

National identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain *

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this article is twofold. First, it examines whether devolution fosters the rise of dual identities – regional and national. Second, it considers whether devolution encourages secession or, on the contrary, it stands as a successful strategy in accommodating intra-state national diversity.

The article is divided into three parts. First it examines the changing attitudes towards Quebec's demands for recognition adopted by the Canadian government from the 1960s to the present. It starts by analysing the rise of Quebec nationalism in the 1960s and the efforts of the Canadian government to accommodate its demands within the federation. It then moves on to consider the radically new conception of Canadian unity and identity embraced by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and its immediate impact upon Quebec. The paper argues that Trudeau's 'nation-building' strategy represented a retreat from the pro-accommodation policies set in place to respond to the findings of the 1963 Royal Commission on Biculturalism & Bilingualism (known as the B&B Commission). Trudeau's definition of Canada as a bilingual and multicultural nation whose ten provinces should receive equal treatment alienated a significant number of Quebecers. After Trudeau, various attempts were made to accommodate Quebec's demand to be recognised as a 'distinct society' – Meech Lake Accord, Charlottetown Agreement. Their failure strengthened Quebec separatists, who obtained 49.4 per cent of the vote in the 1995 Referendum. Hence, initial attempts to accommodate Quebec in the 1960s were replaced by a recurrent confrontation between Canada's and Quebec's separate nation-building strategies.

Second, the article explores whether devolution fosters the emergence of dual identities – regional and national – within a single nation-state. At this point, recent data on regional and national identity in Canada are presented and compared with data measuring similar variables in Spain and Britain. The three modern liberal democracies considered here include territorially circumscribed national minorities – nations without states (Guibernau 1999) – endowed with a strong sense of identity based upon the belief in a common ethnic origin and a sense of shared ethnohistory – Quebec, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Scotland.

Third, the article examines whether devolution feeds separatism by assessing support levels for current devolution arrangements in Canada, Spain and Britain. The article concludes by examining the reasons which might contribute to replacing separatist demands with a desire for greater devolution.

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Part 1. Quebec: from traditional to modern nationalism

Traditional Quebec nationalism was conservative and strongly influenced by Catholic values. It was not separatist, but it possessed a strong ethnic orientation and aimed at preserving the specificity of the French-Canadian nation within the federation, the key components of Quebec identity being the French language, Catholic religion, a common history and, more ambiguously, territory (Keating 2001: 78). Its main ideologist was the Abbé Groulx and its most clear expression can be found in the Tremblay Report (1954). Traditional Quebec nationalism 'was an ideology opposed both to individualist liberalism and to collectivist socialism, emphasizing instead the Catholic social doctrines of personalism and subsidiarity, anti-materialist and imbued with spiritual values' (Keating 2001: 78–9).

A radical shift in Quebec nationalism took place in the 1960s and gave rise to the so-called '*Revolution Tranquille*' (Quiet Revolution), which coincided with the election of the Liberal government led by Jean Lesage. Demands for socio-economic change resulted in a modernisation programme which strengthened and re-defined nationalism. Language remained a key identity-marker of Quebecers, but substantial transformations affected civil society. Among those were: the secularisation of nationalism, the spread of liberal values, the rise of a francophone middle class, the expansion of organised labour and the wish to take control over their own affairs, encapsulated in Lesage's slogan '*maîtres chez nous*' (masters in our own house) (Keating 2001: 80).

The 1960s 'Quiet Revolution' (Fitzmaurice 1985: 201–39) took place in Quebec awakening a nationalist movement which denounced the second-class treatment received by French Canadians within the federation (Brown 1990). Education, employment and language appeared as three major areas in which French Canadians were discriminated against.

Accommodating Quebec

Prime Minister Lester Pearson (1963–68) thought that the only way to tame the emerging separatism was to accommodate Quebec's demands. He created the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, its objective being to

... recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contributions made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution (Cook et al.: 1963: 83).

Pearson's conception of Canada included a sense of asymmetry between the provinces capable of acknowledging the distinct nature of Quebec within Canada. In 1963, Pearson declared that 'while Quebec is a province in this national confederation, it is more than a province because it is the heartland of a people: in a very real sense it is a nation within a nation' (McRoberts

1997: 40). Pearson's approach materialised in a series of initiatives to accommodate Quebec including the elaboration of the notion of 'co-operative federalism' providing the same opportunities to all provinces but assuming that only Quebec would be prepared to take advantage of them. For instance, Pearson established 'contracting out', that is, the opportunity given to all provinces to take full responsibility for programmes managed jointly by the federal and the provincial governments or even by Ottawa alone, a responsibility that only Quebec was willing to take on. Among others it was applied to the youth allowance and the student loan programmes established by Ottawa in 1964. The most prominent of all the programmes from which the provinces were allowed to 'opt-out' was the Canada Pension Plan. Quebec was the only province to 'opt-out' (McRoberts 1997: 42) and in so doing it was clearly engaging in a nation-building project which, in principle, should be compatible with its status as a member of the Canadian federation. For Quebecers, accommodation implied the tacit recognition of Quebec as one of the two founding peoples of Canada.

Canadian nation-building: Trudeau's vision

The new Prime Minister, Pierre Elliot Trudeau (1968–79 and 1980–84), adopted a radically different policy towards Quebec than that of his predecessor. While Pearson sought to accommodate Quebec, Trudeau despised nationalism and was determined to eradicate it by incorporating Quebec francophones into a new pan-Canadian identity. Trudeau, a francophone from Quebec (albeit of mixed British-French descent), regarded Quebec as a backward society and defined its nationalism as the enemy of democracy, individual rights and social and economic justice (McRoberts 2001: 58, see also McRoberts 2004).

Trudeau was strongly committed to a type of individualism rooted in the Catholic doctrine of personalism coupled with an abiding commitment to human rights. In his view, the individual should be supreme and all collectivities were suspect. He condemned the emotional character of nationalism and argued in favour of federalism as a superior form of organisation. The strength of Trudeau's personality and his determination to transform Canada led him to defend a 'rational messianism' (McRoberts 2001: 63) founded on the idea that Canada had the moral responsibility to defeat Quebec nationalism. In doing so, Canada would defend reason above emotion and fulfil its historic mission. It might or might not have escaped Trudeau that such a strong sense of historic purpose could easily be turned into a solid basis for the emergence of a new Canadian nationalism, even if he was opposed to the use of such an expression and decided to define it as something else (Oliver 1991; Laforest 1995; Bashevkin 1991).

Trudeau offered a new image of Canada at a time when the British connection weakened due, among other reasons, to the dismantling of the

British empire, and the spread of the United States of America's influence and power around the world. Many anglophone Canadians welcomed Trudeau's proposals for a renewed, modern and strong pan-Canadian identity ready to confront a rising Quebec nationalism (Gagnon 1998: 163–71). Trudeau sought to shift Quebecers' primary allegiance to Canada by promoting a brand new pan-Canadian identity which ultimately should strengthen Canadian unity and weaken Quebec's nationalism. A tense relationship between Canada's and Quebec's nation-building strategies was to unfold and turn into one of the key challenges to the Canadian federation for years to come.

Trudeau's vision of Canada involved:

- Defence of language rights for francophones throughout Canada.
- Defence of individual rights as superior to collective rights.
- Opposition to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism's (B&B Commission) notion of biculturalism based upon the recognition of two culturally distinct communities with territorial basis, that is, French and English Canada.
- Recognition of the equality of all provinces which, in turn, implied the defence of symmetrical devolution.
- Opposition to recognising Quebec as the primary base of francophone language and culture within Canada.
- The renewal of Canadian federalism.
- The construction of a new pan-Canadian identity.

The pillars of Trudeau's nation-building project were: official bilingualism, multiculturalism and renewed federalism involving the patriation of the Constitution and a new Charter of Rights.

Bilingualism

Trudeau's objective was to make Canada bilingual, an idea rooted in his goal of defeating Quebec nationalism. In Trudeau's view, being able to understand each other in French and English should ultimately contribute to uniting Canadians. He argued that competence in both official languages would break the territorially grounded claim of Quebecers to constitute the only French linguistic and cultural enclave in North America. As McRoberts points out, 'historically, very few Canadians have been bilingual. In 1961, only 12.2 per cent of Canadians said they could carry on a conversation in both English and French . . . and 70 per cent of bilingual Canadians had French as their mother tongue' (McRoberts 2001: 107). The 1969 Official Languages Act granted equal status to French and English in federal institutions, guaranteed federal services in both languages across the country, and established the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages to police implementation (Conway 1992: 70). The same year, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism revealed that the cultural and linguistic privileges of the English minority in Quebec were combined with a considerably better economic situation (Conway 1992: 73).

The federal government was strongly committed to promoting bilingualism but the outcome of its campaign, in terms of promoting national unity and a new pan-Canadian identity, was mixed. It is true that the use of French in the federal government increased substantially (Harrison and Marmen 1994). The number of anglophone Canadians who made the effort and became competent in French was remarkable and this somehow contributed to generating a hostile reaction towards Quebec's continuing demands for recognition. The decision of the Quebec government to abandon linguistic equality with Bill 22 and Bill 101 prompted a negative reaction among many anglophones. They were unsympathetic to the idea that such measures were needed to strengthen the use of French in a primarily anglophone Quebec economy and to integrate immigrant children into a francophone society (see Kymlicka 1998).

Multiculturalism

In 1971, Trudeau proclaimed, 'there are no official cultures in Canada' (House of Commons, *Debates*, 8 Oct. 1971, 8581). Canada was to be a multicultural state, a measure highly disputed by Quebecois¹ circles which argued that multiculturalism was an instrument to water down their nationalist claims and the primarily bilingual and bicultural nature of the Canadian federation. The adoption of multiculturalism contradicted the B&B Commission's assertion that Canada contained 'two dominant cultures ... embodied in distinct societies' (B&B Commission 1967 Book I: xxxiii). Multiculturalism was endorsed by representatives of ethnic groups and as a policy it shifted from preservation of cultures to the promotion of equality. Initially it received the support of largely white, second and third generation Canadians of non-British, non-French descent. Later it appealed to non-white new immigrants from the mid-1960s who denounced inequality and stood for the need to break down social and racial barriers. Limited resources were allocated to the promotion of multiculturalism, bilingualism remaining Trudeau's key concern and priority.

To sum up, multiculturalism has had a mixed impact on national unity and the generation of a new pan-Canadian identity:

- It has widened the gulf between anglophone and francophone Canadians (Bissoondath 1994).
- 'It has robbed Canadian identity of any real core, if Canada lacks an "official culture", then it is difficult to designate any set of values that are common to all Canadians' (McRoberts 2001: 132; Resnick 1994).
- It has undermined the particular status of French as an official language. 'Not only has biculturalism become multiculturalism but, in the minds of some English Canadians bilingualism has become multilingualism' (McRoberts, 2001: 135). Yet, as some scholars have observed, how can cultures be meaningfully supported without also supporting their languages? (See Cummins and Danesi 1990; Manning 1992).

- It has obtained support from many anglophone Canadians who regard multiculturalism as a feature distinguishing Canada from the USA and the melting pot model it is presumed to represent (Breton 1986).

Constitutional reform

The election of the *Parti Québécois* (1976), which endorsed sovereignty-association as a means to achieve an agreement between Canada's founding peoples while defending an ambitious socio-economic programme, demonstrated the failure of the Trudeau government's attempt to fully engage Quebecers – in particular francophone Quebecers – in his pan-Canadian nation-building project. Trudeau's plan involved the eradication of Quebec nationalism and the end of asymmetrical devolution (Gagnon 2004: 127–49) and Quebecers were not prepared to support it.

Trudeau's direct response to the PQ's victory involved the creation of the Task Force on Canadian Unity, also known as the Pepin-Robarts Task Force. Its report advocated a renewed federalism able to accommodate the distinctiveness of Quebec, it rejected Trudeau's orthodoxy and supported Bill 101. The federal government reacted by signing a bilateral agreement with Quebec on immigration – the Cullen-Couture Accord (1978) – and by softening its tone, thus showing a much more flexible approach towards Quebec's demands. It was within this newly generated environment that the 20 May 1980 Quebec Referendum on sovereignty-association took place. Quebecers failed to envisage that a resounding victory for the 'No' platform would encourage Trudeau to pursue his programme of constitutional reform and to ignore the recommendations of both the Pepin-Robarts Report and the Beige Paper, produced by the Quebec Liberal Party under the influence of Claude Ryan.

The inclusion of a constitutional amendment, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Knopff and Morton 1985), was enacted in 1982 when Canada patriated its Constitution from the British Parliament without the consent of the people of Quebec. This constituted an injustice from the Quebecer's perspective because it violated one of the fundamental rules of federation: what affects all must be agreed to by all or by their representatives. Opposition to Trudeau's constitutional patriation package came from beyond the Quebecois nationalist camp. The Liberal party leader Claude Ryan stood against it and most of the liberal members boycotted the ceremonies (*Le Devoir*, 3 December 1981; McWhinney 1982: 137). The Charter protected individual rights and granted special status, to be defined at a later stage, to the First Nations. It also entrenched the policies of the Official Languages (Articles 16–20, 23) and multiculturalism (Article 27).

Peter Russell (1993: 1–33) identifies three main unifying and nation-building aspects within the Charter: First its symbolic aspect insofar as its audience, through a set of rights and a discourse of shared values, 'are Canadians from coast to coast'.³ Second, by promoting national standards, the Charter results in homogenising policies which cannot be touched by the National Assembly in Quebec, for example language policy. Finally, 'the

judicialization of the Canadian political system meant that issues ceased to be regionally defined and addressed by provincial representatives and instead took on a non-territorial and “national” character”; in addition ‘the Canadian judicial system is hierarchical, and the Supreme Court’s jurisprudence is binding on all other courts’ (Gagnon 2003: 302).

The Charter reduced the powers of the Quebec government; notably the new amending formula did not grant Quebec a veto over all forms of constitutional change – a right which Quebec had enjoyed in the past. As Tully emphasises, ‘although the Supreme Court ruled that the convention would be breached, nine provinces and the federal government, all of whose consent was given, proceeded without the consent of the Quebec Assembly, and with its express dissent, even though Quebec was affected the most. This was unprecedented’ (Tully 1995: 6). Since then, several attempts have been made to solve this anomalous situation. McRoberts argues: ‘rather than uniting the many Quebec francophones who continued to support the Canadian federation, constitutional patriation served to divide them – with far-reaching consequences for all Canadians’ (McRoberts 2001: 164). He adds, ‘The Constitution Act, 1982, can best be understood as the imposition by the Trudeau government of its own conception of Canada. . . To defend its course of action, the Trudeau government invoked its right, as the national government, to act on behalf of the Canadian nation’ (McRoberts 2001: 170; See also Russell 1993; Laforest 1995).

Failed attempts to recognise Quebec as a ‘distinct society’ within Canada

In 1987 under the auspices of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (1984–1993), the premiers of the ten provinces drafted the Meech Lake Accord which increased provincial power and contained a clause in which Quebec was defined as a ‘distinct society’ within the Canadian federation. Much concern and unease emerged about the meaning and significance of the term ‘distinct society’ exclusively applied to Quebec. The accord attracted growing opposition and it finally collapsed in June 1990.

The Charlottetown Agreement drafted in 1992 substantially increased provincial powers and weakened the federal government while granting Quebec a ‘distinct society’ status. Decentralisation went further than it did in the Meech Lake Accord. In the Charlottetown Agreement, the so-called ‘Canada clause’ proclaimed the ‘equality of the provinces’, Canada’s ‘linguistic duality’ and proposed to entrench the inherent right of aboriginal self-government in the Constitution.

The most irreparable damage to the Charlottetown Agreement resulted from the stand adopted by the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC). Their major concerns were the exclusion of women from the negotiating table, and the primacy given by the Agreement to native culture and traditions over gender equality rights (Schneiderman 1998: 159). Char-

lottetown gained further opposition from the First Nations' chiefs' caution about the possible erosion of treaty rights. In Quebec, the 'Canadian clause' insistence on the 'equality of provinces' re-awakened an ever-present resentment which would re-emerge whenever Quebec was treated as a province just like the others. In the 26 October 1992 Referendum on the Charlottetown Agreement, Quebec and the rest of Canada (commonly referred to as ROC) voted 'no' for opposite reasons.

Quebec nationalism: a recurrent phenomenon

Trudeau's struggle for Canadian unity and his attempt to generate a new pan-Canadian identity have had a long-lasting impact upon the country. However, instead of eliminating Quebec nationalism, they seem to have prompted its recurrent resurgence. The federal government's implementation of some measures regarded by Quebecers as a threat to their distinct identity and status within Canada has consistently resulted in an upsurge of separatist support.

The final years of the Trudeau administration were dotted with examples of the new pan-Canadian nationalism born out of the Prime Minister's wish to unite Canada and promote equality among its provinces. For instance, after the defeat of the 1980 Referendum on sovereignty-association in Quebec, Ottawa announced the new prices of oil and gas without prior consultation with the provinces in contravention of what had become a common practice throughout the 1970s. In 1983, Ottawa made substantial changes and cuts to its fiscal transfers to the provinces omitting the usual consultation practice (Seymour 2005: 4; McRoberts 2001: 172). Simultaneously, Ottawa decided to run 'parallel' projects with the provinces and adopted a more pro-active policy in delivering benefits and services directly to citizens in areas of clear provincial jurisdiction. McRoberts points out that 'by reinforcing English Canadians in their resistance to any recognition of the continuing Quebec identity within the Canadian federation, it left Quebec sovereignty as the only alternative' (McRoberts 2001: 174).

Later on, the failure of Meech and Charlottetown were resented by many Quebecers and played a crucial role in the 1995 Quebec Referendum which showed a remarkable increase in the sovereigntist vote. The government led by René Lévesque coined the expression 'sovereignty-association', currently referred to as 'sovereignty and partnership'. This involved redefining the relationship between Quebec and Canada as equal and it did not aim at outright independence. The 30 October 1995 Referendum on Quebec's sovereignty, while maintaining a partnership with the rest of Canada,⁴ was lost by only 54,288 votes which allowed for a 1.16 per cent majority for the 'no' camp (Quebec Chief Electoral Office, 1995). The Referendum result prompted two main reactions in the rest of Canada (ROC): incomprehension as to the causes of such a significant 'yes' vote, and anger over the threat to the survival of Canada. Moreover, the Referendum result cast a shadow over the assump-

tion that Quebec could flourish and evolve within the newly created conception of Canada as a bilingual and multicultural nation. Canadian nation-building had gone wrong in Quebec and it had managed to split the vote.⁵

Political and intellectual elites outside Quebec (Cairns 1996; Whitaker 1995) devised Plan A and Plan B as possible responses to the situation created after the near 'yes' victory in Quebec. Plan A sought to accommodate Quebec, but the Chrétien government's initial responsiveness towards Quebec's demands came to a halt in 1996 when a radical shift in favour of a Trudeau-style attitude was adopted. This included the creation of the Canada Information Office, with a \$20 million budget, whose aim was to promote Canadian identity and unity (Dion 1996).

Plan B involved considering how Canada should respond to an eventual majority in favour of Quebec sovereignty in a future referendum. In 1996, and responding to a plethora of criticisms, the federal government referred three questions to the Supreme Court of Canada regarding the constitutional ability of the province of Quebec to secede unilaterally from Canada (Rocher and Verrelli 2003: 208). In 1998, the Court rendered its opinion: Quebec could not proceed with a unilateral secession.

The detailed ruling of the Court indicated that the secession project is legitimate if it is supported by the people through a 'clear' referendum: 'the referendum result, if it is to be taken as an expression of the democratic will, must be free of ambiguity both in terms of the question asked and in terms of the support it achieves' (Supreme Court of Canada 1998). The Court added that the democratic legitimacy of the secessionist project denoted a constitutional obligation on the rest of the country to negotiate insofar as 'the continued existence and operation of the Canadian constitutional order cannot remain indifferent to the clear expression of a clear majority of Quebecers that they no longer wish to remain in Canada' (Rocher and Verrelli 2003: 209). The obligation to negotiate is based upon four fundamental principles: federalism (Noël 2000), democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and the protection of minorities. Further to this, according to the *Clarity Act* (C-20) the Canadian government becomes the sole judge of what constitutes a 'clear' question and a 'clear' majority (Lajoie 2004: 151-64).

In Quebec, debates about the specific consequences and meaning of the Supreme Court ruling have been accompanied by opposition to further nation-building policies implemented by Ottawa, perceived by many Quebecers as undermining federalism. Among such measures are: the Framework on Social Union (1999), innovation funds and the Millenium Chairs of Excellence programme (Seymour 2005: 7).

Part 2. Between accommodation and assimilation

So far I have examined the tensions between accommodation and assimilation of Quebec within Canada. In what follows I assess the impact of the nation-

building policies inaugurated during the Trudeau era upon the Quebecker's desire for sovereignty and partnership. In order to contrast Quebec's support for separatism with that of other Western nations without states, I introduce similar data concerning Spain and Britain. My aim here is to consider whether devolution – encompassing federalism, symmetrical and asymmetrical devolution – fosters separatism.

Canadians: for federation in spite of dissatisfaction with the government

While there are no outstanding movements questioning Canada's federal structure in the rest of Canada (ROC), the *Portraits of Canada Survey* (*Opinion Canada*, 8 May 2003) shows that the citizens in seven out of the ten Canadian provinces felt that they were poorly treated by the federal government, with 84 per cent of the population feeling that they were badly treated in Labrador and Newfoundland, and 55 per cent in Quebec. Eighty-three per cent of ROC's citizens and 80 per cent of Quebeckers consider that the federal system is 'too slow' to make needed changes.

According to *Federation Watch* (*Opinion Canada*, 6 November 2003), 75 per cent of Quebeckers are favourable to their provincial government playing a very active role to help the Canadian federation work better, while 19 per cent are opposed. It is even more significant to see that 61 per cent of Quebeckers think that federalism can satisfy both Quebec and the rest of Canada, a percentage which has remained unchanged since 1998. Also unchanged between 1998 and 2003, was the 49 per cent of Quebeckers who agreed that 'Canadian federalism has more advantages than disadvantages for Quebec'. When questioned about their preferences, 41 per cent of Quebeckers supported a renewed federalism and 30 per cent declared themselves in favour of 'sovereignty-partnership' with Canada. Those who supported the status quo represented 16 per cent of Quebec's population and only 8 per cent stood for total independence. If a sovereignty and partnership referendum had been held in September 2003, 47 per cent say that they would have voted 'yes' and 53 per cent 'no'. When asked how they would vote in a referendum that did not mention partnership but asked simply 'do you want Quebec to become a sovereign country?', 38 per cent say 'yes', 54 per cent 'no' and 8 per cent were undecided.

In stark contrast with the data in Table 1 stand the findings of *Portraits of Canada 2004*. According to them, voting intentions in support of a sovereign

Table 1. *State model: Quebeckers preferred choice (2003)*

Renewed federalism	41%	(down 3 points from 1999)
Sovereignty-partnership	30%	(up 4 points from 1999)
Support the status quo	16%	(up 3 points from 1999)
Total independence	8%	(down 2 points from 1999)

Source: *Federation Watch, Opinion Canada* 5(39), 6 November 2003.

Quebec in a partnership with Canada have risen to 49 per cent, its highest level since *Portraits of Canada* began tracking the issue in 1998 (*Portraits of Canada* 2004). Support for sovereignty-partnership has risen steadily since 2004. At the time of writing, a new opinion poll of CROP-La Presse in July 2005 shows that 55 per cent of Quebecers would vote 'yes' in a referendum on sovereignty-partnership, signalling a historic record since the 1995 referendum. When asked about whether they would be prepared to support Quebec's sovereignty without partnership, 45 per cent of Quebecers say 'yes', while 49 per cent stand in favour of the federalist model. A further question concerns whether a new referendum should take place if the Parti Québécois was to attain power. At present, 53 per cent of Quebecers support this idea, while 42 per cent are against a new referendum.⁶

In terms of ROC's attitudes towards Quebec, the proportion of Canadians who say that they have become more hard-line toward Quebec has been cut by half since 1998, from 52 per cent to 25 per cent. 'Yet, in a separate question, 57 per cent of respondents outside Quebec say almost nothing would satisfy Quebec (up from 48 per cent since 2003)' (*Portraits of Canada* 2004). In contrast, 37 per cent of Canadians outside Quebec believe that with some effort on the part of the rest of Canada, Quebec can be made to feel happy within the country (down from 49 per cent in 2003) (*Portraits of Canada* 2004). The gap between Quebec and the rest of Canada seems to have widened, and 70 per cent of Quebecers agree that 'English Canadians often tend to think that French Canadians are inferior to them'. This is the highest level of agreement since this question was first asked in 1980. Such perception has to be balanced against the 67 per cent of Quebec francophones who say that in the past thirty or forty years they have made some or a lot of progress in economic terms, when compared with anglophones (*Portraits of Canada* 2004).

The data examined here show overall support for Canada's federal structure in spite of a critical assessment of the federal government. They also show strong support for federalism in Quebec coupled with a record of rising support for sovereignty-partnership in 2004 and 2005. It is crucial to realise that sovereignty and partnership does not entail outright independence, rather it stands for what I refer to as 'qualified independence' involving sovereignty with an offer of political and economic partnership to Canada.

Spain

After forty years of dictatorship, the 1978 Constitution provided a new political framework within which Spaniards could organise their lives. One of the major issues faced by the new regime was the national question, particularly acute in Catalonia and the Basque Country (Riquer and Culla 1989; Balcells 1996). The new Constitution radically transformed the centralist non-democratic socio-political regime inherited from Francoism and made possible the creation of the Autonomous Communities System based on

symmetrical devolution. The lack of violence in the transition to democracy, the almost immediate acceptance of Spain by NATO and the European Community (now the European Union), and the rapid expansion of the economy engendered a socio-political dynamism which stood in sharp contrast with the backwardness and conservatism of the Franco years (Preston 1986 and 2003; Solé Tura 1985).

The makers of the Constitution opted for a model based upon symmetrical devolution, what has been referred to as ‘coffee for everyone’ (*café para todos*) (Fossas 1999). Yet, instead of directly responding to the nationalist demands of Catalonia and the Basque Country as nations which had enjoyed their own institutions and laws until the eighteenth century and which still maintained their own separate identities, specific cultures and languages, they decided to divide the territory of Spain into seventeen autonomous communities (Guibernau 2004a: 70–84). Some of them were historically and culturally distinct – Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia – others were artificially created where no sense of a separate identity had previously existed – for instance, La Rioja and Madrid. While Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia could immediately initiate the process towards full autonomy, other regions had to fulfil a five-year ‘restricted autonomy’ period before initiating it. Once full autonomy is achieved, however, the Constitution makes no distinction between the communities.

Currently, Catalans and Basques are not fully satisfied with symmetrical devolution, and they manifest their desire to be recognised as nations within Spain (Requejo 2000: 108–14; Keating 2000: 29–42). They demand greater autonomy and show increasing reluctance toward a blind acceptance of the ‘coffee for everyone’ option (Keating 1999: 71–86). Pressure to change the Constitution is already piling up in Catalonia, where the main political parties are demanding a new statute of autonomy and a fairer financial arrangement. In the Basque Country, the Basque government has launched the so-called ‘Plan Ibarretxe’, already endorsed by the Basque Parliament and rejected by the Spanish Parliament. It suggests that the Basque Country should become a ‘free state’ associated with Spain, a project falling short of outright independence within the EU⁷ and close to the Quebec sovereignty and partnership plan.

A large number of Catalans and Basques favour an alternative model of the state based upon asymmetrical devolution which would entail the recognition of the distinct status of the historical nationalities – Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia. In their view, such an arrangement would reflect the multinational, multicultural and multilingual nature of Spain in a more accurate manner (Requejo 2001).

In favour of devolution

An opinion poll (2003) (Datos de Opinión 2003) shows that the majority of Spaniards are against a unitary state model. The autonomous community (AACC) which attains the highest score in favour of a unitary state is Murcia,

with 19 per cent in favour of a single central government. The lowest scores are registered in Navarra and the Basque Country (2 per cent), La Rioja (5 per cent), Andalucia (6 per cent) and Catalonia and Galicia (7 per cent). This shows that historical nationalities such as the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia are strongly against a unitary model of state. Curiously, a newly created community such as La Rioja displays a similar attitude and so does Andalucia, a region with a rising sense of shared identity.

The majority of Spaniards endorse the current devolution model. Again a recently created autonomous community, La Rioja, offers the highest support (66 per cent) for the *status quo*. Madrid, also a recently invented autonomous community, scores 60 per cent. At 28 per cent, the lowest score belongs to Catalonia, closely followed by the Basque Country (30 per cent).

However, quite a significant percentage of Spaniards are in favour of greater devolution for the autonomous communities. Catalonia shows the largest support for greater devolution (42 per cent) while Madrid shows the lowest (13 per cent).

In contrast, the Basque Country (23 per cent) followed by Catalonia (17 per cent) show the largest support for a state model prepared to recognise the right of its autonomous communities to become independent nations. The lowest scores in favour of opening up the possibility to secede are to be found in Murcia (0 per cent), La Rioja, Extremadura, Castilla-La Mancha, Asturias, Aragon (all with 1 per cent) and Andalucia and Castilla-León (2 per cent). Madrid registers 4 per cent in favour of a state prepared to recognise the right of autonomous communities to become independent.

To sum up, the majority of Spaniards support the current devolution model. In Spain, devolution has not fostered separatism, but it has generated

Table 2. *Question: Which of the following state models for Spain would you favour?*

<i>AACC</i>	<i>Centralised government</i>	<i>Current model</i>	<i>Greater autonomy for AACC</i>	<i>State acknowledging right Centralised government to independence to AACC</i>
Catalonia	7	28	42	17
Basque Country	2	30	27	23
Galicia	7	53	27	3
Navarra	2	64	15	9
La Rioja	5	66	16	1
Madrid	14	60	13	4
Andalucía	6	51	24	2

Source: Datos de Opinión, Instituciones y Autonomías, Boletín 31, January-April 2003. Estudio CIS 2455. The above data correspond to a selection including the seventeen Spanish Autonomous Communities.

<http://www.cis.es/boletin/31/autonomias.htm> consulted 16 February 2004 (results shown as percentage).

a strong desire for greater autonomy in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Still, it would be simplistic to assume a direct correlation between the two and to ignore the extent to which historical nationalities – in particular Catalonia and the Basque Country – feel somehow frustrated by the content, speed and financial arrangements derived from the devolution process set up in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In addition, the neo-conservative, neo-centralist policies and attitudes of the Aznar government, once it attained a majority in the Spanish Parliament (2000–04), have undoubtedly contributed to radicalising regional nationalism in Spain and indirectly fed separatism (Resina 2002: 377–96). It was during Aznar’s mandate that the ‘Plan Ibarretxe’ in favour of the Basque Country becoming a ‘state associated with Spain’ was devised. In Catalonia, the spectacular rise in support for the only pro-independence Catalan political party, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia or ERC), also occurred during Aznar’s term in office. Again, it should be noted that ERC stands for Catalan independence within the EU (Guibernau 2004a: 83).⁸ In both cases, the impact of the Aznar government’s attitudes and policies played a major role in exacerbating nationalist feelings; however, there were also other factors, national as well as international, that contributed to it. Their study is beyond the scope of this article.

Britain

Once in power (1997), the Labour government decided to implement an asymmetrical devolution model granting differing degrees of autonomy to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In doing so, they sought to respond to different demands for devolution based upon particular national identities existing within Britain (Keating 2001).

The British model stands in sharp contrast to the symmetrical devolution programmes implemented in Germany after World War II, where all its *länder* enjoy similar degrees of devolution, and with post-Francoist Spain, where its seventeen autonomous communities are due to enjoy similar powers once the devolution process is completed. So far, devolution in the UK has been confined to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, omitting the 85 per cent of the population that lives in England, something which could find a remedy if elected regional assemblies are finally created there. Some argue that in this omission lies the inherent instability of British devolution, quite apart from the different settlements already in place (Osmond 2000: 40; Tomaney 2000: 117–22).

*In support of devolution*⁹

Among the English, 57 per cent support the current model of government for England, 22 per cent are in favour of English regions having their own

assemblies, and 16 per cent consider that England as a whole should have its own new parliament (*SN4766* 2001: 42).

When questioned about their preferences regarding the British model of the state, 53 per cent of Scots,¹⁰ 25 per cent of Welsh and 12 per cent of Northern Irish are in favour of the current devolution settlement. In addition, 37 per cent of Welsh and 31.4 per cent of Northern Irish consider that their Assembly/Parliament should enjoy tax-raising powers and only 5.6 per cent of Scots think that their Parliament should not have tax-raising powers, as it currently has. In addition, 18.6 per cent of Scots, 7.2 per cent of Northern Irish and 6.5 per cent of Welsh support the independence of their region within the European Union. Scotland shows greater support for the *status quo* while both Wales and Northern Ireland stand for greater devolution.

When questioned about whether the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should involve it remaining part of the UK, unifying with the rest of Ireland or becoming an independent state, it is interesting to observe that 25.3 per cent of English people and 51 per cent of Northern Irish consider that it should remain in the UK. It is also quite striking to note that 55.4 per cent of the English and only 25.8 per cent of the Northern Irish consider that it should unify with the rest of Ireland. Only 0.65 per cent of English and 6.4 per cent of Northern Irish think that it should become an independent state (*SN4766* 2001: 39–41).

When compared with results obtained in Spain, the percentage of non-English British citizens in favour of a unitary state without devolution is greater in Britain (22.5 per cent in Wales, 13.3 per cent in Northern Ireland and 9 per cent in Scotland) (*SN4766* 2001: 59). In Spain, the highest percentage against devolution is to be found in the autonomous community of Murcia (19 per cent) followed by Aragon (14 per cent) and Madrid (10 per cent) (*Datos de Opinión* 2003).

According to the above data, in Britain post-1997 devolution has not fostered separatism. However, the asymmetrical model adopted by the state may have contributed to a desire for greater autonomy in Wales and Northern Ireland in order to follow the Scottish model. A further characteristic of British devolution when compared with Canada and Spain concerns the fact that, so far, not a single nationalist party in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland has obtained a majority in regional elections. In addition, British-wide parties have been ruling devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales since they were re-established in the late 1990s. In contrast, nationalist governments have been or are still in power in Quebec, Catalonia and the Basque Country.

Part 3.

National identity: single or multiple identities?

Devolution has strengthened regional identity in Spain, Britain and Canada and, in the three cases, it has promoted the emergence or consolidation of dual

identities – regional and national. I am aware that other types of identity such as local or transnational identity are often present and sometimes strong, but they are not being analysed in this paper since they are beyond its limited scope (see Moreno 2001).

In Spain (Datos de Opinión 2003), the highest score corresponding to citizens who feel ‘only Spanish’, 30 per cent, is to be found among those living in the autonomous community of Madrid. In contrast, only 12 per cent of Catalans and 5 per cent of Basques display a single Spanish national identity. In addition, 8 per cent of Catalans and 3 per cent of Basques feel ‘more Spanish than Catalan or Basque’.¹¹

Citizens who identify ‘only’ with their autonomous community represent 25 per cent in the Basque Country, 16 per cent in Catalonia, 7 per cent in Galicia and 15 per cent in the Canary Islands. Those who confer priority on their identification with their autonomous community above identification with Spain (‘feel more Catalan, Galician, Basque . . . than Spanish’) receive the highest scores in Catalonia (24 per cent), Galicia (25 per cent) and the Basque Country (19 per cent). This clearly shows that a significant percentage of the population in Catalonia (40 per cent), the Basque Country (44 per cent) and Galicia (32 per cent) identify more strongly with their region than with the Spanish state.

Devolution has contributed to the consolidation of dual identity in Spain. The highest scores concerning equal dual identification, national and regional (this is those who feel ‘as Spanish as Catalan, Basque, Andalucian, etc.’) are to be found in Extremadura (75 per cent), Aragon (73 per cent) and Andalucía (70 per cent). In contrast, the lowest correspond to Catalonia (37 per cent) and the Basque Country (34 per cent), while Galicia scores 58 per cent. Such data reflect the separate sense of identity manifested by Catalans and Basques when compared with that of Galicians, also citizens of a historical nationality although one with a much weaker sense of identity, and the rest of Spain.

In the Basque Country, those who feel ‘only Spanish’ plus those who feel ‘more Spanish than Basque’ and those feeling ‘as Spanish as Basque’ show that under 50 per cent of the population, 42 per cent, exhibit some sense of ‘Spanish identity’. The above data point to the Basque Country as the autonomous community with the weakest sense of Spanish identity since identification as ‘Spanish only’ plus dual identification prioritising identification with the state scores only 8 per cent. In the Basque Country, however, the overall percentage for those declaring some kind of dual identity is 56 per cent. In Catalonia, it corresponds to 69 per cent of the population.

In Spain devolution has not resulted in the weakening of Spanish identity. On the contrary, the reconfiguration of post-Franco Spanish identity as democratic, pro-European, secular, modern, industrialised and in favour of decentralisation has promoted a dual identity among large sections of the population. For instance, it has made it possible for many Catalans and Basques, as well as for other Spaniards, to identify with the Spanish state, for

many an untenable position during the years of the dictatorship when they regarded Spain as an oppressive, limiting and alien state.

In Britain (SN4766 2001) 17.7 per cent of English, 36 per cent of Scots and 23 per cent of Welsh identify solely with their nation, that is, England, Scotland or Wales and not with Britain. In addition 13 per cent of English, 30.5 per cent of Scots and 22 per cent of Welsh prioritise their national identification over identification with Britain. In contrast, those who feel 'more British than English, Scots or Welsh' correspond to 9 per cent in England, 3 per cent in Scotland and 11 per cent in Wales. Very low scores are registered when citizens are questioned about whether they feel 'only British': 11 per cent of English, 4 per cent of Scots and 11 per cent of Welsh.¹²

Forty-one per cent in England, 23 per cent in Scotland and 29 per cent in Wales have equal dual identification, and this is much lower than in Spain. Those declaring some kind of dual identity (regardless of whether greater emphasis is placed upon regional or national identity) score 63 per cent in England, 56.5 per cent in Scotland (a similar percentage to that obtained in the Basque Country) and 63 per cent in Wales. Curiously, according to the above data, the overall Catalan's sense of dual identity is greater than that of the English, Scots and Welsh.

Overall, identification with the region only (regions correspond to 'nations' in Britain and to 'autonomous communities' in Spain) is much higher in Britain than in Spain, except for the Basque Country and Catalonia. In my view, this could be explained by invoking the long-standing recognition of Wales, Scotland and England as nations constituting Britain and the English's almost complete assimilation between English and British identity reinforced during the Empire. At that time Scots, and to a lesser extent Welsh, were permitted to cultivate their own separate identities and have a strong influence in separate sections of the vast British Empire. In Spain, the unsuccessful assimilation of Basques and Catalans is connected to a long history of oppression marked by repeated attempts to annihilate their specific cultures, languages and identities while dismantling their autonomous institutions. Recent memories of exclusion and repression aimed at Catalonia as the last bastion, together with Madrid, in resisting Franco's troops and, above all, against the nationalist demands of both Catalans and Basques contribute to accounting for their separate sense of identity in contrast to that in other parts of Spain.

Similar percentages identify 'only' with the state (Britain or Spain) in both countries, and again similar percentages grant priority to state above regional identification. The English show the highest sense of dual identification as English and British, a feature connected with the long-term unspecified distinction between English-ness and British-ness.

In Canada, regional attachments are very strong. In Newfoundland and Labrador, 97 per cent of the citizens feel attached to their province, 88 per cent in British Columbia, 91 per cent in Alberta and a slightly lower percentage, 85 per cent in Quebec (including both anglophone as

well as francophone and allophone Quebeckers). When questioned about whether they also feel attached to Canada, positive responses are found in 96 per cent in British Columbia, 95 per cent in Alberta, 92 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador, and 79 per cent in Quebec (*Opinion Canada* 2003). Such an attachment prevails in spite of the fact that the population in seven out of the ten Canadian provinces feels poorly treated by the federal government. The highest scores are found in Newfoundland and Labrador where a striking 84 per cent feel badly treated, compared to only 16 per cent of respondents who feel that their province is treated properly. The respective data for Quebec are 55 per cent and 42 per cent for Alberta (*Opinion Canada* 2003).

Overall, Canadians display very strong dual identities, provincial and federal, in spite of being highly critical of the federal government. National identity, that is identification with Canada, obtains much higher scores than identification with Spain and Britain respectively.

In conclusion, I argue that devolution strengthens pre-existing regional identities and fosters the emergence of novel identities where they did not previously exist. It promotes the development of dual identities – regional and national – invoked at different times. In the cases of Spain and Britain, a further layer of identity which I have not considered in this paper, is embodied in the rise of an incipient European identity.

Among some elites it is to be expected that the strengthening of EU institutions will foster the genesis of a further layer of identity among European citizens. The current Western socio-political framework points to the consolidation of strong dual identities, often accompanied by local and European forms of identity of various strength. This invariably seems to lead our societies to the coexistence of multiple identities of a cultural, territorial and, often but not necessarily, political nature. To coexist, such identities should be compatible, that is, individuals and groups should not face a situation in which they are forced to choose between national, regional and European identity.

Does devolution foster separatism?

Most Western nation-states have embraced some type of devolution. Nevertheless, the rationale for devolution varies according to each particular case and the aims and mechanisms to implement it are also specific to each country. States invoke geographical, economic, administrative, cultural and historical reasons when they decide on the boundaries of their regions (Keating 1999: 71–86; see also Seymour 2004).

In my view, Canada, Spain and Britain share four main characteristics. First, they have opted for various devolution models encompassing federation, symmetrical and asymmetrical devolution.

Second, devolution models have not remained static throughout time.

Third, the three cases contain one or more strong national minorities endowed with their own sense of common ethnicity and ethnohistory, cultures and identities which have developed relatively powerful nationalist movements demanding self-determination, be it in the form of greater autonomy or secession (see Guibernau 2004b).

Fourth, up to the present time, none of the three cases considered has witnessed the rise of a separatist movement sufficiently robust to force the independence of the region it claims to represent. In spite of substantial support for Quebec, Catalan, Basque and Scottish nationalism, all these movements seem to have been somehow accommodated through the device of particular devolution structures which, so far, have prevented secession and weakened pro-independence claims. Yet, the main nationalist political parties within these countries do not stand for outright independence, rather – and this may lead some to question their ‘nationalist’ character – they advocate greater devolution or some form of ‘qualified independence’ such as the ‘sovereignty and partnership’ model defended by some Quebeckers. As Keating argues, ‘autonomy is no longer a question of establishing a state, or using it to pursue a strategy of economic autarky. Rather it involves the creation of a national project, mobilisation around it and an ability to engage in policy making in a complex and interdependent world’ (Keating 2001: 64). An independent Quebec would be highly dependent on the rest of North America. It would have to negotiate its place within NAFTA and ‘in the face of the United States and Canada it would be more of a rule-taker than a rule maker, having to accept rules made elsewhere’ (Keating 2001: 134).

Should we then conclude that devolution acts as an antidote against secession? And if so, why? Secession entails national self-determination and sovereignty. That is, it empowers the people to decide upon their political destiny by drawing up their own laws and constructing their political institutions and national identity. At the same time, a newly created state, to function as such, requires the international recognition of its status as an equal partner by the international community of nation-states. There is a strong reluctance on the part of Western nation-states to contemplate the possibility of new states emerging out of the break-up of their own territories.

Western nation-states feel threatened by the ghost of secession and are strongly opposed to altering their territorial boundaries. They are also aware that a single successful secessionist movement leading to the constitution of a new nation-state, as was the case in the former USSR after 1989, could trigger a domino effect and foster the intensification of nationalist movements seeking independence elsewhere. Should we then infer that hostility towards secession has prompted nation-states to regard devolution as a remedial strategy to placate the nationalist demands of some of their national minorities? A cautious response is needed since each case study is subject to specific nuances. For while Catalans, Basques and Scots sustain long-standing demands for self-determination, Quebeckers are in favour of greater devolution, sovereignty and partnership. In Wales devolution was rejected in the

1979 Referendum and supported by a narrow majority in 1997. In spite of this, I believe that I am justified in arguing that the above data on Canada, Spain and Britain confirm that the various devolution models implemented in each case have, so far, contributed to deter secession.

Pro-independence nationalist movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country are in favour of maintaining some kind of partnership with Spain and membership of the EU. In Quebec the pro-independence movement is in favour of 'sovereignty and partnership' with Canada. In Scotland and Wales political parties standing for greater autonomy obtain larger support than those advocating outright independence. A radically different scenario is found in Northern Ireland where the two successive suspensions of the Stormont Assembly since its re-establishment in 1997 reveal the profound difficulties of power-sharing within a divided society marked by many years of hatred, discrimination and violence.

The cases considered confirm that devolution does not fully satisfy self-determination claims but it tends to weaken them. It locks regional movements and political parties into a dynamic which involves an almost permanent tension with the central state; an uneasiness generally grounded in ongoing demands for greater autonomy and recognition (see Guibernau 1999; Keating 1999; Gagnon et al. 2003). Yet, devolution also entitles national minorities to enjoy substantial powers. In my view, these are some of the outcomes of devolution which contribute towards explaining its deterrent power against secession:

1. The creation of devolved institutions – parliaments, assemblies, provincial governments, etc . . . contributes to the dynamism of civil society for two main reasons. First, it requires the reallocation of resources to facilitate discrete policies and regional budget planning. These processes, in turn, help to revitalise civil society, encouraging local and regional initiatives including cultural, economic and social projects. Second, among other endeavours, devolved institutions tend to promote regional businesses, restore and preserve the regional heritage, and create regional cultural networks such as universities, museums and libraries. As I have shown in this article, none of this is necessarily inconsistent with sustaining an overall national identity.
2. The constitution of devolved institutions invariably tends to foster a sense of common regional identity where it did not previously exist – as is the case in the non-historical Spanish autonomous communities (Guibernau 2000a: 64). In those cases where a pre-existing sense of identity was already in place, devolved institutions tend to strengthen it by promoting the culture, language, regional art and selected meaningful landscapes of the area in question. But while some of these elements originate in the local cultures, others are the products of recent invention. Whether indigenous or invented, old or new, cultural distinctiveness both generates and restores regional collective identities. Often regional cultures question some national symbols if they are perceived as divisive. So I would argue that the

devolution of power – and with it, the creation of regional institutions corresponding to communities with or without previous historical or cultural identities – leads to the emergence and, thereafter, the strengthening of separate regional identities. Nowhere is this more so than within communities where there is a clear connection between past and present experiences of self-determination, law and a separate political and /or cultural identity and language that accounts for the sheer force of nationalist feelings. Catalonia, the Basque Country, Scotland and Quebec are cases in point. As Max Weber argued, ‘shared political memories are elemental in the construction of a common national or ethnic identity, which are more likely to persist for long periods after these communities have lost their political independence’ (Weber 1978: 389).

3. Devolution generally results in the emergence of dual identities, regional and national. As I have shown above, the promotion of regional identity seems to be compatible with holding an overall national identity (Moreno 2001; Keating 2001; Smith 1991).
4. Devolution reinforces the sentiment of forming a community at regional level. Citizens are enabled to participate in decisions concerning their common political destiny and usually feel better represented by their own regional leaders. Furthermore, projects to promote the culture, economy and well-being of the region’s citizens tend to increase individuals’ self-esteem by encouraging a sense of leadership among them. This is not to ignore the disappointment that some may sense when faced with insufficiently funded devolution settlements, self-interested politicians, occasional corruption and a growing bureaucracy.
5. Devolution results in the construction and consolidation of a regional political elite enjoying various degrees of power and prestige. Such an elite benefits from some privileges and acquires a distinguished status within regional circles (Guibernau 2000b: 1003–4). Generally, only a few members of the regional elite play a significant role at state level. Yet, their relevance within the region depends on whether they are perceived as politically, economically and culturally powerful and influential. A substantial degree of devolution when accompanied by sufficient – or even moderately generous – resources automatically raises the profile of regional political elites. Members of the regional government, key figures among the indigenous bourgeoisie – if there is one – and some distinguished intellectuals dominate the elite. Moreover, selected political leaders representing various tendencies are almost invariably incorporated within the regional elite. Regional political leaders are usually engaged in an ongoing power struggle with the central state, one which often lacks a deadline. They are prepared to maintain, intensify and sometimes alleviate such a conflictual relationship, but only rarely are they prepared to risk turning their backs on the *status quo* in order to make a radical move of unpredictable consequences towards independence. In my view, devolution tames secessionist leaders by enticing them with some doses of political power and prestige. There is a certain

'comfort' arising from devolution, which tends to turn secessionist aims into never-ending demands for greater power and recognition.

6. Devolution tends to strengthen democracy in as much as it brings decision-making closer to the people (Guibernau 2000a: 64). Problems are identified, analysed and resolved where they emerge. Regional politicians usually have greater awareness of the needs and aspirations of their electorates.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the reactions of the Canadian federal government to the upsurge of a new modern nationalism in Quebec during the 1960s. It has focused on the shift from accommodation to assimilation regarding Quebec's status within Canada. In particular, it has analysed the novel pan-Canadian identity and vision of Canada as a nation advanced by Prime Minister Trudeau. In the late 1960s, he launched a Canadian nation-building strategy destined to dissolve Quebec nationalism and promote equality among the provinces. His policies were relatively successful in Quebec until 1982, the year in which his government, without Quebec's consent, patriated the Constitution incorporating into it a new Charter of Rights. Subsequent attempts to accommodate Quebec by acknowledging its 'distinct society' status failed. Frustration and discontent grew among Quebecers and it was reflected in the 1995 Referendum result, lost by only 54,288 votes. Support for sovereignty and partnership declined steadily after 1995, hovered around 30 per cent from the late 1990s, picking up again in 2004 and reaching 55 per cent in 2005. Such an upsurge was partly due to the impact of the federal government's implementation of policies aimed at eliminating Quebec's special status within Canada. Such policies have been regarded by many Quebecers as posing a threat to the development of Quebec's language and culture.

Insofar as the evidence I have presented shows, we can conclude that:

1. devolution, when accompanied by a substantial transfer of power, the constitution of regional institutions and access to significant resources – as is the case in Canada, Spain and Britain – promotes the emergence of regional identity without necessarily weakening national identity;
2. devolution does not tend to foster secession, that is, devolution does not usually challenge the integrity of the nation-state's boundaries. The evidence considered in this paper confirms that devolution tames secessionism both by offering significant power and resources to the national minorities it seeks to accommodate and by enticing regional political elites with the power, prestige and perks associated with it.

To sum up, devolution if founded upon mutual trust, recognition and a sound financial arrangement, stands as a successful strategy in the accommodation of national minorities within liberal democracies. However, a certain degree of tension between central and regional institutions is likely

to remain as a constant feature in their complex relationship since, to a certain extent, they entertain opposing aims. The state's determination to protect its territorial integrity and its will to foster a single national identity among its citizens irremediably clashes with the national minority's (or nation without a state) wish to be recognised as a separate *demos* entitled to decide upon its political destiny and to foster its distinct identity.

Notes

1 Throughout the paper, the term 'Quebecker' refers to all Quebec citizens, while the term 'Quebecois' only refers to 'nationalist Quebeckers'. This follows current use in Quebec studies.

3 Quoted by Gagnon (2003: 302).

4 The Lévesque government formulated its proposal in the document: 'Quebec-Canada: a New Deal: The Government's Proposal for a New Partnership between Equals: Sovereignty Association' (Quebec City: Éditeur officiel, 1979).

5 For a set of proposals on reconciliation between Quebec and Canada see, Gibbins and Laforest (1998).

6 See <http://quebeclibre.net/sondage1.html> (accessed 22 September 2005). Rising support for sovereignty-partnership has obtained similar results to those of CROP-La Presse in a recent opinion poll carried out by Leger Marketing (May 2005, 54 per cent supported sovereignty-partnership).

7 This project was launched on 27 September 2002 by José María Ibarretxe, *lehendakari* or president of the Basque autonomous government, and obtained the support of the Basque Parliament.

8 In 2003, ERC managed to double its 1999 results. It obtained a record twenty-three seats corresponding to 16.47 per cent of the vote. ERC became consolidated as the third political force in Catalonia, one with the capacity to play a key role in the constitution of a future government since neither the CiU nor the PSC had achieved a majority.

9 For a comprehensive analysis and statistical data concerning support for devolution in Scotland see McCrone and Paterson (2002: 54-75).

10 Slightly different percentages corresponding to 2002 are provided by Lindsay Paterson in the paper 'Attitudes to Scottish Independence and to the SNP', Institute of Governance, University of Edinburgh, 29 May 2004. Web accessed on 15 March 2005. <http://www.institute-of-governance.org>.

11 Alternative data concerning Catalonia provided by the Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials (ICPS) vary slightly from those produced by the CIS, Datos de Opinión. According to the 2003 ICPS opinion poll 9 per cent of Catalan citizens feel 'only Spanish'; 4 per cent feel 'more Spanish than Catalan'; 41 per cent feel 'as Spanish as Catalan'; 27 per cent feel 'more Catalan than Spanish'; and 16 per cent feel 'only Catalan' (ICPS 2004: 84).

12 Similar data for Scotland can be found in McCrone, D. 'National Identity in Scotland', Briefing Papers, Institute of Governance, University of Edinburgh, 10 January 2002. Web accessed on 15 March 2005.

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