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Travelling Concepts

Negotiating Diversity
in Canada and Europe

With a Foreword by Bhikhu Parekh



VS VERLAG FÜR SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN

Defining the Quebec Nation: Ten Years of Debates and an Emerging Consensus

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Defining the nation in Quebec has been the subject of heated debates since the 1990s. History will certainly see this period as politically interesting as lively debates have taken place to self-define Quebec society. The national question took a new turn when the Bourassa Government negotiated the Meech Lake Accord (rejected in 1990) wherein Quebec was referred to as a 'distinct society.' Later - and more so after the 1995 Referendum - the question of Quebec's nationhood came once again to the forefront. Jacques Parizeau's reference to "money and some ethnic votes"¹ as the main causes of the defeat of the sovereigntists' option and his use of "we, Quebecers" raised many questions on the night of October 30th 1995. Who exactly were the 'we' so often used not only by the Parti Québécois but also in many milieus of the Quebec society?

The present interest in defining the Quebec nation is linked to endogenous social and cultural changes that took place not only in Quebec, but also in English Canada - where a 'Canadian nation' building is also ongoing - and in French Canada outside Quebec where endogenous changes were also at work.² It is Quebec's language legislation voted in the 1970s and other measures taken to integrate immigrants into the French-speaking majority that implied a process of 'refounding' the nation. Immigration has made Quebec schools more ethnically and religiously diverse (especially in the Montreal area), a phenomenon that incurred the restructuring of the system on a linguistic rather than a religious basis in the 1990s. Compared to Canada, Quebec has only lately begun to question its new identity which takes into account immigration and cultural diversity.

There are strong disagreements in the very definition of the concepts of 'nation' and 'national identities' not only in Quebec but elsewhere in the world. Changes on the international scene, globalization and free-trade, the development of the European Union towards a greater integration of its composing na-

¹ Contrary to what has been written repeatedly in the press, Jacques Parizeau actually said "money and some ethnic votes" and not "money and *the* ethnic vote". The meaning of each of these expressions is radically different (See: http://www.uni.ca/argent_ethniques.html). (accessed August 2009).

² Simon Langlois, "Canadian Identity: A Francophone Perspective," in *Encyclopedia of Canada's People*, ed. P. Robert Magocsi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 323-329.

tions, the end of the communist regimes, and ethnic confrontations as seen in such places as ex-Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union or in Africa have also brought about a world-wide debate on the question of nationhood, cultural diversity and multiculturalism, and sovereignty of nations. Nations today have many shapes and sizes and it has become perilous, if not impossible, to classify them.

Today there is a wide consensus in Quebec on the meaning of the *nation québécoise*. It is seen as a nation that is being rebuilt on new foundations, in the process of a 'refoundation', to refer to the expression used by Fernand Dumont. Charles Taylor describes the same idea when he says that, from time to time, a nation has to realize that the pillars on which it stands have changed. Because nation building is a work in progress it is forever open to debate. When referring to Quebecers, Quebec's elder population primarily refer to the French-Canadians; for others, the term also includes immigrants and the English-speaking community seen as a national minority inside the society.³ The use of the word *Québécois* – 'Quebeckers' in English – became popular as early as the 1960s, but it is only in the mid 1970s that it acquired a wider and more inclusive meaning. A similar change occurred during the 1960s for the word 'Canadians' which, after the recognition of multiculturalism in lieu of biculturalism, replaced the hyphenated terms of 'English-Canadians' and 'French-Canadians.'

The average citizen may believe that these debates only cause heated political argument, incomprehensible to some and useless to others. But, in a democratic society, such debates are essential to social cohesion which, in turn, assures the adoption of public policies that are in tune with today's population.

In this presentation, I intend to outline the main debates on the definition of the nation that took place in Quebec during the 1990s and 2000s. I will consider the consensual elements and examine their pros and cons. I will then look at a few pending questions such as the status of the English-speaking community and that of the Québec's Amerindians.

The Refoundation of the nation

In a context of re-assessing past traditions, charters of rights and freedoms, and diversity of belongings and origins, the question of symbolic integration has become important in contemporary societies characterized by relativism and pluralism.⁴ One should not believe that identity is the only important issue; other

³ Gary Caldwell and Eric Wadell, *Les anglophones du Québec: de majoritaires à minoritaires* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1982).

⁴ Gary Caldwell, "Immigration et nécessité d'une culture publique commune," *L'Action nationale*, 78.8 (1988): 705-711; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority*

social and economic problems are also at stake as they, too, concern collective identity. The opening of borders affects national identity as does legislation that changes relations between the national components inside the state: Canada's 1968 *Official Languages Law*, Quebec's 1978 *Charter of the French Language*, known as *Bill 101*, and the 1957 *American Civil Rights Act* are but a few examples. This type of legislation deeply changes every day life, that of the majority as well as that of the minority, and redefines social relationships as well as the social representation of themselves.

Before touching on the subject of Quebec's nationhood, two observations: firstly on the question of social evolution, secondly on the question of social construction or interpretation. Most scholars share Guy Rocher's view that "One must not consider a nation as an absolute and universal immovable concept."⁵ Each nation has its own history and particularities that transform it over time. Therefore when studying a nation, one must take into account the changes that have occurred from one period to another. Significant changes indicate that there has also been a fundamental change in the very foundations of the nation. Fernand Dumont claimed – in an interview that was published posthumously – that: "States or nations are periodically refounded on new bases, and, incidentally, [in Quebec] it has become necessary to repeat the process, as we did in 1850."⁶ Gérard Bouchard has adopted an identical perspective in his essay on the nation in Quebec.⁷ We will look at his essay in detail later but, for the moment, let us consider two examples: Canada and the United States.

The Canadian Confederation united four British colonies and came into being in 1867 but, for French-Canadians, two linguistic groups, the aboriginal communities having no say in the matter at the time, founded the country. Since then millions of immigrants have settled in Canada – between 1945 and 2000 the number of immigrants is equal to that of a country the size of Austria – and First Nations are now seen as an integral part of the country. From these important changes in Canada's – and Quebec's – social structure stems a necessary rebuilding process, a refoundation process, and the obligation to re-examine the national question.

Groups (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Denise Helly, "Les transformations de l'idée de nation," in *La nation dans tous ses états*, eds., Gérard Bouchard and Yvan Lamonde (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 311-336; Denise Helly, "Minorités ethniques et nationales: les débats sur le pluralisme culturel," *L'Année sociologique, Voies nouvelles de la sociologie* (special edition, M. Forsé and S. Langlois, eds.) 52.1 (2002): 147-181.

⁵ Guy Rocher, "Des intellectuels à la recherche d'une nation québécoise," in *Penser la nation québécoise*, ed. Michel Venne (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2000), 283-296. 289.

⁶ Fernand Dumont, *Un témoin de l'homme. Entretiens* (Montréal, L'Hexagone, 2000), 56.

⁷ Gérard Bouchard, *La nation québécoise au futur et au passé* (Montréal: VLB, 1999).

Such a process has also been ongoing in the United States ever since the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth in 1620. Michael Lind identifies four different regimes: 1) English-America, 2) European-America, 3) multicultural America, and 4) transracial cultural⁸ America which is in the process of coming of age at the turn of the 21st Century. According to Lind, this last emerging regime will be able to counter what he considers the negative effects of multiculturalism prevalent in Canada. He states that, finally the United States can claim to be a monocultural ethnic nation. "If ethnicity can be defined by language and culture, there is a multiracial and a multireligious but unicultural American ethnic nation. We might speak without contradiction, of the ethnic American".⁹ His way of seeing things is quite surprising as it is contrary to most previous definitions of the United States. According to Lind, the English language is the first and foremost cultural element; popular culture, traditions, history, shared values, and a sense of belonging to a unique economic and social system are secondary elements. The nation's culture has been built over the years and has integrated several cultural elements taken from the various groups – including Blacks and Hispanics – that have shaped today's America; it is no longer the white Anglo-Saxon protestant society of the Founding Fathers. The cultural majority in America is larger than the white racial majority, he stated. If he is correct, the American example proves that a multicultural and diversified nation can also become a unified cultural nation. The idea that the United States forms but one nation is widespread amongst its political analysts¹⁰ even if, in other countries, it is perceived as being heterogeneous.

There are many types of nations in the world. Each has its own particularities which stem not only from its past but also from its relations to its neighbours. For example, Scotland is proud of its sport teams that compete on an international level, it has its own symbols on currencies and is recognized as one of the nations that form Great Britain, and Scotland has recently elected its own Parliament, but with limited powers. The situation is quite different in Quebec; on the one hand it is not officially recognized as a nation within Canada but, on the other hand, its well established Parliament controls many political levers. Some scholars upheld that there is a difference between Western and Eastern nationalisms, the first gives rise to democratic, rational, and liberal entities, the second, to non-democratic, racist, and reactionary entities.¹¹

⁸ Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation. The New Nationalism and the Next American Revolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

⁹ *Ibid.* 274.

¹⁰ See John A. Hall and Charles Lindholm, *Is America Breaking Apart?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

¹¹ Miroslav Hroch, "Historical Aspects of Nationalism: the West," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, dir. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Bates (New York: Elsevier,

As for the question of social construction or interpretation, particularly important in periods of national refoundation is the fact that a nation can be perceived in many ways and, consequently, there can be several conflicting interpretations. Fernand Dumont has discussed this topic at length in his works and has defined the nation as a reference entity – a national reference – an interpretation that is very close to that of Benedict Anderson who sees the nation as an imagined community. Over the years, Dumont mapped out ways of building national reference claiming that history, literature, and ideologies – and today one might add the media – contribute to build a common representation of a community. They are shared markers of a particular universe that are specific to each nation. These references belong to the whole of a particular society, they do not only concern one or several individuals as do other markers such as age, gender, profession, and social class.¹² A nation is more than the sum of its differences and individual identities, a nation integrates horizontally in spite of its many vertical divisions like social classes or internal divisions along gender or regions.¹³

A cultural versus a civic nation: an outdated debate

If at first glance there appears to be several ways of defining a nation, essentially there are only two, all others being variations on the same themes.¹⁴

The first type of nation is often seen as cultural, that is defined by its cultural aspects: generally a common origin, ethnic background, and way of living. From this perspective the nation's territory does not necessarily match that of the state as it does in Japan for example. At the turn of the 20th Century, the heart of French Canada was Quebec but it had *offspring* not only in Ontario, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, but also in New England.¹⁵ French Canada was then perceived as a cultural nation, defined as an historical community, the latter seeming more accurate as it avoids confusion with what is known as an "ethnic nation."¹⁶

2001), 10357-10365; L. L. Snyder, *The Meaning of Nationalism* (New Brunswick (NJ): Rutgers University Press, 1954).

¹² For the Study of the relation between gender and nation, see Diane Lamoureux, *L'Amère patrie. Entre féminisme et nationalisme* (Montréal: Editions du Remue Ménage, 2001).

¹³ Philippe Gerrans, "La localisation du nationalisme," in *Les nationalismes*, ed. Bernard Baertschi and Kevin Mulligan (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002), 13-28.

¹⁴ Bernard Baertschi and Kevin Mulligan, eds., *Les nationalismes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002).

¹⁵ Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre* (Québec: Septentrion, 2001).

¹⁶ Yvan Lamonde, *Allégeances et dépendances. L'histoire d'une ambivalence identitaire* (Québec: Nota bene, 2001).

The second type of nation – the political nation – is one based on citizenship and civil rights. This type is the most common and we will return to this aspect further on. Be it a cultural or a political nation, the difference is purely theoretical as no nation corresponds exactly to one model or the other. Nations are complex and varied entities. To compare an ethnic nation and a civic nation as if they were two separate social entities is irrelevant because each corresponds to Weber's ideal types or models that then serve as a framework to study specific nations.¹⁷ Let us now apply these two basic models to Quebec.

Quebec as an historical nation

Fernand Dumont, a well-known sociologist who passed away in 1996, published many books and articles on the subject of Quebec's nationhood.¹⁸ He was very influential in his time but, since the 1990s, his thoughts have been criticized, often quite harshly. He seems to have sometimes been misunderstood and, even today, his theories are the subject of many debates amongst Quebec's scholars and intellectuals.¹⁹

But what remains of Dumont's thinking today?

Dumont approached nationhood from three interrelated perspectives that have not always been differentiated by his critics: theoretical, historical, and normative. His theoretical perspective is still valid, but his definition of Quebec as an historical entity must be reviewed because, like all contemporary societies, Quebec has changed. For Dumont nations are built on their past and collective mem-

¹⁷ Gilles Bourque, "Le discours sur la nation," *Recherches sociographiques* 38.3 (1997): 532-536; Gilles Bourque, "Entre nation et société," in *Penser la nation québécoise*, ed. Michel Venne Coll.: Débats (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2000), 165-188; Kai Nielson, "Un nationalisme culturel, ni ethnique ni civique" in *Le pays de tous les Québécois. Diversité culturelle et souveraineté*, ed. Michel Sarra-Bournet (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 1998), 143-159.

¹⁸ Fernand Harvey, "Construire la référence : Québec et le Canada français selon Fernand Dumont," in *Valeurs et société. Références politiques et références culturelles au Canada*, ed. Claude Sorbets and Jean-Pierre Augustin (Bordeaux: Maison des sciences de l'Homme de l'Aquitaine, 2001), 151-168; Jean-Philippe Warren, "L'état de la nation," *Bulletin d'histoire politique. Présence et pertinence de Fernand Dumont* 9.1 (2000): 60-70; Serge Cantin, "Nation et mémoire chez Fernand Dumont. Pour répondre à Gérard Bouchard," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* Special edition: *Présence et pertinence de Fernand Dumont* 9.1 (2000): 40-59.

¹⁹ Guy Laforest, "Identité et pluralisme libéral au Québec," in *Identité et cultures nationales. L'Amérique française en mutation*, dir. Simon Langlois. Coll. Culture française d'Amérique (Sainte-Foy: Les presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 313-327; Geneviève Mathieu, *Qui est Québécois? Synthèse du débat sur la redéfinition de la nation* (Montréal: VLB éditeur; Harvey, 2001); Jacques Beauchemin, "Le sujet politique québécois: l'indicible 'nous'," in *Repères en mutation. Identité et citoyenneté dans le Québec contemporain*, ed. Jocelyn Maclure and Alain-G. Gagnon. Coll.: Débats (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2001), 205-225.

ory.²⁰ Never does he speak of Quebec as a civic or an ethnic nation – that is a nation based on rights or a common culture – which he saw as being too abstract in the first case and of another nature in the second case. Dumont's nation was first and foremost an *historical community*.

A nation is a community that has a common historical legacy and way of living. Its resulting collective points of reference are: language, religion, judicial institutions, various organisations, and sometimes a common legal status. The criteria may vary from one nation to another and it is therefore impossible to form a theory that would be applicable to every case.²¹

A nation is first and foremost a community that has the same historical legacy [...] a community that has built its own identity on the past and where collective memory plays the most important role.²²

Most scholars who have written on nationhood agree that collective memory is an important part of nation building, but *who's* memory is the question. Gérard Bouchard suggests that there must be a new debate on the subject of Quebec's collective memory so as to integrate that of the aboriginals and recent immigrants.²³ These ideas have been discussed and criticized.²⁴ This debate raised new issues that have yet to be thoroughly examined by historians.

A second dimension of Dumont's thought refers to the belief in a collective destiny, the support of a common project. For him, collective memory and the capacity to plan a common future are two facets of the nation. Most important, a nation is characterized by its capacity to integrate newcomers: "An original culture is not one that remains in its past, but one that has a good capacity of integrating new elements."²⁵ Renan defined an 'historical community' by referring to the two main aspects of a nation: "To have done great things together and to want to continue doing great things together."

In this perspective, how can one integrate the contribution of strangers and immigrants? In *Raisons communes*, Dumont turns to the notion of 'cultural convergence,' a conceptual approach that was quite popular in the political arena towards the end of the 1980s but that was quickly put aside because of its numerous presuppositions and postulates. Because an historical community also projects into the future it is able to integrate the input of newcomers and, by convergence, acquire common cultural references. For Dumont, abstract princi-

²⁰ Fernand Dumont, *Genèse de la société québécoise* (Montréal: Boréal, 1992).

²¹ Fernand Dumont, *Raisons communes* (Montréal: Boréal, 1995), 5.

²² Dumont 1995, 56.

²³ Gérard Bouchard, *La nation québécoise au futur et au passé* (Montréal: VLB, 1999).

²⁴ See Cantin 1997.

²⁵ Dumont 1995, 81.

ples such as legislation, individual rights, and political institutions – which are important aspects of a society – are insufficient to build a national community. For Dumont, Gary Caldwell's and Julien Harvey's idea of a common civic culture which allows for a democratic rebuilding of nations is much too abstract a notion on which to build national sentiment. While Dumont saw that historical communities should integrate new elements, he did not realize that by doing so they would be profoundly changed as shown in Michael Lind's *The Next American Nation*.

Employment, community groups, mixed marriages, schooling, social, professional and geographic mobility, and especially the sharing of a common language are all factors that facilitate integration of newcomers and thus the creation of a different entity. But the obligation to share established common cultural references, which is implicit in a culture of convergence, is difficult to uphold nowadays because contemporary societies favour diversity. Immigrants in particular tend to hold on to elements of their past and do not readily accept cultural convergence.

If Dumont's cultural convergence theory has been very much criticized, so has the importance he accorded to historical memory in the building of the Quebec nation. It is as if once Dumont had identified the two main components of the nation – the memory of its past and its projection into the future in building a new national entity – he gave precedence to the memorial aspect and paid little attention to diversity – the main component of its future – which involves the taking into account a significant other. He never directly addressed the place of immigrants in a convergent society – and when he did, his comments were usually vague – and it is precisely this question that makes for today's many debates on his theory of Quebec's nationhood. Some intellectuals have come up with different ways of seeing the nation, many of which are, in the long run, compatible with Dumont's theory. Some new theories complete it while others oppose it.

If Dumont's theory on cultural convergence and the importance of history in the shaping of a nation has been subject to debate, so has his very diagnosis of the Quebec society. Dumont argues that French Canada has never been able to become a nation state and, as part of Canada, had only been able to preserve its cultural specificity inside the Canadian State. He claims that there are three nations in Quebec: a French nation, an English nation, and an Amerindian nation. The terms he used are badly chosen and outdated, they are those of the past and not in tune with neither Canada's nor Quebec's contemporary multicultural societies. Coming from Dumont this seems strange as he was very much aware of the power of words, and had even developed a sociology of interpretation. His choice of words indicates that he did not fully grasp the ongoing rebuilding proc-

ess of the Quebec nation and was therefore unable to use the adequate terms to define the new social reality.

Dumont saw Quebec as a pluri-national state where immigrants should assimilate into one of the two important national communities. His very concept of national communities has been questioned by Gérard Bouchard who says that to see Quebec in terms of national communities is to see it in terms of ethnic entities which, politically speaking is a deadlock.²⁶ Bouchard wonders how one can politically work out a plan that takes into account three composing nations. Is it not bringing home the problems of the Canadian Federation?

Personally I find that the debate over the perception of Dumont's nation as ethnic is rather simplistic and, in part, inaccurate. Dumont's Quebec was an open historical nation because it was able to integrate all the elements of its society. That Dumont did not perceive the consequence or implications of cultural diversity is another matter.

Jacques Beauchemin is another sociologist who picks up on Dumont's theory and clarifies certain aspects that pertain to an historical community.²⁷ He first separates the political project from the political subject. On the one hand he sees that political projects – such as replacing the French-Canadian nation by the Quebec nation in recognition of the presence of immigrants and by francophone communities outside Quebec – are always subject to conflict because the various groups that intervene in the matter have different values and interests to defend. Quebec's project on political sovereignty is the project of a number of French-speaking Quebecers and some immigrants who can be mobilized if necessary.²⁸ We all know that some groups can draw up a common democratic project for the whole society while others aim to favour only part of it. For example, in the United States of the 1960s, there was Martin Luther King, the spokesman for a political group – the Black community – who pushed forward an important political project of equal rights for all Americans, both Black and White, while certain more radical Black leaders, such as Malcolm X, favoured the creation of Black States or measures in favour of Blacks only.

Beauchemin adds that it is also the responsibility of the political subject to set the boundaries of the political project. The political subject can give birth to a political nation with strong cultural and historical foundations while keeping in

²⁶ Bouchard 1999.

²⁷ Jacques Beauchemin, "La communauté de culture comme fondement du sujet politique chez Fernand Dumont," *Bulletin d'histoire politique* Special edition: *Présence et pertinence de Fernand Dumont* 9.1 (2000): 29-39; Jacques Beauchemin 2001; Jacques Beauchemin, *La société des identités, Éthique et politique dans le monde contemporain* (Montréal: Athena, 2007).

²⁸ See Gilles Gangné and Simon Langlois, *Les raisons fortes. Nature et signification de la souveraineté du Québec* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2002).

mind that, periodically, it must be refounded so as to take into account new elements and allow for recognition of diversity.

Quebec's new project, laid out by the historical French-speaking community, is now one that takes into account a renewed political nation and where public affairs are openly discussed.

Quebec as a political nation

In the 1990s, Quebec was referred to as a political nation. The term used was *nation québécoise* and the model was often seen as opposing that of a cultural nation. The notion of *nation québécoise* proved to be an important break in the history of French Canada and epitomized the refounded nation, the building of a new reference, the Quebec society.

In recent studies, scholars generally give three meanings to the concept of 'political nation.' All three favour common citizenship but differ as to the degree of importance accorded to the cultural aspect and the role of collective memory. At one end of the spectrum, a political nation has no cultural content, in such cases it is called a civic nation. At the other end, it coincides with a cultural nation. In between these two points, political nations try to harmonize common citizenship with various cultural and national belongings. Let us now look more closely how the concept of a political nation has been characterized in the past few years in Quebec.

In the 1990s, the concept of civic nation, that is one that is firstly defined by a common citizenship without any reference to individual characteristics such as pertains to ethnicity or culture, was popular. This type of nation is in conformity with Quebec's 1975 and Canada's 1980 *Charters of Human Rights and Freedoms*.²⁹

In 1998, Claude Bariteau thoroughly explained Quebec's emerging civic nation. Drawing from Jürgen Habermas' theory of a common culture which respects the rights of individuals – constitutional patriotism – Bariteau argued that political culture does not have to be in sync with neither the anthropological nor the cultural characteristics of the majority.³⁰ He was very critical of Fernand Dumont's culture of convergence because it favoured the dominant culture but, as is the case in Canada, allowed for the acceptance of collective rights for the English-speaking minorities and aboriginal nations. To cultural convergence Bariteau prefers a political Quebec nation based on the respect of individual

²⁹ Guy Laforest, *Trudeau et la fin d'un rêve canadien* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1992).

³⁰ For more on Habermas see Frédéric Guillaume, *Patriotisme constitutionnel. Sur Jürgen Habermas* (Montréal: Liber, 2001).

democratic rights, with French as the common language and a public sphere which favours procedures over substance. If such was the case, the Quebec nation would avoid associating citizenship and nationality which he sees as two very different notions. The author also favours generosity towards the English-speaking minority and aboriginal peoples rather than including special rights in a written Constitution. To him, a nation that rests on a common political culture would guarantee linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities individual rights to a peaceful coexistence with the majority.

Bariteau's definition has also been criticized. Daniel Salée for example argues that civic nationalism maintains socio-economic inequality because it has its roots in neo-liberalism³¹ and that, if the concept of civic nation has no ethnic factor, it becomes an abstract social entity, a pure product of a philosophical imagination.³² If the concept of civic nation as seen in Habermas' constitutional patriotism perspective is seen as having zero coefficient ethnicity – to use Gérard Bouchard's expression – does it not constitute a very abstract social entity? Can one overlook national sentiment, which must not be taken for nationalism? A political community is not the sum of the individuals it groups together (Jean Léca), nor can it be seen as a series of postal codes (Chantal Hébert).

Bariteau agrees that cultural identity influences political activity but, in a multicultural society, he claims that a political nation can offer common ground. Like Dominique Schnapper, he thinks that citizenship transcends ethnic and community solidarities,³³ but he does not go as far as to say that a political nation can build a new shared collective identity, in the form of a collective 'we' that Jean-Jacques Simard has defined in his numerous studies.³⁴ Bariteau sees Quebec as a political nation that does not yet have the aspects of a cultural nation which is the characteristic of several modern nation-states.

Past public debates often opposed ethnic nation and civil nation but today many say such a debate is artificial. This dichotomy is outdated according to Jacques Beauchemin because ethnic nations can also be democratic and civil and may also include identity issues.³⁵ Guy Rocher speaks of the French-Canadian

³¹ Daniel Salée, "De l'avenir de l'identité québécoise," in Maclure and Gagnon, 2001, 147-164. 150 and 160.

³² Ibid. 147.

³³ Dominique Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

³⁴ Jean-Jacques Simard, "Fragments d'un discours fatigué sur les identités québécoises," *Recherches sociographiques* 21.1/2 (1980): 163-179; Jean-Jacques Simard, "Ou sont passés les Roughmen? Le destin du Québec anglais," *Recherches sociographiques* 24.3 (1983): 391-412; Jean-Jacques Simard, "Ce siècle où le Québec est venu au monde," in *Québec 2000*, ed. Roch Côté (Montréal: Fides, 1999), 18-77.

³⁵ Beauchemin 2000.

nationalism of the first half of the 20th Century³⁶ – often seen as cultural and having to fight to survive – as having, on the contrary, a strong civic component promoting a secession with England, a Canadian identity, the creation of national symbols which would be wholly Canadian, and especially official recognition of the pact signed between two founding peoples. The French-Canadian political subject had a political project for Canada as a whole (and not only for French Canadians) that has never been recognized.

Charles Taylor also claims that because of the hybrid character of democratic societies it is impossible to define nations as purely civic or purely ethnic. Strongly anchored in republican liberalism, one or more ethnic groups form the heart of these societies.³⁷ Gérard Bouchard's position in regard to this debate is twofold: 1) there is an ethnic content in all national identities and this is not incompatible with the judicial presuppositions of a civil nation, and 2) even in nations which are recognised as representative of the civic model (such as France, the United States, and Canada for example), the state remains active in promoting a collective identity, establishing traditions, protecting the language and collective heritage, shaping collective memory, and promoting its national culture.³⁸ In other words, the State plays an important role in nation building, as illustrated in contemporary Canada or in the United States.³⁹

In his works, Charles Taylor distinguishes a cultural nation from a political nation. For him a political nation is more than just a question of citizenship, it is a place where social differences are recognized. This question of recognition is a central one in his works and it has been discussed the world over. In 1992, and again in 1994, Taylor developed a theory that linked the protection of the individual and collective rights of small communities. He was also an advocate of Quebec's specificity which he claimed was founded on: 1) a political ethic based on human rights, equality, and democracy (which is its republican dimension); 2) French as the public language; 3) a certain connection to its historical past.⁴⁰ Taylor adds that, from time to time, a nation must recognize the existence of new pillars, which is similar to Dumont's theory on the refounding of nations. "[T]hey must be carved again, reshaped by the successive generations, beginning by the present one."⁴¹

³⁶ Guy Rocher, "Des intellectuels à la recherche d'une nation québécoise," in *Penser la nation québécoise*, ed. Michel Venne. Coll.: Débat (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2000), 283-296.

³⁷ Charles Taylor, "Nation culturelle, nation politique," in *Penser la nation québécoise*, ed. Michel Venne. Coll. Débats (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2000), 37-48. 38.

³⁸ Bouchard 1999.

³⁹ Laforest 1995.

⁴⁰ Taylor 2000, 41.

⁴¹ Ibid. 45.

Taylor is against independence for Quebec and claims that the minorities do not accept the project of building an independent political entity even if they are invited to do so by the French-speaking majority. Taylor concludes that an all-inclusive political Quebec nation is not yet a reality.⁴² Personally, I find that his appraisal is premature and unjustified for two reasons. Firstly, it is clear that Quebec's linguistic policy has just begun to show its effects on the social integration and the social cohesion of the Quebec society, a fact recognized by Charles Taylor. Secondly, the political project put forth by the new nationalism in Quebec insists on the inclusion of all Quebecers in refounding the nation.

Michel Seymour prefers a much broader political definition of the Quebec nation with references to culture and memory. He claims that the traditional French-Canadian cultural nation has been replaced by a political nation. This political nationalism refers to the nation as a socio-political community. Like Dumont before him, he feels that "the nation does not only depend on the way we see ourselves, but also on what we want to become."⁴³

Because Seymour does not see the nation only as a civic entity, he cannot share Bariteau's view. For Seymour, nation and citizenship are not interchangeable "because people who belong to different nations can share a same civic identity."⁴⁴ This sociopolitical way of seeing the nation implicitly recognises that different entities such as the English-speaking minority in Quebec – whose historical contribution to Quebec society has been important – and immigrants, each with their linguistic and cultural heritage, can be part of a national whole. "The nation in Quebec can therefore be considered as a political community composed of a majority of French-speaking Quebecers, a minority of English-speaking Quebecers, and of individuals whose origins are Italian, Jewish, Greek, Portuguese, Haitian, Lebanese, Latin-American, etc. who generally speak a language other than French or English." Seymour refutes all exclusive civic nationalism that does not take differences into account because recognition of various identities is fundamental in any society. Also, for any nation to exist in the sense that Seymour sees it, it must represent itself as a nation. For example, Ontario exists as a political community but, unlike Quebec, it is not a nation because it does not perceive and does not promote itself as such.⁴⁵

The concept of *nation québécoise* is now an integral part of the public and political discourses. Ideas are now more precise and the debate has progressed.

⁴² Ibid. 48.

⁴³ Michael Seymour, *Le pari de la démesure. L'intransigeance canadienne face au Québec* (Montréal: L'Hexagone, 2001), 27.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 32.

⁴⁵ See Michel Seymour, *De la tolérance à la reconnaissance. Une théorie libérale des droits collectifs* (Montréal: Boréal, 2007).

Today, the nation seen as an historical community does not exclude neither citizenship nor diversity and it respects individual rights. The debate has helped to understand the complexity of a political nation and its necessary relation to memory and culture.⁴⁶

The two dimensions of the refounding process: language and territory

For the past few years the debate on Quebec's nationhood has zeroed in on two principal dimensions: French language and territory. On the one hand, French has become the very symbol of the Quebec nation, it is at the heart of its new collective self-image and its present realities. On the other hand, if traditional French Canada covered a vast territory, today the Quebec nation is confined to its territorial limits which complicate the relations not only with its English-speaking minority but also with the First Nations who live inside its borders. Outside Quebec the French Canadian minorities have also chosen to redefine themselves as communities inside Canada, with the exception of *Acadie* where a unique national sentiment exists. The French speaking communities of Canada are marked by a double refusal. Firstly, they refuse to define themselves by reference to Quebec, that is as *hors-Québec*, and secondly, a more recent phenomenon, they refuse to define themselves as minorities.

A North-American francophonie

Gérard Bouchard has been quite critical of Fernand Dumont, if he agrees with his thoughts about the nation as a construct reference, he does not agree with his way of defining the empirical nation in Quebec. He agrees that the imaginary, symbolic, and memorial aspects are important elements of a national identity but adds that new symbols must be included in the process of nation building. In his book, *La nation québécoise au futur et au passé*, Bouchard favours the introduction of new historical facts and, inevitably, a reinterpretation of the past. He suggests that one could take into account aboriginal history in the process of rebuilding the nation for example.

Recognition and promotion of the French language as the common language of Quebec's civil society are at the heart of the new nation building that would replace the old French-Canadian. To eliminate all reference to ethnic elements – like common ancestors or old stock origin – the Quebec nation must be con-

⁴⁶ Jocelyn Maclure and Alain-G. Gagnon, eds., *Repères en mutation. Identité et citoyenneté dans le Québec contemporain*. Coll.: Débats (Montréal:Québec-Amérique, 2001).

sidered as a North-American *francophonie* where French would be the common language spoken by all, newcomers and English-speaking Quebecers included. The *nation québécoise* model would then no longer be perceived as being intolerant or xenophobic.⁴⁷ The younger generation, new migrants who have never been preoccupied with the survival of the French culture, as well as the Anglo-Quebeckers who are attached to the French language should then feel that they could be part of this new nation and share its new self representation.

Bouchard suggests a quadruple transfer: 1) ethnicity to rule of law, 2) an organic *francophonie* to a linguistic *francophonie*, 3) a French-Canadian culture to a Quebec culture, and 4) cultural nationalism to a new developmental collective project.⁴⁸ Bouchard has carefully chosen the expression 'collective development' in lieu of 'civic nationalism' so as to insure that the nation is seen as ethnic as well as civic. Bouchard further develops the concept of Quebec's nationhood in terms of co-integration – refusing all forms of assimilation or exclusion – which favours diversity and therefore continuous negotiation of all of Quebec's ethnic or cultural groups. He pleads for acceptance of conflict zones and tensions that are normal in democratic societies. In short it means learning to live together on a daily basis.⁴⁹

How do Bouchard's propositions correspond to Quebec's contemporary social reality? Is it wishful thinking? Is the notion of *francophonie* too vague, too abstract, to serve as the main national reference as defined above and as the basis on which to build a new common imagery? More research is needed to answer these questions but one can state that, since the 1960s and the Quiet Revolution, French is gradually becoming the common language in Quebec. One must however also add that, according to recent statistics on languages spoken in workplaces and households, English has also made great progress, especially in Montréal.

Quebec nation seen as a region.state

In the 1990s, the notion of Quebec as a territorial nation also became popular: "A Quebecer is one who lives inside of Quebec's boundaries." This extremely abstract and objective way of defining a nation was first put forth in reaction to the many ethnic nationalisms which caused major problems in the world during the second half of the 20th Century. During and after the Referendum campaign

⁴⁷ Bouchard 1999, 71.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 73.

⁴⁹ Gérard Bouchard, "Nation et co-intégration: contre la pensée dichotomique," in Maclure and Gagnon 2001, 21-36. 35.

on Quebec's sovereignty in the mid-1990s, many opponents attempted to discredit Quebec's political project by associating it with a narrow ethnic nationalism. Some politicians and intellectuals preferred the much more neutral term of territorial nationalism which totally avoided the ethnic issue.

To define a nation exclusively in territorial terms is not realistic because nations are much more complex entities.⁵⁰ They have historical, cultural, political, and spatial aspects that vary over time. Even if territory is important, it cannot alone serve to build a national identity but, because it is associated with a shared imagery, it cannot be totally ignored be it in Quebec or elsewhere. Present day Europe is an eloquent example of a new contemporary collective identity building on a mythical territory shared by many countries.⁵¹

Alain-G. Gagnon gives more importance to the territorial aspect of nationhood because he sees culture and politics as territorially based.⁵² He defines Quebec as a political and cultural nation defined territorially. Gagnon speaks of region state the way others speak of nation states and claims that region states are social and political entities which are becoming the norm because they have numerous possibilities for national assertion. In the case of Quebec he prefers this concept to that of nation state for three main reasons: 1) a region state is in a better position to maintain social cohesion as it favours a close-knit community and therefore a better grip on its present and future, 2) it is directly accountable to its citizens, and 3) having a smaller territorial base, it is easier for the community to define itself. "The right for a political community to define itself is a sign of self-assertion and identity building which is the most effective act of empowerment."⁵³ A region state favours the construction of new identities, the elaboration of collective projects, and a sense of togetherness. He feels that "Quebec has all the necessary ingredients to define itself as a cultural and political nation." In specific contexts, a territorial nation can also correspond to a nation state.⁵⁴

The concept of a 'national region state' has the advantage of seeing the emerging Quebec nation without the drawbacks that come with the project of renewing the Canadian Federation or of building a sovereign state. With this approach, the building of a new nation becomes possible no matter what the constitutional status of Quebec is. In other words, it is not closely linked to the political program of the Parti Québécois and allows Quebec's current Liberal

⁵⁰ Alain-G. Gagnon and Raffaele Iacovino, *De La nation à la multination. Les rapports Québec-Canada* (Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal, 2007).

⁵¹ Henri Mendras, *L'Europe des Européens: sociologie de l'Europe occidentale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Henri Mendras, *La France que je vois*. Coll. Frontières (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2002).

⁵² Alain-G. Gagnon, "Le Québec, une nation inscrite au sein d'une démocratie étriquée," in Maclure and Gagnon 2001, 21-65. 53.

⁵³ Ibid. 62-63.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 52-53.

prime minister, Jean Charest, to use the expression *nation québécoise* without any political remorse.

Anglo-Quebeckers and the Quebec nation

How must one react to Dumont's 1995 assertion that Quebec cannot include people by the magic power of words who do not accept to be part of it? It can be said that *Bill 101* has given cultural minorities access to the renewed nation and one might think that Dumont's pessimism was greatly exaggerated. Only the future will tell if French as a common language can effectively play the role English does in Canada outside Quebec or in the United States.

If Quebec has always taken into account its English-speaking minority when undertaking major reforms, such has not been the case for the French-speaking minorities in other Canadian provinces. When regional colleges (CEGEP) were implemented in 1967-1968, four of them were created to serve the English-speaking population. Later, when local health centres (CLSC) were created, Quebec automatically set up some with services in English. The same was done for the creation of school boards some years before⁵⁵ and, must we add, there are also English-speaking universities in Quebec.

Since the Quiet Revolution there has been a change in the self-image of English-speaking Quebeckers. They have always been part of the Canadian majority group, but since 1960 they have become a minority in Quebec.⁵⁶ Jean-Jacques Simard claims that they seem to have changed places with their 'privileged other': "They used to belong to a civil, political, and cultural nation while we held on to our ethno-linguistic filiations. Today it is the opposite: when they used to build, we used to survive and since we have started building they are worried about their survival."⁵⁷ A fine example of inversion in self-definition.

It is sometimes said that French-Canadians have become orphans of their nation because their nation no longer exists as such,⁵⁸ the same cannot really be

⁵⁵ See Hubert Guindon, *Tradition, modernité et aspiration nationale de la société québécoise*, eds. Roberta Hamilton and John L. McMullan (Montréal: Albert Saint-Martin 1990); Hubert Guindon "Chronique de l'évolution sociale et politique du Québec depuis 1945," *Cahiers de recherche sociologique* 30 (1998): 33-78.

⁵⁶ Gary Caldwell and Eric Wadell, *Les anglophones du Québec: de majoritaires à minoritaires* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1982).

⁵⁷ Jean-Jacques Simard, "Ce siècle où le Québec est venu au monde," in *Québec 2000*, ed. Roch Côté (Montréal: Fides, 1999), 18-77.

⁵⁸ Marcel Martel, *Le deuil d'un pays imaginé: rêves, luttes et dérouté du Canada français: les rapports entre le Québec et la francophonie canadienne, 1867-1975* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1996).

said about Anglo-Quebeckers because their nation still exists and this is a fundamental difference between the English-speaking minority in Quebec and the French-speaking minorities in Canada. Anglo-Quebeckers can count on a North-American environment dominated by the English language. More so, they belong to a nation that, since the adoption of its 1982 *Constitution Act*, has become more self-assertive. Becoming a minority in Quebec has not deprived them of the Canadian nation as their privileged reference. On the contrary.

One should not believe that the concept and the reality of the *nation québécoise* as the new reference have completely or partially rallied Anglo-Quebeckers. For some time, let us say from the mid-1960s, the term *québécois* was synonymous with French Canadians of Quebec. Multiculturalism and cultural diversity were not yet on Quebec's or Canada's agenda and therefore self-definition did not necessarily include the immigrants.⁵⁹ It is only in the 1980s that national references began to change, some went as far as defining English-speaking Quebeckers as a national minority, inferring that they were part of a larger Quebec nation just as French-speaking minorities were part of the larger Canadian nation. This perception is not necessarily shared by most of English-speaking Quebeckers because they did not abandon their Canadian reference even if they now perceive themselves as a minority in the new Quebec society that was put in place more than 40 years ago.

It is still too soon to say if the English-speaking minority see themselves as Anglo-Quebeckers just as the French-speaking population of Ontario see themselves as *Franco-Ontariens*, but as the demographics of the English-speaking population change so do the relationship with the French-speaking majority. This last point is important because a part of the English-speaking community of Montréal stems from Canadian multiculturalism.

The present political project, which dates back to René Lévesque, has taken into account the presence and historical rights of the English-speaking community. René Lévesque had strong feelings about this and held on to his ideas no matter how difficult it was at times. The recognition of the English-speaking minority has been included in all legislation concerning health care and social services and the recent amendments to *Bill 101*, while maintaining French as the official language, recognize the importance of English as a second language, a compromise accepted by most of the English-speaking population of Montréal, but seen as threatening by some francophones.

In the past, the minority had little contact with the French-speaking majority, but since the 1960s things have changed. The English-speaking population of Quebec have created a political party (Equality Party) and set up advocacy

⁵⁹ See Marcel Rioux, *Les Québécois* (Paris: Seuil, 1974).

groups (Alliance-Quebec for example) so as to have an official voice in all social matters. There are a few radicals on both sides but, on the whole, the debates have remained civilized. The important fact here is that today the English-speaking population participate in Quebec's national debate that has been going on for several decades, some groups have even added the word 'Quebec' in their titles but, contrary to French-Canadian minorities throughout the rest of Canada who define themselves as bilingual Canadians, they have not yet gone as far as officially integrating the Quebec nation as their reference.

The Amerindians and the Quebec nation

Before closing, a few words on the aboriginal question. Quebec's Amerindians do not wish to be closely integrated into neither the Canadian nor the Quebec nation, at least in a sociological sense. They define themselves as belonging to their own nations, to ancestral nations who have lived in the Americas for thousands of years.⁶⁰ They refer to themselves as First Nations. Constitutionally and sociologically they have been recognized as forming different nations but, because they live in small national communities, they must join larger political entities in which they claim full participation as equal entities. They therefore define themselves also according to the State in which they live. Canadian Aboriginal peoples are thus different from American Aboriginal peoples because they are linked to different political communities.

Does the fact that some First Nations live in Quebec change things? As aboriginals slowly take control of their own economy, the contact with the French-speaking majority has become much more positive than in the 1980s. On October 23rd 2001, Quebec's premier, Bernard Landry and the Cree's Grand Chief, Ted Moses, signed an important Agreement in Principle (*La paix des braves*) and negotiations are ongoing with Saint Lawrence's North Shore Innus. The fact that the political and administrative elite of the various aboriginal nations negotiate directly with the Quebec Government is a sign of a gradual integration into Quebec's society.⁶¹

For the past 50 years, both Quebec and Canada (which includes its French-speaking minorities with their new communitarian orientation) have each been rebuilding their respective nations. Quebec's self-definition is that of an historical and political community, an imagined nation that for some is part of the Ca-

⁶⁰ Denys Delâge, "Le Québec et les autochtones," in *Penser la nation québécoise*, ed. Michel Venne. Coll.: Débats (Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2000), 215-228.

⁶¹ Jean-Jacques Simard, *La réduction. L'autochtone inventé et les Amérindiens d'aujourd'hui* (Sillery: Septentrion, 2003).

nadian Federation and for others, a sovereign nation – or on the way to becoming one – or a region-state. The notion of the *nation québécoise* is now largely shared and accepted by most of the population even if there are still many problems to be solved. The federal House of Commons has also officially recognized the existence of the *nation québécoise* in 2006, but this recognition has up to now no constitutional basis. French as the common language is the cultural foundation of the Quebec nation which is governed by rule of law. Its population composed of a French-speaking majority, an English-speaking minority, and newcomers are all part of its past and more recent history. If the presence of immigrants contributes to modify the way Quebeckers see themselves – as seen in recent Quebec literature for example – it has also modified the way English-speaking Canadians see themselves.