.

(v) The Quebec government should be the only government responsible for matters related to culture and telecommunications on Quebec's territory. In other words, Quebec should be sovereign in matters related to culture. There should be a recognition of the fact that there is a common public culture in Quebec which is very different from the common public culture in the rest of Canada. The multiculturalism policy of the federal government should be amended so that it becomes clear that the protection and promotion of the language and culture of immigrants has to go hand-in-hand with their linguistic and cultural integration into one of the two welcoming national communities.

(vi) There should also be a limitation in the federal government's spending power, which has constantly been a way to intrude in provincial jurisdictions such as education and health programmes. Even if, according to the constitution of 1867, some jurisdictions entirely belong to the provinces, the federal government has always used its spending power in order to increase its presence in provincial affairs. It is only natural for a people to be able to conduct its own policies in matters related to education, health and social welfare, and this is why Quebeckers have always required that the federal government should not use its spending power in order to intervene into those jurisdictions.

(vii) Quebec should have a veto over any modification to the constitution that concerns it. There should also be a formal opting out clause allowing financial compensation on any new programme implemented by the federal government if the Quebec government wants to be the one applying such a policy.

(viii) A political recognition of Quebec as a nation must also go hand-in-hand with the recognition that Quebec has a special responsibility towards its national economy. Therefore, Quebec should be afforded all the powers related to unemployment insurance in addition to those of manpower training.

(ix) Quebec should have the power to appoint three of the nine judges in the Supreme Court. A true political recognition of the existence of a Quebec people should go hand-in-hand with an appropriate representation. By allowing appointments to be made by Quebec at the level of

the Supreme Court, Canada would be showing that it is taking very seriously the fair representation of Quebec within the Canadian constitutional order.

(x) Quebec should be allowed to increase its presence on the international scene.

These are ten principles that would reflect the multinational character of Canada within Canadian institutions, as far as Quebec is concerned. In order to do the same for the Aboriginal populations of Canada, the federal government should apply the main recommendations contained in the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples. Canada would then not only be a *de facto* multination state. By applying these measures, it would truly become a *de jure* multination state. And there is no reason to think that a true multinational Canada is impossible.

Why sovereignty?

I have now arrived at my third and final theme, which concerns the sovereignist option. From the very beginning of the federation, Quebeckers have accepted the fact that they were a nation within a nation (or a nation within a multination state). They have lived the experience of the multination state almost on a daily basis. They have accepted their multiple identities, as 'French Canadians' or Quebeckers, and as Canadians. But Canadians have always refused to recognise the existence of a Quebec people or nation within Canada, and after the departure of Lester B. Pearson, they have begun to make this rejection more and more explicit.

In order to prove my point on these matters, let me provide a rough picture of recent Canadian history. The transformation of a French-Canadian nationalism into a Quebec nationalism took place during the 1960s. One result of this process was a series of platforms adopted by various Quebec governments. A few examples of these are the 1962 Lesage government's request that Quebec be granted special status; the position of the Daniel Johnson *Union nationale* government in 1966, based on the principle of 'equality or independence'; the 1967 position of the Liberal Party, which proposed a framework between 'Associated states'; and the position of the 1970 Robert Bourassa Liberal government (restated in 1973 and 1976) which requested that Quebec be granted a 'distinct society' status. All of these repeated requests for more political autonomy met with failure during constitutional negotiations and commissions of inquiry. Let me mention some of those: Quebec's rejection of the Fulton-Favreau 1964 proposal regarding the constitutional amending formula (which granted a veto to all the provinces); the rejection of the report issued by the 1967 Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (which recognised Canada's bicultural status); the failure of the 1971 Victoria Conference (which did not

propose a sharing of powers compatible with the one proposed by Quebec) and the rejection of the Pepin-Robarts Commission report (which proposed an asymmetrical federalism).

All of these fruitless negotiations led to the election of the (sovereignist) Parti Québécois in 1976, which promised to hold a referendum on Quebec sovereignty. This referendum, which took place in 1980, was to conclude a process of national affirmation that had begun in the 1960s. Its purpose was to give Quebec a mandate to negotiate political sovereignty and an economic association with Canada. A victory for the 'yes' side would give rise to a second referendum in which the Quebec people would be given a chance to ratify such an agreement. This referendum resulted in defeat for the sovereignists, who won 40 per cent of the vote, as opposed to 60 per cent for the supporters of the No side.

The referendum defeat of 1980 was due in part to the promises for change made by the Canadian prime minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Yet these changes did not materialize favourably – in fact, quite to the contrary. In 1981, the federal government went ahead with its plans to patriate the constitution, which was still at that time in England. This patriation essentially enabled Canada to modify all by itself its own constitution. However, patriation took place without reaching a preliminary agreement among the provinces concerning a new sharing of powers between the levels of government, as Quebec had been requesting for many years. The new constitutional law took effect in 1982 despite the fact that the people had not been consulted. In addition, the federal government ignored a nearly unanimous resolution put forward by Quebec's National Assembly which rejected this new constitutional order. Indeed, the new constitutional order incorporated a charter of rights that contained several new clauses severely limiting Quebec's power over matters of language and culture. It was also a document that did not reflect Quebec's interests and answered none of Quebec's historical demands. Finally, it incorporated an amending formula which is unusable in practice. It should be noted that the constitution, which has governed Canada since 1982, was never ratified by the Quebec people or by successive Quebec governments (either federalist or sovereignist), and it has never been signed by Quebec.

Following this patriation, Quebec tried in vain to negotiate constitutional amendments that would enable it to sign the Canadian constitution. It asked Canada to adopt five simple clauses, contained in the Meech Lake Accord, that would fulfill the minimal conditions for Quebec's signature. This attempt at reform failed in 1990, since legislatures of two provinces refused to ratify the accord. The inclusion of Quebec in the constitution was refused despite the fact that its five conditions were minimal in nature, and would have helped partly to repair the damage done by the 1982 show of political force.[11] Symbolically speaking, the most important of these was the clause granting Quebec a 'distinct society' status, and it was this one in particular that Canada refused to accept in 1990.[12]

At that point in time, opinion polls in Quebec indicated that popular support for sovereignty had risen to nearly 65 per cent. Despite its federalist allegiance, the government of Quebec, in power since 1985, felt obliged to form a commission on the political and constitutional future of Quebec – the Bélanger-Campeau Commission – which heard the testimony of people from all walks of life and representatives from a wide spectrum of opinion. In 1991, the commission recommended that the Quebec government begin preparation for a second referendum on sovereignty to be held the following year, if no formal offer was made by Canada. At the very last minute, a Canada-wide referendum on the Charlottetown Accord was proposed. This accord was based on a new constitutional agreement between all the provinces, including the federalists in power in Quebec since 1985.[13] It involved some of the points that were contained in the Meech Lake Accord and some additional considerations concerning decentralisation. The referendum took the place of the one that would have occurred the same day on sovereignty, but it was also voted down (No: 55 per cent Yes: 45 per cent). For Canadians, the defeat of the Charlottetown Accord was still a partial success, since it prevented another referendum on sovereignty.

Between 1980 and 1995, Quebec was thus witness to the illegitimate patriation of the constitution, the imposition of a new constitutional order, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the failure of the Charlottetown Accord. In addition, at the time of the 1993 federal election, the Bloc Québécois, a new federal party working to advance Quebec sovereignty, appeared. The party won 54 out of Quebec's 75 seats in parliament. In the 1994 provincial election, the Parti Québécois regained power in the Quebec National Assembly by promising to hold a referendum on sovereignty the following year. This referendum finally took place in October 1995.

The referendum question of 1995 proposed that Quebec would become politically sovereign after having formally offered to the rest of Canada a political and economic partnership. If the 'yes' side were victorious, the process leading to sovereignty would begin, after allowing one year for an agreement concerning the offer of partnership to be reached with the rest of Canada. This referendum question was in keeping with the wishes of a large number of Quebeckers who wanted to maintain certain political and economic ties with Canada after sovereignty had been attained. Nowadays, complete separation is not desirable, especially when so many close, mutually advantageous economic ties already exist. In addition, a political union is also desirable not only to manage the economic union and the debt, but also for geopolitical reasons, and to accommodate the interests of the English-speaking minority in Quebec and the French-speaking minority in Canada, not to mention the Aboriginal populations who happen to live on both territories.

The referendum took place on 30 October 1995. The results were 50.6 per cent for the No side and 49.4 per cent for the Yes side, with a record voter

turnout of 93.5 per cent. The majority of experts agree that the close result of the referendum proves that this issue is far from being resolved.

On the basis of this short historical description, it is easy to show that Canadians reject the existence of a Quebec people or nation. They have rejected the bicultural aspect of the federation underlined by the Laurendeau/Dunton (or B & B) Commission. They have rejected the cultural sovereignty put forward by the former federalist premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa. They have discarded the asymmetric federalism promoted by the Pepin/Robarts Commission. They patriated the constitution without the consent of Quebeckers and against the will of its national assembly, thereby treating Quebec as a province and not as a nation. They have imposed a new constitutional order which does not recognise the existence of a Quebec people, does not meet the historical demands of Quebec and does not reflect its interests. They have rejected the distinct society clause that was contained in the Meech Lake Accord. They tried to deny the moral right of self-determination to Quebec by putting the matter of a unilateral declaration of independence in the hands of the supreme court (Supreme Court of Canada 1998). With the recent Calgary proposals adopted in 1997, they once again treated Quebec not as a nation but rather as a province equal to all other provinces. Even more recently, the federal government reached an agreement with all provinces except Quebec on principles which recognise Canada's spending power in education, health and social services (Coll 1999).

In other words, the Canadian government is engaged in a process of *nation-building*, developing a single civic identity which obscures the country's multinational character. Of course, the citizens of a multinational state may adopt a common civic identity, but it is also clear that such an identity could only be viable if the existence of the state's various component nations were recognised. Unfortunately, Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, enshrined in the constitution, is based almost solely on individual rights, and makes no mention of social or economic rights, and no mention of the existence of the Quebec people. Canada increasingly denies its multinational character, and is turning itself into a federation of ten provinces with equal administrative status. It is promoting a territorial conception of federalism instead of a multinational conception of federalism. The process of *nation-building* also results in the promotion of a proclaimed 'Canadian cultural diversity', while in actual fact neither the Quebec nation nor the Native nations enjoy any real political recognition, except for the merely symbolic recognition of Native peoples in the 1982 constitution, and for the promotion of French-speaking individuals in the Canadian establishment, as long as they are willing to defend the status quo.

Of course, the Canadian government has implemented a multiculturalism policy, as well as a bilingualism policy which states that the entire country is officially bilingual. However, the multiculturalism policy is based on the

principle that all cultures within Canadian territory are equal as long as they integrate in either two of the linguistic communities (French and English). We should certainly favour the equality of all cultures, but, when this principle is applied to a particular territory, we should, precisely in order to ensure the survival of all cultures, give priority to the existence of welcoming national communities, and not treat welcoming communities as though they were equal to any immigrant communities. This fundamental distinction between cultural minorities and welcoming communities, which is crucial for the defence of the equality of all cultures, is especially important when the country is a multination state and when one of the welcoming national communities, within that state, is in a minority position when compared to the other welcoming communities on the same territory.

Although Canada's multiculturalism policy officially promotes the integration of immigrants into either one of its two official linguistic communities, in practice, most immigrants to Canada integrate into the English-speaking community, and this is true even within Quebec, since there are French and English communities on its territory. The immigrant who arrives in Quebec very often ignores the fact that she is on the territory of a welcoming national community, and she rather sees herself as having the choice between integrating into the English minority or into the French majority, and her impressions are confirmed by the multicultural policy of the federal government. We should perhaps favour a policy of multiculturalism, but it should not be one that ignores the existence of welcoming national communities. In the context of Canadian politics, and given Canada's refusal to recognise the existence of the Quebec nation, a policy of multiculturalism plays against the Quebec nation. Let us not forget that the policy of multiculturalism was implemented by the Trudeau government in 1971 as an answer to the report by the Royal Commission on Bilinguism and Biculturalism. So it was from the very beginning conceived as a way to deny the existence of two welcoming cultural communities within Canada.

As far as bilingualism is concerned, we have to say that it is virtually non-existent outside of Quebec and New Brunswick. The recent statistics coming from the federal government reveal that 'bilingualism is progressing', but the cities where we see such an evolution are those where we find a majority of French-speakers. In short, bilinguism increases within French Canadian communities but not within English Canada. For instance, 40 per cent of the French Canadian population within Ontario declare that their main language at home is now English, and the situation is even worse in other provinces. The Harris government in Ontario has reduced 75 per cent of all services in the only entirely French-speaking hospital of the province, even if there are 500,000 individuals in Ontario whose mother tongue is French. Despite some efforts by the Harris government on education reform (extension of the independent school boards), there are still no uniquely French-speaking universities in Ontario. And despite some extension of

provincial government bilingualism, there is a general backlash within the population against French Canadians which makes it difficult for them to consider maintaining their own language (see Castonguay 1999; Cardinal 1999; Conlogue 1999).

Even if French Quebeckers constitute the majority of the population of Quebec (83 per cent), we now know that by the turn of the century, those whose mother tongue is French will be in a minority position within the island of Montreal. Thus, Canadian bilingualism and multiculturalism policies may appear generous, but in fact they serve specific domestic goals, notably to conceal or overcome the difficulties that arise out of Native and Quebec nationalisms.

We must decry the racist positions adopted toward immigration by some ultranationalist parties in Europe. Canadians and Quebeckers should be proud to be part of one of the countries most open to immigration. In Quebec, for instance, we welcome more than 25,000 immigrants each year within a population of 7 million. Yet this openness must not make us lose sight of the precarious position of North America's French-speaking minority. Canadians want their country to be multicultural, and they vaunt the merits of cultural pluralism, but they do so in such a way that they will not be obliged to acknowledge the existence of several nations within Canada. Their policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism are thus subordinated to a nation-building policy.

The Quebec nation is an open, pluralist and multiethnic society. Most Quebeckers have always accepted cultural diversity and the enrichment that it brings. They have, moreover, long considered it an advantage to identify with both Quebec and Canada, thereby being citizens of a multination state. Consequently, they would have preferred to find a way to have Quebec's specific needs taken into account within the federal system. Canada, however, fails to adequately protect the French language outside Quebec, and refuses to fully recognise the Quebec government's authority and autonomy in matters of language and culture within Quebec's territory. It is also trying to deny that several nations exist within the country. Although Canada is in fact a multination state, Canadians now seek to turn it into a one-nation state. These, then, are the reasons why a growing number of Quebeckers favour political sovereignty.

It is crucial however to understand that Quebeckers do not wish to subscribe to the old view of the nation-state, for they wish to engage in an economic and political partnership with Canada. Just as they tried hard to retain their multiple identities within Canada, they wish to maintain an economic and political union with Canada after sovereignty, in order to deal with the difficulties for Canada and Quebec created by this new political status. They wish to take into account the desire for a common economic and political space shared by all Canadians who fear the dissolution of Canada after sovereignty. They wish to protect and promote the rights of French Canadians within Canada and anglophones within

Quebec. They wish to protect the rights of all Aboriginal populations, and especially those who overlap both territories.

The more the rejection of the Quebec nation becomes explicit, the more Quebeckers will think that the only remaining option is sovereignty, along with an offer for political and economic partnership with Canada. In other words, the rejection of the Quebec nation by Canadians is responsible for the existence of a growing nationalist sentiment among the population. Nationalism does not come out of nowhere. It is induced and fuelled by the crude and cruel reality of exclusion. So if it is not possible to get political recognition as a nation within Canada, then increasingly, Quebeckers will rightly believe that they must achieve such a political recognition by becoming a sovereign state.

Notes

1 See, for instance, Greenfeld (1992). In that book, Greenfeld argues that there are many different sorts of nationalist movements, but she normatively accepts only one point of view. She endorses what she calls the civic/individualist model of nationalism expounded in Great Britain and in the USA.

2 A group which would form a majority of individuals on a given territory could fail to constitute a 'national majority' in at least two important senses. First, the largest concentration in the world of a group of individuals with the same language, culture and history could still be a numerical minority when compared to the sum of all the smaller groups sharing the same features in the remaining parts of the globe. This is now presumably the case with the Jewish population. Although the largest Jewish population is in Israel, a majority of Jews are a diaspora. Second, and perhaps more controversial, the group could fail to constitute a national majority for the following reason. Even if it is a majority on its own territory, and even if nowhere else in the world do we find a similar group of people constituting a majority on a given territory, there could be a larger sample sharing the same language, culture and history on some other territory, but constituting a minority on that other territory. An example of that could once again be the Jewish population which could have been at one time larger within Russia than within the Jewish population of Israel. To recapitulate, in order to become a sociopolitical nation, the political community must contain a national community which is both a majority on a formally recognised territory and an absolute majority of the people sharing the same language, culture and history around the world. As a final remark, let me add that there is also a trivial way of failing to be a majority on the territory that I did not mention yet. It is when the political community contains only the members of the national majority, and no historical minority or immigrants (for example the Inuits of Nunavik). However, I do not consider this case as one which would force us to deny the existence of a national majority on the territory.

3 I develop these ideas in Seymour (1999).

4 Kymlicka espouses such a subjective account. Nations must be protected because they are primary goods. See, for instance, Kymlicka (1995: 86).

5 For a critical examination, see Kymlicka (1995: 121–3).

6 See, for instance, the *Common Declaration* initiated by the group Dialogue Quebec-Canada and signed by 100 Canadian intellectuals. In that document, Canada as a whole is described as a nation. Philip Resnick himself is among those who signed the document. It is available on the web site of the Intellectuals for Sovereignty. See http://www.cam.org/~parsouv/ipso/index.html.

7 There is a vast literature in English describing Quebeckers with the French word 'Québécois'.

This reveals the natural inclination of many to describe Quebec in cultural terms and not as sociopolitical nation. See, for instance, Kymlicka (1995: 12, 19, 28–29), etc.

8 This poll was conducted in April 1999 by Angus Reid for the 'Citizens of the nation', a group led by Quebec lawyer Guy Bertrand.

9 For an account centred on Pearson's idea of a nation within a nation and which denounces the policies of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, see Kenneth McRoberts (1997).

10 There are many authors arguing for a reform based on a multinational federation, as opposed to a territorial federation. See Resnick (1991, 1994), Kymlicka (1998a, 1998b), McRoberts (1997), Taylor (1993), Conway (1992).

11 Briefly, the five conditions were: (1) recognition of Quebec as a 'distinct society'; (2) the right to withdrawal from all programmes (not only those related to culture and education), with financial compensation, along with the right to veto all constitutional changes affecting Quebec's powers; (3) a restriction on federal spending power; (4) the right for Quebec to nominate three of the nine Supreme Court judges; (5) the ratification of the Cullen-Couture agreement which would grant Quebec a certain amount of autonomy in immigration matters.

12 For a short opiniated history of the Meech Lake Accord, see Cohen (1990).

13 For a reappraisal of the Charlottetown Accord, see McRoberts and Monahan (1993); see also Cook (1994).

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