

OUTSIDERS AND INSIDERS: COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, 1995

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ABSTRACT

The 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty serves as a case study illustrating how collective identities are inherently political, linked to mobilization contexts. The multiplicity and ambiguity of collective identities are demonstrated using the concept of mobilization playing fields. The social movement literature tends to focus on a single movement identity, while research on nationalism uses the dichotomous categories of ethnic or civic nationalism. The case of the Quebec independence movement suggests these approaches are overly simplistic. Leaders of the sovereignty movement appealed to three identity discourses in 1995: ethnic, linguistic and civic. However, the mobilization process – specifically, the need to translate collective membership into collective action – forced the more restrictive ethnic identity to the forefront. I suggest generally that the use of collective identity to mobilize individuals tends to narrow the boundaries of the collective.

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On the evening of October 30, 1995 Jacques Parizeau, Premier of the province of Quebec and the leader of the Parti québécois (PQ), a political party advocating Quebec independence, conceded defeat in the 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty. Proponents of separation lost by the slimmest of margins: the final tally was 50.6% against separation, with about 54,000 votes separating the two sides. In his concession speech Parizeau clearly distinguished *nous-autres* – French Canadians whose history in Quebec goes back for centuries – from those who “beat” the “yes” side in the referendum, namely “money and the ethnic vote.” For some, Parizeau put into words the frustration they felt. A majority of *les Québécois de souche*¹ voted for independence, but the overall tally fell short of 50% partly because Quebec’s minorities – Anglophones, Allophones and Aborigines – voted overwhelmingly against separation.² For many others, including large numbers of committed separatists, Parizeau’s comments elicited repugnance because he implied that some people were privileged insiders while others were interlopers. Critics argued that all individuals in Quebec, regardless of language, ethnicity or social status, form *le peuple québécois*.

Defining who is Québécois represents one example of how collective identities are debated and politicized in the contemporary world. The women’s movement, ecology movement and gay/lesbian movements all create, use and transform collective identities to attract support, build group solidarity and provide a basis for mobilization. Often social movements – and especially nationalist movements – are portrayed as embodying a robust, cohesive identity. Mature movements in particular are said to “reaffirm or, at most, extend an existing ideological consensus” (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996: 16). However, identities are rarely homogeneous and crystallized; most often, they are multiple, ambiguous and sometimes even contradictory. The definition of the Quebec nation is no exception. At least three collective identities were available to movement leaders in 1995: a geo-political, or civic, identity, a linguistic Francophone identity, and an identity centered on the ethnic nation.

The definition and privileging of collective identities are also profoundly political. Using the referendum campaign as a case study, I argue that the logic of political competition leads movement leaders to employ narrow, exclusive collective appeals, sometimes despite their desire to embrace open definitions. First, leaders encouraged potential supporters to translate collective membership into collective action. As Gamson (1995) underlines, this process requires “hot cognition,” often accompanied by very specific grievances that only appeal to a limited audience. Second, the interactive nature of political conflict – in which competitors attempt to portray adversaries’ identities in a negative light or define the competitive relationship using “us-versus-them” rhetoric – narrows identity definitions.

This analysis of the 1995 Quebec referendum does not imply that the use of an exclusionary collective identity by sovereignty leaders reflects the ‘true nature’ of the independence movement – that is, a movement that is racist, narrow-minded and ethnically centered – as argued by some Anglophone federalists. I demonstrate that the definition of the Quebec nation is ambiguous and multi-faceted with no essentialist “true” nature. However, the logic and constraints of a strong push to collective action – the dynamics of mobilization itself – tend to favor narrower collective appeals. Indeed, *despite* the personal position of various movement leaders who strongly criticize discrimination on the basis of race, gender or religion, the logic of political mobilization nevertheless privileged an ethnically-centered collective identity. Opponents of independence seized upon this restrictive identity discourse to criticize the movement as a whole, further politicizing the collective identity. Movement leaders responded by appealing to past humiliations and future freedom, but the us-versus-them rhetoric they employed further narrowed the collective definition. One implication of this analysis is that while inclusive collective identity definitions may carry symbolic importance, narrower definitions tend to develop during periods of intense political mobilization.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND MOBILIZATION: THEORY AND METHOD

The Political Nature of Collective Identities

As various commentators note, culture and identity are two growing areas of research in the field of social movements (Cohen, 1985; Melucci, 1989; Mueller, 1992; Johnston & Klandermans, 1995). Whether as an outgrowth of European interest in “new social movements,” or as a reaction to the overly utilitarian aspects of resource mobilization theory, the creation, adoption and transformation of collective identities have attracted increasing attention since the 1980s (Fantasia, 1988; Melucci, 1989; Taylor & Whittier, 1992, 1995; Jenson, 1995; Klandermans, 1997). Some scholars of nationalism similarly shifted focus to consider the role of culture in national identity formation (Anderson, 1991; Colley, 1994). Yet, the meaning and the importance of collective identity have been interpreted in conflicting ways. I highlight three ways that scholars characterize the concept: collective identities as the product of structural or material forces providing motivation for collective action; identity as a tool to collective action; and the separation of collective identity and collective action into two distinct topics.

Some scholars consider collective identities to be outgrowths of structural factors. Within the literature on state-building, collective identity in the form of nationalism is sometimes portrayed as crystallizing naturally during modernization, especially industrialization (Deutsch, 1966; Gellner, 1983; Weber, 1976). Initial European theorizing on "new social movements" argued that the feminist, ecology and peace movements of the 1960s and 1970s were reactions to large-scale structural changes in advanced Western countries (Klandermans, 1986). As materialist concerns were met in the industrialized West, it was hypothesized that people would shift their attention to "life-style" issues and begin to organize against the increasing intrusion of the state in people's everyday lives. The first argument sees the state and material factors as active in the development of a unifying collective identity while the second sees collective identity as a reaction against structural factors. In either case, structural or material forces beget collective identity which in turn motivates collective action. Although most writing on Quebec identity has been very sensitive to culture, the majority has also been heavily influenced by structural arguments. In some cases, such arguments suffer from over-determinism. As Melucci (1989) points out, while the structural aspects of new social movement theory might explain the "why" of some social movements, it fails to account for the "how."

Resource mobilization proponents in North America study the "how" question. Rejecting classical approaches focused on deprivation and irrational beliefs, these scholars emphasize the role of organizations, networks and resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1973; Tilly, 1978). Yet, to reject the role of grievances and ideologies completely ignores the very real feelings and beliefs of movement participants (Mueller, 1992). Consequently, there is renewed interest in "ideational factors" such as collective action frames (Snow & Bedford, 1992) and in social psychological phenomena such as collective identities (Klandermans, 1997). Some nevertheless keep the instrumental thrust of resource mobilization, seeing frames, collective identities and culture merely as another determinant, or tool, in the "how" equation (Swidler, 1986).

Others advocate a position that is the polar opposite of an instrumental approach. These scholars distance questions of identity and culture from the traditional focus on collective action. Thus, Cohen (1985) sees social movement paradigms as either addressing strategy concerns or addressing identity concerns, not incorporating both simultaneously. Touraine (1985) goes further, arguing that the concept of "social movement" can only refer to conflicts over cultural patterns; the use of political pressure and pursuit of group interests merely represent "non-integrated and lower-level social movements" that are subsumed in broader identity and cultural conflicts (Touraine, 1985: 760-761). From this perspective, the political world of mobilized action and the socio-

cultural sphere of collective identity comprise two separate realms.

Yet, to isolate collective identity from the political sphere seems short-sighted. Cohen (1985) might be correct in arguing that contemporary social movements are less radically all-encompassing compared to turn-of-the-century worker movements: the latter often challenged the entire political and economic structure of society, while the former frequently prefer small, local changes, including "consciousness-raising" projects. In this way, Cohen sees identity concerns as separate from political mobilization goals. However, Cohen's underlying observation, namely the state's increasing involvement in all aspects of social life, provides the perfect example of how contemporary collective action remains political and strategic. I wish to bring the issue of political mobilization back into the discussion of collective identity.

To argue for a political approach to collective identities requires acknowledging the complexity of identity formation. While structural factors have a role to play, collective identities do not automatically develop from structural changes in society. Instead, identities must be formulated, fought over, and to an extent 'sold' to the potential holders of the identity. Yet, despite the element of creation and political calculation, collective identities are not the simple tools that some scholars portray. Beyond the very real emotional attachment people may have to a collective identity, there are also environmental factors that allow some identities to fit better in certain contexts than in others. Finally, identity concerns cannot be separated from political mobilization. As Zald (1996) points out regarding strategic framing, there are competitive processes both external and internal to social movements that shape movements' ideas, symbols and representations. Insiders must be defined and distinguished from outsiders. When a social movement engages in collective action, attempting to mobilize both movement members and others in society, collective identities are invoked and become political. Competitors can attempt to criticize identities or re-interpret them.

In this respect, my approach is similar to that of Taylor and Whittier (1992, 1995) who see culture and identity as central to mobilization efforts. Analyzing the women's movement, they conclude that "the study of collective identity, because it highlights the role of meaning and ideology in the mobilization and maintenance of collective action, is an important key to understanding this process" (1992: 123). Similarly, Gamson claims that "the bridging of personal and collective identity can be viewed strategically, as one part of the mobilization process" (1992: 60). In the case of the Quebec independence movement, leaders in the movement, intent on mobilization goals, narrowed the scope of who was Québécois in order to appeal to a collective action frame that tied self-definitions and community solidarity to specific grievances

(Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Bedford, 1988, 1992). Political competition reinforced this narrowing.

Multiple Identities and Mobilization Playing Fields

The usual approach when considering the role of identity in mobilization efforts is to analyze the crystallization of one shared meaning system. This shared meaning system creates a more or less unified identity helpful in recruiting movement participants (Klandermans, 1992), creating group solidarity (Gamson, 1992), fixing collective action goals (Melucci, 1989), and inciting collective action (Fantasia, 1988). Researchers concentrate on the end-product of identity formation, although all note that identities are negotiated and dynamic. The underlying assumption has been that either before or during initial collective action, a single comprehensive identity is forged. For example, Fantasia (1988) shows empirically how "cultures of solidarity" develop immediately before and during strikes. The literature implies that collective action can solidify nascent identities, creating a shared meaning system that acts as a valuable resource for further mobilization.

The case of the Quebec independence movement challenges the hypothesized progression to a unified identity. Political context plays a critical role in determining which identity is salient at any one time. In Quebec, a Francophone identity is linked to seeing the province as a nation-state. A civic or territorial identity comes into play when Quebec is placed within the international system. Finally, an ethnic identity discourse arises when leaders juxtapose Quebec with the Canadian state.³ The existence of multiple collective identities – which I would hypothesize is the case in most movements – means that attempts to rally people around one particular definition are fraught with difficulties. If identity crystallization is successful, many benefits can result. However, in many cases the attempt to privilege a single collective identity results in more problems than it solves. A dynamic exists between identity formation, framing activities for collective action, and the broader political environment.

To examine the relationship between collective identities and collective action, an analytical approach is needed that maximizes the potential for complex interactions. These interactions can be better understood using the concept of *multiple mobilization playing fields*. Mobilization playing fields are defined as analytically distinct political action environments where each field has its own logic, constraints and conventions. So conceived, mobilization playing fields resemble political opportunity structures, but they are more explicitly multi-dimensional and more focused on ideas, discourses and frames.

Tarrow defines a political opportunity structure as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provides incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success or failure" (1994: 85). Frequently the literature suggests that only one political environment – invariably the national level – impacts a social movement (Tilly, 1978; Kitschelt, 1986; Rootes, 1992).⁴ Discussing political opportunity structures, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald state that "social movements and revolutions are shaped by the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the *national* context in which they are embedded" (1996: 3, emphasis added). It is rare that a researcher consciously separates out the influences of different political environments. Doing so highlights the complexity of collective identities.

The concept of mobilization playing fields has some parallels with Bourdieu's use of field, or *champs*. Bourdieu uses the term "field" to conceptualize the sets of historical relations between various positions of power, or capital, that create a socially structured space within which humans live (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Fields are accompanied by *habitus*, simplifying schemata generated by historic relations that are internalized by individuals. These *habitus* shape, but do not determine, individuals' actions in the social world (Bourdieu, 1977). The idea of mobilization playing fields is similar to Bourdieu's lexicon in that I emphasize the relational aspect of collective identities; different social spaces have different effects on how ideas are defined and actions are carried out. It is also relational in that identity cannot be defined without a "them" to our "us", nor can "insiders" be identified without "outsiders."

However, these parallels should not be overdrawn. I do not propose a theory of capital or power; I merely wish to point out that different fields, and collective identities, exist and should be taken seriously. Mobilization playing fields are very broadly defined political environments. Highlighting the way in which collective definitions exist within multiple mobilization fields is a necessary prior step to explaining why certain collective identities seem to become more dominant. This analytical approach makes the researcher sensitive to the existence of diverse identities rather than a single collective self-definition.

Leaders and Methodology

Presently there are few sign posts for scholars wishing to measure and analyze something as vague as "identity." Taylor and Whittier (1992, 1995) advise the researcher to scrutinize movements' formal writings and speeches, thus placing heavy emphasis on discourses, although they also mention that observable

practices (such as gestures, acts, dress, etc.) can be valuable. Gamson (1992, 1995) also advocates the use of public discourse, especially as created by the mass media. Fantasia (1988) emphasizes field research in his book on worker solidarity. In contrast, Johnston (1995) outlines how to employ "micro-discourse analysis," the minute examination of observers' and participants' narratives. Finally, Lofland (1995) offers an extremely detailed typology for classifying different elements of culture (e.g., objects, stories, roles) according to measures such as degree of distinctiveness, elaboration of culture and expressive symbolism.

Most evidence for my theoretical arguments comes from data collected during the ten months preceding the October 30, 1995 vote on Quebec sovereignty. I analyze the identity discourses found in position papers, news reports, campaign advertisements, speeches and public pronouncements made by key movement leaders. Throughout, I concentrate on leaders: how did independence movement leaders formulate appeals to collective identities in order to further their mobilization goals? I believe a focus on leaders provides the best strategy for unraveling the connections between collective identity and mobilization frames. It also supplies a rich, and reasonably accessible, source of data.

There is also an important theoretical reason for the focus on leaders, related to the need for identity articulation. To be able to claim that a *collective* identity exists, one must show that individuals' personal identities are shared, and that these individuals recognize the shared nature of their identities. Identities, therefore, only exist on the personal level until they are articulated by someone – usually a religious, political or intellectual leader. Once articulated, such identities become truly collective. Given the need for collective identity articulation, leaders are critically important, yet they have rarely been studied within the social movement and collective identity literature. Rather, scholars investigate the formation of collective identity among participants in a social movement (Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Fantasia, 1988), or examine how social movements affect the micro-mobilization and identities of ordinary people (Klandermans, 1992, 1997; Mansbridge, 1993). Such research obviously is necessary for a complete picture of collective identity, but it should be accompanied by an examination of leaders' role in collective identity formation and transformation.

AMBIGUOUS IDENTITIES AND MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES

A rich literature exists on Quebec nationalism and French Canadian collective identity (Balthazar, 1986; Bourque & Duchastel, 1996; Dion, 1975; Dumont,

1993). Some, like Dion, use a socio-economic lens to categorize ideologies as conservative, liberal, social-democratic or socialist. Others, like Balthazar, employ a chronological approach downplaying collective identity differences in order to examine commonalities. An alternative approach – one taken here – examines boundary formation discourses; it investigates how certain people are defined as part of the collective while others are excluded.⁵ In this section, I provide an overview of collective identity shifts in Quebec to show the historic roots of contemporary discourses and situate the 1995 referendum. It is followed by a detailed look at the 1995 referendum campaign.

Historical Roots of Contemporary Quebec Collective Identities

The process of defining outsiders and insiders has been dynamic over time. Naming plays a crucial role in marking and defining these shifts (Jenson, 1995). During the 17th century, about 10,000 French settlers came to the land called New France; this group gave rise to most of the contemporary French-Canadian population. The settlers soon called themselves *Canadiens* to distinguish themselves from people in France and from the Aboriginals living around them. There is some debate as to whether these *Canadiens* possessed a distinct national consciousness. Frégault (1990) suggests they did, while others, such as McRoberts (1993: 41), disagree. There is agreement, however, that the North American environment and evolving language and cultural patterns made those living in New France distinct enough to warrant a new collective name.

In 1760, following a decisive French defeat at Quebec City the year before, Britain established a military government over New France. British possession of Canada was formalized in 1763 when France ceded the territory in exchange for British possessions in the Caribbean. Under the Royal Proclamation, Britain intended to make the Church of England the official church of the colony, to impose English law and language, and to end the seigneurial land holding system. The goal was clearly assimilatory, and the theme of *la Conquête* (the conquest) has been a mainstay in many streams of Quebec nationalism. Some even argue that the British conquest produced a "collective trauma," similar for all conquered and colonized peoples, that affected majority Quebecers' economic success well into the 20th century (Harvey, 1971). Such an argument suffers from over-determinism, but appeals to French Canadians' common past as a conquered people, a people who withstood assimilation pressures, figure prominently in ethnic conceptions of the Quebec collective identity. Although used rarely during the 1995 campaign, reference to the conquest was made in the Preamble of the 1995 Bill on Sovereignty, upon which the October referendum turned.

In 1774, the Quebec Act superseded the Royal Proclamation, re-establishing the seigneurial system, permitting the Catholic Church to collect tithes, allowing Catholics to hold office, and re-storing French civil law. These concessions were made for a variety of reasons, chief among them fear that unrest from Britain's American colonies would spread north. As it was, the American War of Independence forced thousands of Loyalists to flee northward, causing another name change: the people of the St. Lawrence Valley became *les Canadiens-français* and developed a French Canadian collective identity to distinguish themselves from the English Canadians now living in their midst (Lahaise in Gougeon 1994).⁶ Preservation of language and culture became a matter of resistance not only against British overlords, but also against others who called themselves Canadians.

There have always been various ways of defining the French Canadian nation at any one time. The Catholic Church, secure under the 1774 Quebec Act, generally promoted a traditional identity centered around the French language, traditional values, the Catholic faith and rural living. In the 1820s and 1830s the *Patriotes*, liberals seeking political changes in how the British colonies in North America were governed, opposed such traditional identities. Some of the Patriots' writings suggest that Aborigines were included in their conception of the nation, as were like-minded liberal Anglophones (Ferretti & Miron, 1992). Whether the Patriots are seen as nationalists fighting British conspiracies against the French Canadian nation (Filteau, 1980), as a class uprising of the petty bourgeoisie against the *ancien régime* (Bernier & Salée, 1992), or as a group of earnest republicans fighting for popular sovereignty (Greer, 1993), they articulated an early version of a liberal Quebec identity. Their vision represented a much more inclusive collective identity than that offered by the church; it would be re-embraced in the second half of the 20th century.

After the Patriots' rebellion was violently suppressed by the British military, the Church's conservative interpretation returned in full force. Until the end of World War II, this traditional vision was embraced by both conservative clerics and mainstream political leaders. Those part of the nation were contrasted to an "other", or outsider, who was English-speaking, Protestant, and, within Quebec, a leader of business and trade. A number of Anglophones, especially in Quebec, actively promoted the separation of spheres implicit in this definition. McRoberts (1993), borrowing from Hechter (1975, 1978), speaks of an internal cultural division of labor between the two language groups. The English in Quebec occupied key positions in the private sector and owned most businesses while French Canadians either had careers in the liberal professions or worked as farmers or laborers. Economic domination has been a recurring theme in Quebec nationalism, reinforcing a discourse of grievance. Both traditional

Francophone elites and Quebec Anglophones were criticized for perpetuating majority Quebecers' second-class economic status.

The English Canadian collective identity was largely one of Anglo-conformity during the 19th century and up to end of World War II (Breton, 1988). Most immigration to Canada during much of the 19th century originated in the British Isles, and to a lesser extent in Western Europe and the United States. These immigrants were welcome if they could fit into the emerging Anglo-Canadian nation, seen by many as a small part of the larger British Empire. Immigration, already responsible for the move from *Canadien* to French Canadian, would remain a bone of contention between the English and French throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, in some cases reinforcing boundaries and in others challenging them. Lord Durham's report, following the Patriots' rebellion, stated that the French Canadian "race" was inferior to the British, and he advocated active assimilation through political union and immigration. In 1840 a single government of Canada was established to rule over both English Upper Canada and French Lower Canada. This experiment in political union soon deadlocked, leading to Canadian Confederation in 1867 which established Canada's current federal structure. Following the Durham report, fear of immigration as a British assimilatory device became more firmly bound to traditional visions of the French Canadian collective identity. There was a strong turn inwards, or a *repli sur soi*. Supported by Catholic leaders, the growth of the French Canadian nation was to be based on natural increase, not through the incorporation of newcomers.

Yet, the forces of industrialization, urbanization, and secularism made rigid national definitions problematic. Ferment in the 1950s by a number of liberal thinkers ushered in what has been termed the "Quiet Revolution" in Quebec. In 1960, a new government of the Quebec Liberal party ended the long reign of the conservative Union Nationale. Traditional identity issues centered on culture and religion were supplanted by nationalist interest in economic and political power, though there is debate as to whether a single class instituted the change (McRoberts, 1993), or whether there was a coalition of classes (Coleman, 1984). By the 1960s, the nation had ceased being *Canadiens français* and had become *Québécois*. While the earlier name clearly incorporates an ethnic label, the term 'Québécois' evokes the geo-political space of the province of Quebec. The implication is that anyone within this territory can be a member of the nation.

Since Confederation, the Quebec provincial government was seen as the defender of French Canadian interests because Francophones always constituted a majority in the province. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries this role, as articulated by leaders such as Henri Bourassa, encompassed a non-territorialized

nation: the Quebec provincial government would protect the interests, as far as it could, of French Canadians living throughout Canada. As a result, conflicts in Western Canada involving French language rights and/or Catholicism generated outrage in Quebec.⁷ The Quiet Revolution narrowed the collective boundaries to encompass only those living within the geo-political confines of the province of Quebec.

The Liberal government of Lesage actively used the state to modernize education, take greater control over the provincial economy and generally develop an activist state machinery. This was a radical change from the previous non-interventionism of Quebec governments. One significant consequence was the eclipse of the Catholic Church as a central social and political leader in the province. Quebec society rapidly secularized. In 1965, 83% of Quebec Catholics attended Mass weekly while only 32% of Protestants in the province and the rest of Canada attended a weekly service. By 1985, only 38% of Catholics in Quebec were going to church every Sunday (Harvey, 1990; see also Bibby, 1987). Couture (1994) goes so far to argue that the state took over the role of the church and assumed many of the sacred characteristics normally linked to religion: fearful respect and fascination, social myths giving meaning to the community, and transcendental power. While this overstates the case – the government also had to contend with many challenges to its power and authority – it is not too far-fetched to argue that as state institutions and government elites replaced those of the church, the state took over part of the church's traditional ideological role, including the definition of the collective identity.

Again, this had important implications for the national conception. As the state replaced the church, the shift away from a traditional ethnic collective identity increased. A provincial government, even if the majority of its constituents are French, governs over all, and should, in a liberal democracy, attend to the needs of all inhabitants within its territory. Thus, it became conceivable that the group named "Quebecers" could and should include non-majority members.

The changes and ferment in Quebec did not go unnoticed in the rest of Canada. A federal Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism inquired into the status of Francophones within the federal government and, more generally, in Canadian society. The federal government decided to follow the Commission's recommendation to institute official bilingualism within the federal government, giving English and French equal status. However, at least partly because of the new "ethnic" voice from immigrants and their descendants, Prime Minister Trudeau announced an official policy of *multi-culturalism* in 1971, not the bi-culturalism reflected in the name of the Commission. English Canada was also undergoing a slow identity shift. As Breton (1988) outlines,

immigrants to Western Canada and Ontario began asserting their right to promote and celebrate their own cultural heritages, rather than comply with Anglo-conformity. There is much debate over the factors leading to the adoption of multiculturalism (Fleras & Elliot, 1992), but one reason was clearly Trudeau's wish to privilege liberal individualism over ethnic nationalism and the growing Quebec independence movement.

Trudeau's actions and general political stance were seen by many in Quebec as an attempt to de-legitimize Quebec nationalism. Under multiculturalism, majority Quebecers are reduced to having an ethnicity like everyone else (Labelle, Rocher & Rocher, 1995; Dufour, 1989).⁸ Coupled with an individual rights discourse, this meant that the demands of majority Quebecers would be treated equal to those of Ukrainian-Canadians or Canadians of Italian background. Although multiculturalism in English Canada has been the subject of much debate (Abu-Laban & Stasiulis, 1992; Bissoondath, 1994; Fleras & Elliot, 1992), it has proven to be a powerful rhetoric for post-British Empire Canada, evoking diversity and unity simultaneously. Vis-à-vis immigrants in Quebec, the Canadian government's policy of multiculturalism has allowed it to have the rhetorical high-ground in debates with supporters of sovereignty, regardless of the policy reality behind multiculturalism (Labelle, Rocher & Rocher, 1995). Thus, federalists are especially vigilant in picking up any hint that the independence movement is ethnocentric or racist, contrasting perceived Québécois ethnic nationalism to the federal ideology of multiculturalism. This dynamic was very evident during the 1995 referendum. As Beauchemin (1998) suggests, the force of this attack is in part due to growing global (or at least Western) acceptance of the idea of multiculturalism.

A number of movements and political parties devoted to Quebec independence grew in the 1960s and 1970s. Most were peaceable, though in 1970 the *Front de libération du Québec* (FLQ) kidnapped two political figures, killing one. A critical turning point occurred when René Lévesque, a former Cabinet member of the provincial Liberal party, declared his support for sovereignty-association and became the leader of the Parti québécois (PQ). In 1976 this pro-independence party was elected to provincial government. In 1980 the PQ held a referendum on sovereignty-association. Supporters of independence lost when only 40% of the Quebec population voted for political sovereignty and economic association with Canada.

The 1980s and 1990s can be characterized as a time of significant constitutional contention. During the 1980 referendum campaign, Trudeau promised a new Canadian constitution that would address many Quebecers' demands. When the new Constitution was signed in 1982, not only did it fail to deal with those demands, but it created a host of new grievances. There remains considerable

controversy as to what, exactly, happened, but Quebec sovereigntists claim that Premier René Lévesque was betrayed by other Canadian provinces and left out of crucial constitutional negotiations. The end result was that Quebec – following a unanimous vote in the National Assembly – refused to sign the new Constitution, though it is still legally obliged to abide by it. For many majority Quebecers, this incident has become a symbol of English Canada's rejection of French Canadians, an added insult to the list of humiliating experiences suffered within Confederation. The failure in 1990 to pass the Meech Lake Accord, a constitutional amendment that would have brought Quebec back into the Canadian fold, heightened the feeling of rejection. Themes of rejection would become potent symbols during the 1995 referendum campaign, an example of what Taylor (1994) calls the "politics of recognition." For sovereigntists, "recognition" will only come through independence, *not* through the modification of existing political structures. This is what makes the political competition over Quebec collective identities so important.

The 1995 Referendum Campaign

Having sketched out a number of collective identity discourses available to leaders of the independence movement, as well as some of the counter-identities available to their opponents, I move now to an analysis of the referendum campaign. In accordance with Quebec election law, there was an official "yes" and "no" side to which groups could adhere. The major players on both sides were members of provincial and federal political parties. Jacques Parizeau, leader of the PQ and Premier of Quebec, headed the "yes" coalition. He was joined by Lucien Bouchard, the leader of the Bloc québécois (BQ), a pro-independence party seated in the federal House of Commons, and Mario Dumont, leader of the small pro-sovereignty association party Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ). Leading the "no" side was Daniel Johnson, leader of the provincial Liberal party. Johnson was joined by Jean Chrétien, leader of the federal Liberals and Prime Minister, Jean Charest, leader of the federal Progressive Conservative Party, and a host of federal politicians. The official referendum campaign started in the fall of 1995 in accordance with Quebec law, but the symbolic campaign began in January of 1995 since it was evident to all that a vote was imminent. I examine the diversity of collective identities used by leaders in conjunction with each discourse's primary mobilization playing field.

Quebec as Playing Field: Un Québec francophone

By 1995 the dominant, but not hegemonic, definition of the nation held by separatists and federalists in Quebec centered on the idea that being *Québécois*,

and thus an insider, requires that one speak French. The evolution to a linguistic Francophone, not ethnic French Canadian, identity derives from a long-standing concern by majority Quebecers over the survival of the French language in North America. However, it is also a response to unique 20th century phenomena: secularization made Catholicism unimportant to the collective identity, while immigration posed a challenge to ethnic nationalism.

A Francophone collective identity rests on a mobilization field of provincial strength. Although majority Quebecers are dominant in Quebec, they are a minority within Canada. The Canadian federation gives provincial governments numerous powers including taxation for their own purposes, control over health care and education, and the right to make civil laws. Quebec governments, both those of a federalist and separatist bent, have long used provincial strength to make up for French Canadians' perceived weakness, or minority status, at the federal level. As a result, provincial governments are key instruments of Quebec nationalism. The main difference between federalists and separatists lies in the desire of the former to use provincial strength to achieve a better place in confederation, while the latter wish to use this strength as the basis for a separate nation-state.⁹ Studying state formation in Europe, Tilly (1975) has pointed out that a culturally and linguistically homogeneous population (either "natural" or coercively created) is a contributing factor to a strong nation-state. Eugen Weber (1976) found that homogenization carried out by the French state in the 19th century made administration easier, engendered loyalty and patriotism which helped with conscription, and served as ideological legitimization for the regime. In a similar manner, the conception of a Francophone Quebec identity links with a mobilization effort to build a strong, internal nation-state.¹⁰

The move away from an ethnic collective identity to a purely linguistic one resulted from the Quiet Revolution's liberalism, the presence of immigrants, and demographic fears. As early as 1952, demographers sounded the alarm of a comparative decrease in the French Canadian population, as an ethnic group, in proportion to the entire Canadian population (Behiels, 1991). French Canadians outside Quebec were rapidly assimilating and becoming Anglophone. Inside Quebec, French Canadians' traditional means of ensuring strong population growth – through high fertility rates – did not seem sustainable. In 1926 French Canadian women had an average of 4.4 children in their lifetime (Linteau et al., 1986: 198). By 1966 it was 2.7 and in 1971 it fell to 2 children per woman, below the natural replacement rate of 2.1 (Linteau et al., 1986: 405). French Canadians feared that they would be further marginalized within the Canadian confederation as their numbers declined relative to the entire Canadian population. Where natural population increase failed, immigration offered a solution.

Traditional versions of Quebec nationalism tend to be suspicious of immigrants, though Behiels (1991) argues, based on responses to language questions on the Canadian census, that Italian immigrants were probably integrating into French Canadian society during the 1920s. However, by the 1930s the economic hardships of the Depression had driven most immigrants to English welfare agencies connected with English-speaking churches. As Breton argues, "[immigrants] did not threaten the French collective directly, but indirectly by increasing anglophone numbers and by reinforcing their institutions" (1988: 95). Since business and the Quebec economy were dominated by Canadian and American Anglophones, immigrant parents sent their children to English-language schools. In response, various Quebec governments in the 1960s and 1970s proposed, then required, French-language instruction for all immigrant children, fueled by demographic fears over the status of the French language and political fears regarding French-speakers' minority status in Confederation (Levine, 1997).

The result was a strange insider/outsider logic. The enemy during the linguistic battles of the 1960s and 70s was clearly Anglophone Quebecers (regardless of how long they and their ancestors had lived in Quebec), and to a lesser extent, other Anglophone Canadians. If ethnic minorities learned English, they were outsiders, working to undermine Francophone Quebec. If, however, they successfully learned the French language, the logic of the linguistic discourse meant that they must be part of the collective, even if they were not descendants of the original French colonists and had only recently arrived on Quebec soil. Such a re-definition was already available in the non-ethnic label "Québécois." This new linguistic identity was progressively embraced by many groups in Quebec society.

Today the government's official position suggests that language determines collective membership. The language criterion is somewhat exclusionary, but is attainable by most people since languages can be learned and are not ascribed. Insider status does not require French as a mother tongue, just French speaking ability. In 1981, the government released a "Plan of Action for Cultural Communities" which stated that the vitality of minority communities benefit all of Quebec society, but that the common meeting point must be the French language. In addition, since "language is not simply a vehicle . . . it follows that one must also accept the logical conclusion . . . that the francophone culture need [not] be the only legitimate one in Quebec, but rather that it must have the leading role" (Quebec, 1981: 11). In a 1990 policy statement on immigration and immigrant integration, cultural convergence is downplayed, but linguistic convergence lies at the very heart of a 'moral contract' between immigrants and Quebec society. The 1990 document uses demographic arguments in three

of the four reasons it gives for integrating minorities into the Francophone linguistic sphere. It notes that immigrants and their descendants are needed to keep the Quebec population stable, they are necessary in order to keep the Quebec economy healthy and able to pay for the social service of an aging population, and finally, noting that majority Quebecers have a fertility rate well below the replacement rate, the government argues that the integration of minorities is essential to keep "la pérennité du fait français" alive.¹¹ Immigrant integration thus becomes a method of state-building. With these and other statements, Quebec provincial governments endorsed a change in the collective identity to a non-ethnic, linguistic definition of the nation.

In the ten months preceding the 1995 referendum vote, independence movement leaders made appeals to a Francophone collective identity numerous times. One of the most interesting, and complex, documents of the referendum period is the "Bill Respecting the Future of Québec" (1995).¹² Produced by the governing Parti québécois, it was to serve as a guideline of what would happen in the event of a "yes" vote and as a statement on the future constitution of an independent Quebec. This important document provides some key indicators of the various discourses prominent during the referendum. Although not dominant, a Francophone Quebec, where the French language separates insiders from outsiders, marked one collective identity definition.

The Bill begins with a long, lyrical preamble that, according to one of the Bill's contributors, is supposed to give both a grandiose feel to the declaration of sovereignty and a vision of what Quebec society will be like after independence (*La Presse*, 07.09.95). At one point, the preamble argues that "[w]e, the people of Québec" are free to choose a future "[b]ecause the heart of this land beats in French and because that heartbeat is as meaningful as the seasons that hold sway over it, as the winds that bend it, as the men and women who shape it" (Québec, 1995: 8). The Preamble later describes an independent Quebec, characterized first and foremost by language:

Our language celebrates our love, our beliefs and our dreams for this land and for this country. In order that the profound sense of belonging to a distinct people be now and for all time the very bastion of our identity, we proclaim our will to live in a French-language society (Quebec, 1995: 10).¹³

In this passage there is a clear relation between "we," "the people," "our identity" and the fact that Quebec is and should be a French-speaking society.

There are other, less poetic, expressions of this Francophone identity. In the legal body of the Bill, the first guideline reads, "The new constitution shall state that Québec is a French-speaking country and shall impose upon the Government the obligation of protecting Québec culture and ensuring its

development" (Quebec, 1995: 14).¹⁴ On the campaign trail, Lucien Bouchard used constitutional and demographic arguments in support of the French language to convince people to vote "yes." He noted that without the Canadian Supreme Court, there would be no body that could challenge the right of the government to legislate language laws. Furthermore, an independent Quebec would have complete control over immigration, as opposed to its current partial control, and thus could ensure that "we realize more rapidly a French Quebec" (*La Presse*, 22.09.95).¹⁵ Note especially how the immigration argument does not necessarily entail an ethnic conception of the nation. French-speaking Haitian immigrants are desired according to this logic, while the assimilated Anglophone American descendents of French Canadians would be less welcome.¹⁶

In sum, since the 1960s a collective identity discourse centered on the French language gained prominence. The development of this identity is largely related to an internal nation-state dynamic, a mobilization playing field with the goal of forging a cohesive, strong Quebec society and state. This Francophone collective identity is somewhat exclusionary, but since most people can acquire language skills it has the potential to include non-majority Quebecers, though perhaps at the price of assimilation. Documents and statements of various sovereignty movement leaders provide some examples of this Francophone identity during the referendum. However, one is struck by the relative dearth of such comments generally. Given its widespread use by both pro-independence and federalist governments during the 1990s, one would have expected a Francophone collective identity to be the dominant discourse of the referendum campaign. Because federalist forces within Quebec also embrace a French-language identity, it would have been harder for federalists to attack the separatist movement. Curiously, however, there was only intermittent use of the Francophone definition of the collective identity. I suggest that the pressures of another mobilization field, the international arena, led a second, broader collective identity discourse to compete with the first.

An Inclusive Québécois Identity: International Considerations

Given the prevalence and acceptance of a Francophone collective identity, it is surprising that the initial collective identity enunciated by movement leaders was all-inclusive, considering everyone within the geo-political confines of Quebec *Québécois*, regardless of language or ethnicity. This identity was supposed to be the dominant discourse throughout the whole referendum campaign, as evidenced by advertising strategies and internal campaign planning documents. Ultimately, this identity discourse was insufficient and replaced by a much narrower definition of the *Québécois* nation. Nevertheless, movement

leaders attempted to take an inclusive approach, reflecting Quebec's place in the international system.

The move to an inclusive identity was signaled two years before the referendum campaign heated up. A comparison of two documents written by the Parti québécois, the central organization of the independence movement, is instructive. In 1990, the PQ published a pamphlet outlining five reasons to support Quebec sovereignty. The first two reasons explicitly mention language and cultural concerns, evoking a Francophone collective identity, and perhaps a narrower ethnic French-Canadian identity. The first reason for independence is "to develop as a Francophone people" (PQ, 1990: 6).¹⁷ The text notes the importance of the French language, argues that the Canadian federal government impedes the development and spread of French, and contends that an independent Quebec will better integrate immigrants into a French society. The second reason for independence is "to no longer be a minority" (PQ, 1990: 8).¹⁸ The text notes that historically French Quebec had a bigger voice at the federal level, and that this French voice has diminished with little hope for future growth due to changing demographics. It also suggests that the Anglophone majority who controls the federal government will work against Quebec interests. Again, this appeals to a Francophone identity, and perhaps even an ethnic French Canadian one with its invocation of history and its zero-sum portrayal of federal politics. Other reasons given for independence are to end governmental overlap, to create an economic policy in Quebec's interests and to allow Quebec to take its place in the world. Later in the pamphlet, eight paragraphs summarize anti-French and anti-Quebec historical incidents, beginning with the English conquest of 1760 and ending with the "unprecedented anti-Francophone sentiment in the English provinces" (PQ, 1990: 20, 42-45). There are also two paragraphs devoted to assuring the place of minorities in an independent Quebec. The tone of the document, taken in its entirety, is one of a restricted collective identity that includes only Francophones, and perhaps only ethnic French-Canadians.

There is a stark contrast between this 1990 document and a 1993 position paper that the National Executive Council of the Parti québécois published under the title, *Le Québec dans un monde nouveau*.¹⁹ The 1993 position paper is mostly forward-looking and overwhelmingly concentrated on economic issues in its defense of independence. There are almost no references to linguistic or cultural issues, nor a reiteration of historical grievances in support of separation. In over 65 pages, only six and a half mention cultural issues, a couple of pages touch on subjects such as women's equality and the environment, and the rest is entirely devoted to material aspirations such as making Quebec business competitive internationally, job creation, and combating poverty. Nowhere in

the document do we find an explicit mention of who the Quebec people are, but the tone is very inclusive, implying anyone can be Québécois. At one point, the position paper states that "The French language is the cornerstone of Quebec's cultural identity" (National Executive, 1994: 37), but this declaration is immediately followed by the sentence, "However, a Quebec that wants to be open to the world needs to encourage its citizens to learn other languages, especially English" (National Executive, 1994: 37). Non-white minorities are briefly mentioned (1994: 39), and are clearly considered Québécois, as are Aboriginals and Anglophones, to whom Quebec owes much in terms of cultural contributions (1994: 46). The reference to learning English is especially striking, considering that English is usually attacked as a direct threat to the survival of the French language and Francophone Quebec. The overall tone is of a dynamic, pluralist, and forward-looking Quebec, more interested in economics than traditional cultural concerns.

This definition of the collective identity – one that includes all resident of Quebec, regardless of language or ethnicity – was transferred from the PQ organization to the general referendum campaign. In accordance with Quebec referendum law, both sides of the question were allowed to publish their arguments in a pamphlet delivered to all households in Quebec. In it, the changes heralded in 1993 are brought to fruition. There is no reference to the English conquest of 1760, nor to any historical wrongs prior to 1980, minimizing the suggestion that ethnic grievances fuel separation. The booklet gives ten reasons for voting for independence. While in 1990 the PQ document based 40% of its arguments on socio-linguistic concerns, the 1995 document only contains one explicit reference to French language and culture, and one veiled reference to the need to protect Quebec's "distinct society" (DGEQ, 1995: 8–9). While in 1990 protection of French language and culture was the number one reason to support separation, it falls to number three in the 1995 pamphlet. The first reason for independence in the 1995 campaign document is the need of a "distinct society" to have a country, a reference to the French character of Quebec, but one which is less explicit than earlier calls for linguistic and cultural control.²⁰ The other eight reasons for independence all focus on economic and bureaucratic issues such as freedom from government overlap and the protection of social services.

Numerous other examples from a variety of sources show the same shift to a consciously inclusive collective identity. The color of the Quebec flag, of the Quebec government, and by extension, of the Quebec separatist movement is blue and white, usually including the symbol of the French fleur-de-lys. Yet in 1995, the 'yes' side broke with tradition, launching a poster campaign that refused to use blue and white color schemes and which contained no symbol traditionally associated with the independence movement. Instead, brightly

colored campaign posters, mostly in reds and yellows, sported the slogan "Oui, et ça devient possible."²¹ All five versions of the poster reflected the positive message that all would be well in a sovereign Quebec. At times the "O" in Oui was replaced by a "men at work" sign, implying that separation would help job creation. Other posters replaced the "O" by a world globe (openness to the international community), by a Canadian one dollar coin (signifying continued economic relations with Canada), or with a daisy or peace sign (suggesting a peaceful, harmonious future). The poster campaign was explicitly designed to "surprise" and to move away from "traditional" images of the sovereignty movement, according to an aide of Jacques Parizeau (*La Presse*, 02.10.95). While the posters were only put up in October, the idea for them was developed in the spring of 1995 when it was decided to focus on the possibilities of an independent future, rather than on traditional grievances.

The themes of inclusion, working for the future, and economic strength dominated most of the speeches given by movement leaders throughout the spring and summer of 1995. On June 12, 1995 the leaders of the three major political organizations of the sovereignty movement, the PQ, the Bloc Québécois and l'Action démocratique du Québec, signed a joint declaration announcing their intention to work together in the upcoming referendum (Quebec, 1995). The declaration was mostly technical, stating the desire for independence, but also the wish for economic partnership with Canada. Economics dominated, including commercial issues and membership in international economic associations such as the World Trade Organization and NAFTA. The only reason given for independence is a vague reference to "the historical aspirations of Quebec" (Quebec, 1995: 20).²² Mario Dumont was particularly prone to emphasizing the opportunities of an independent Quebec throughout the campaign; he would frequently use the phrase "the side for change" when referring to the efforts of the "yes" side (e.g. *La Presse*, 21.09.95). Independence was portrayed as benefiting everyone, not just a specific group such as majority Quebecers.

It is impossible to pinpoint all the reasons for such an all-encompassing collective representation. From a purely strategic point of view, it seems to make sense to enlarge the mobilization audience by including everyone. The more people who feel part of the group, the greater the possibility that enough people will vote "yes" to independence. However, it is well-known that many minority groups do not support independence, and broader national conceptions will not change that stance. The reasons for the inclusive discourse must therefore lie beyond strategic considerations. Instead, we must look to the mobilization playing field of the international arena, as well as individuals' convictions. An inclusive Quebec collective identity (around what Fernand Dumont (1995) terms the "political community") also provides a counter-point

to the Canadian (multicultural) identity promoted by the federal government. Considering international relations highlights discourse nuances that a standard domestic analysis of this social movement would miss.

First, international laws and norms take on consequence in separatists' quest for international acceptance in the event of a declaration of Quebec sovereignty (Brossard, 1976; Woehrling, 1994a, 1994b). For many Western, industrialized states (not to mention many developing countries), an independent Quebec would create an unsettling precedent. The Scots in Britain, the Flemish in Belgium and the Basques and Catalans in Spain are but a few examples of regions that might follow Quebec's lead, making foreign governments reluctant to recognize Quebec's sovereignty. Quebec must therefore be exemplary in its treatment of minorities and in the democratic way it attains independence. Indeed, the sovereignty movement faces a second mobilization campaign on the international level if it were to receive a majority vote, a situation recognized by leader Jacques Parizeau (Parizeau, 1997).

Second, most separatists in Quebec embrace the global ideology and rhetoric of human rights as an end in itself, and they strongly support notions of democracy. Consequently, many elites find it repugnant to discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, and while they wish all non-Francophones spoke French in addition to their maternal language, they strongly support a rights discourse. At the international level, support for human rights has grown over the course of the 20th century, undermining exclusionary definitions of citizenship and nation (Jacobson, 1996; Soysal, 1994). As Beauchemin (1998) contends, international discourses, supported by structural globalization processes, add a new dimension to debates over Quebec's future.

Finally, and more tentatively, one can argue that the separatist movement is distancing itself from an ethno-cultural conception of the nation and toward a geo-political delineation partly due to the challenge of Quebec's native peoples. Quebec's Cree and Inuit populations have been especially vocal in arguing that if Quebec can separate from Canada because it forms a distinct socio-cultural nation, then native peoples have a right to separate from Quebec for the same reason. Fragmentation would likely destroy the viability of an independent Quebec. Consequently, a broad collective identity, one that includes Aborigines as well as other minorities, seems critical within the international sphere.

Thus, a host of reasons existed for the inclusive Quebec identity promoted by the independence movement in the spring and summer of 1995. Yet, in the six weeks prior to the vote, there was a radical shift to a narrow definition of the collective identity, culminating in Parizeau's remark blaming the "ethnic vote" for 'true' Quebecers' loss. The final section of this paper attempts to explain this strange turn of events.

Back to the Past? Recurring French-Canadianism in the Quebec-Canada context

It is one thing to define an identity or draw boundaries around a nation, but it is another to make that collective identity salient during mobilization. For example, in the 1993 PQ position paper, there is little to spur people into action except for vague promises that an independent Quebec will solve all of society's ills. The reasons given to reject the federal arrangement inspire little passion: in the new economic world order governments must have "coherent adjustment strategies" that can be achieved only in the "social solidarity" offered by separation. The goal of an ideal Quebec state allows the position paper to embrace an inclusive collective identity, but one might well wonder if "coherent adjustment strategies" will mobilize people to support separation.

To convert a collective identity into a collective action frame capable of mobilizing people, leaders must stress specific, meaning-laden grievances. Nothing in a collective identity inherently spurs members of a group to act for the group. Collective identity involves the definition of a "we" characterized by certain traits and set apart from others by symbolic boundaries. The "we" can remain latent, providing a pleasant psychological feeling of belonging, but not necessitating action. In contrast, collective action frames define the social world, often as unjust (punctuation), assign blame and propose a line of action to remedy that injustice (attribution), and provide a lens for individuals to interpret their whole "world out there" according to that schemata (articulation) (Snow & Benford, 1992: 137-138). As Gamson argues (1995), a successful collective action frame combines identity with injustice – a feeling that goes beyond awareness to inspire moral indignation – and agency, the belief that it is possible to alter conditions through collective action.

A few scholars have hypothesized a possible inverse relationship between collective identity and mobilization. Of movement cultures, Lofland claims, "There seems, in fact, to be a dilemma of culture: truly strong movement cultures tend to stimulate commitment and participation but to be authoritarian, while weak cultures, even though they are democratic and participatory, underestimate commitment and participation" (1995: 215). Looking specifically at social movement organizations, Friedman and McAdam (1992) argue that the more inclusive an organization attempts to be in formulating its collective identity, the smaller its actual membership might become.

The case of the Quebec independence movement and the 1995 referendum campaign provide further empirical support for such an inverse relationship. The PQ initially appealed to a broad collective identity. However, because collective definitions were cast so broadly, concrete arguments in favor of separation could only be couched in the most general terms. The result was a

positive – even utopian – initial campaign. Unfortunately, there was little in the mobilization appeal to encourage action. As the actual referendum day came closer, movement leaders increasingly appealed to a narrow, ethnic-based collective identity. In a number of cases, the shift was conscious, aimed at generating strong emotions in favor of separation. In other cases, an implicit ethnic identity arose through the bitter competition between the “yes” and “no” sides of the referendum, despite the wishes of some movement leaders. Together, cultural specificity and the introduction of an injustice frame brought emotional meaning to Quebecers’ collective identity. At the same time, the change in collective identity narrowed the boundaries of the nation.

The shift in collective identity began in September when opinion polls predicted that the sovereignty camp would lose the referendum and as internal dissension became public. In the last two weeks of September, three polls done by three different firms showed support for sovereignty at about 45%, unchanged since the summer (*The Gazette*, 30.09.95). In an unthinkable move, four academics who had analyzed numerous polls for the sovereignty movement disclosed their confidential findings publicly, criticizing the leaders of the independence movement for fighting a referendum they could not win (*Le Devoir*, 28.08.95). Their critique reflected the thinking of many in the separatist camp: the pre-referendum campaign was not going well, and 1995 was not the appropriate year to have a vote on separation. On September 21st, the French language press carried articles on serious internal conflicts within the “yes” side as PQ activists questioned campaign strategies (e.g. *La Presse*, 21.09.98).

Within a week, one of Parizeau’s aides explicitly signaled a change in strategy, commenting that “We’re going to add a little tabasco sauce into the campaign” (*The Gazette*, 28.09.95). Parizeau himself told reporters that “a whole new rhythm” would henceforth characterize the campaign, and various strategists were replaced (*La Presse*, 28.09.98). Other elites of the “yes” side, such as BQ leader Lucien Bouchard and Deputy Premier Bernard Landry, partially distanced themselves from the summer campaign. Telling reporters that a new campaign had begun, Bouchard declared, “I think the campaign will begin with numbers . . . and end in enthusiasm – and now the campaign is following its normal course” (*The Gazette*, 12.10.95). Arousing enthusiasm and emotions meant that the independence movement had to narrow and specify its collective action frame.

The change in the definition of the collective identity was first signaled on September 20th. Although much of his speech focused on economics, Parizeau alluded for the first time to the threat of assimilation facing Francophones, and he argued that federalists in the rest Canada have “spent the last 15 years pushing us around, belittling us and putting us into debt” (*The Gazette*,

21.09.95). That day the independence movement also began a major radio advertising campaign that claimed French speakers would become a minority in Montreal if people did not vote yes (*La Presse*, 21.09.98).

Political competition – generating an “us against them” rhetoric – also led to a stronger ethnic definition of the collective identity as cultural factors and historic grievances came to the forefront. On September 23rd, the federalist president of a life insurance company urged “no” supporters to “crush” the opposition. In response, the image of English Canada crushing an implicit ethnic Quebec became a dominant rallying point for sovereigntists and the predominant theme of many of Parizeau’s campaign speeches. Playing on the humiliation frame, the Conseil de la Souveraineté ran full-page newspaper ads on September 27th asking in big red letters, “Are we going to be crushed . . . or respected?” Addressing a youth rally on October 19th, Parizeau told his audience, “There has always been a No camp. Every time we wanted to move there was a No camp to tell us that we’re too small, that we’re not capable, that we never look as good as when we’re on our knees” (*The Gazette*, 20.10.95). Although ostensibly still addressing such comments to “Quebecers” writ large, reminders of past humiliations were invariably designed to attract majority Quebecers’ votes.

The logic of mobilization and political competition reinforced the move to a narrower collective identity, creating numerous ambiguities in the public definition of the Quebec collective identity. Deputy premier Bernard Landry told an assembly organized by the Greek-Quebec Society that all Quebecers regardless of origin were “Québécois,” but the next day he claimed that the federalist “no” side was “using non-integrated immigrants to purposefully inhibit all Quebecers from choosing to join the society of nation-states” (*La Presse*, 14.10.95). The use of the term “non-integrated” both questioned his earlier premise that territorial residence determined collective membership, and suggested that cultural convergence was necessary to be part of the group. The opposition jumped on these remarks, suggesting that Landry and other sovereigntists believe that only majority Quebecers are true Québécois, and that non-majority Quebecers are welcome only if they vote “yes” (*La Presse*, 14.10.95). Other comments, such as Bouchard’s passing remark about Quebec being of the “white race,” were similarly exploited by the opposition to paint the “yes” forces in an ethnocentric light (*La Presse*, 17.10.95). Federalists presented an image of Canada as open and tolerant, a superior option to ethnocentric Quebec nationalism.

Yet it would be wrong to claim that the independence movement was homogeneously centered on a French-Canadian identity and collective action frame in the weeks preceding the October 30th vote. Some discourse became much more traditional, but other voices continued to speak, aggravating the ambiguous

boundaries defining who, exactly, is Québécois. ADQ leader Mario Dumont generally kept the inclusive frame of the summer. For example, on October 11th, Dumont focused on how collective action, free of federal restraint, would ensure a bright future for his student audience (*The Gazette*, 12.10.95). In other speeches, he generally avoided references to the past, highlighting the potential of Quebec and the benefits of sovereignty-association.

The speeches of Lucien Bouchard provide explicit examples of competing collective identities. Bouchard became the dominant figure of the referendum campaign after Parizeau named him Quebec's negotiator with Canada in the event of a majority "yes" vote. At various points in the campaign, Bouchard emphasized that everyone had a right to speak and vote, regardless of language, ethnicity or social standing (e.g., *The Gazette*, 07.10.95). However, he was also the person who most strongly played on the theme of "a stab in the back," referring to the discussions over the 1982 patriation on the Canadian constitution. Patriation was a weak point in the federalist argument, and Bouchard exploited the fact that in 1980 Trudeau had promised constitutional change, only to pass a Constitution against the wishes of the Quebec Legislative Assembly.

On October 25th, after Prime Minister Chrétien had made a special country-wide plea for unity on Canadian television, Bouchard made the case for separation. In the majority of his speech, Bouchard raised grievances and issues of injustice, especially the 1982 patriation by which "on a déchiré la Constitution de nos ancêtres."²³ The language was harsh, mentioning how the "English provinces" had left Quebec isolated and Lévesque alone. Particularly dramatic was the moment when Bouchard held up a photocopy of the front page of an old edition of the *Journal de Québec* dominated by the headline "Lévesque Betrayed by his Allies."²⁴ Bouchard then assured viewers that "nous ne sommes pas dupes" and "nous sommes au delà des suplications" enjoining them to vote "yes" for change.²⁵ Bouchard's words were clearly meant to elicit strong emotions among those in an abused minority, evoking a linguistic definition of the Quebec nation, and strongly implying an ethnic "we" as well. Yet, at the end of his speech Bouchard reaffirmed his commitment to the democratic process, accepting the "people's" will regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

The more emotional campaign and "us-versus-them" rhetoric contradicted the original referendum strategy. Internal documents from the "yes" side show that the independence movement formulated plans in the summer to use four themes for each of the four weeks leading up to the actual vote. The first week was to have been about employment in a sovereign Quebec, the second on decentralization, the third on the elimination of government overlap, while the final week was to have centered on social equality for women, youth and

the disadvantaged (*La Presse*, 21.10.95). Such a schedule reflected the original plan to embrace an open collective identity. However, leaders of the "yes" side only talked about employment in the final weeks of the campaign, and the other issues fell by the wayside as leaders appealed to ethnic solidarity and injustice frames. Mobilization dynamics shaped collective identity discourses more than carefully planned campaign strategies.

CONCLUSION

Debates about collective definitions in Quebec are not merely disagreements over national identity, but involve conflict over the strategic frames used to encourage or discourage collective action for Quebec independence. The Quebec case lends support to those who argue that collective identity cannot be separated from processes of political mobilization (Gamson, 1992, 1995; Taylor & Whittier, 1992, 1995). Collective identities are not just the products of structural shifts in society or long-held cultural beliefs; they are shaped, articulated and acted upon by conscious movement actors.

However, we cannot move to the opposite extreme: collective identities are not simple tools strategically wielded by movement leaders. Collective identities must resonate with individuals in order to be powerful. Contextual factors constrain leaders' freedom to shape identity discourses. McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996) have called for more research into the dynamic relations between opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes, rather than an exclusive focus on one aspect of collective action. The present case study is a step in that direction since it highlights dynamics of collective identity and framing processes using multiple mobilization playing fields.

Most authors suggest that movements crystallize discourses into one relatively homogeneous collective identity prior to or during collective action. While a nascent movement might engage in identity or framing work that is "emergent, inchoate," mature movements "reaffirm or, at most, extend an existing ideological consensus" (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996: 16). However, the Quebec case clearly reveals that a mature and institutionalized movement can articulate multiple and ambiguous identities, even during critical mobilization periods like the 1995 referendum. By using analytical techniques sensitive to multiple fields of mobilization, we can distinguish different collective identities and specify the extent to which contextual environments shape and constrain identity discourses.

I found it helpful to separate out three mobilization levels, roughly mapping a different collective identity discourse to each. In the Quebec case, geo-political

definitions of the Quebecois are resonant at the international level, while a linguistic definition of outsiders and insiders reigns within Quebec. When the mobilization context becomes Quebec's place in Canada, ethnic definitions of the nation frequently come to the forefront. It is worth repeating that in the case of Quebec, collective national identity is ambiguous and multiple. Rather than a simple classification of nationalism as civic or ethnic (Brubaker, 1992; Derriennic, 1995), the possibility of dynamic, multiple identities should be explored.

Finally, this case study suggests that the very logic of political mobilization, both the desire to spur members to action, as well as the zero-sum nature of political competition, tends to make collective identity discourses exclusive. Lofland (1995) proposes that the strength of a movement's culture influences the movement's ability to encourage members' participation. In a similar manner, this paper shows how collective identity articulation and collective action are inter-related. The competitive dynamic of the 1995 referendum led movement leaders to shift away from the initial, inclusive Quebec identity they espoused to a discourse focused on ethnicity and exclusion. The need to conduct a more emotional campaign led to references of past humiliations and the belittling acts of English Canada, implying that true Quebecers were those Francophones whose ancestors had continuously fought the English assimilatory threat. The "framing contests" (Zald, 1996) between federalists and sovereigntists further reinforced this move away from an inclusive collective identity as the day of the referendum vote grew nearer.

The 1995 Quebec referendum is only a single case study, and the independence movement is somewhat unusual since it relies heavily on collective identity discourses. However, central insights from this study – namely that collective identities are ambiguous, multiple, linked to mobilization contexts, and inherently political – might apply to all social movements. In particular, further research is needed regarding the contention that political competition and mobilization produce narrower collective identity discourses. As Zald (1996) suggests, little scholarship exists on the impact have competitive processes have on framing and collective identity definition. Do all social movements have difficulty in both promoting open collective identities and engaging in political mobilization? It is possible that this tension is felt most severely in cases where the mobilization goal involves large stakes, and where there is bitter competition between opposing sides. In these instances, it is probably critical that insiders be distinguished from outsiders.

NOTES

1. As Jane Jenson (1995) argues, the activity of "naming" is both critical and controversial for social movements that make national claims. The phrase "Québécois de souche" can be translated loosely as 'old stock Quebecers', thus referring to those who are French-speaking and who have roots dating back to the original French colonists of the 17th century. It is very difficult to choose a simple label to name these people since, as will be argued in this paper, the definition of collective identities is ambiguous in Quebec. In this chapter I use the term "majority Quebecer", since "les Québécois de souche" make up approximately 80% of the Quebec population. The term "French Canadian", while still used by some, is generally considered an out-of-date term in the contemporary period, and it is one that the sovereignty movement avoids since the movement wishes to distinguish "Canada" from "Quebec." Anglophones, Allophones (non-English and non-French-speakers; often an euphemism for immigrants and their descendants, regardless of language) and Aboriginals make up approximately 20% of the Quebec population.
2. It is estimated that approximately 60% of majority Quebecers voted for independence; Anglophones voted about 95% against separation while Allophones and Aboriginals voted against sovereignty at rates between 85–95% (Bernier, Lemieux & Pinard, 1997).
3. The typology of nationalism invariably employs two categories: civic and ethnic. Derriennic (1995) makes the argument that while an independent Quebec would be built on civic nationalism, the process from provincial status to independence would need to pass through "identity" [ethnic] nationalism. I find that the literature's dichotomy reifies nationalist identities too much. As I argue here, (at least) *three* collective identities operate in Quebec. One (based on residence) could be considered civic, one I clearly label ethnic, but I also identify a linguistic collective identity. I am not certain that this linguistic identity is far removed from the actual nationalism found in France vis-à-vis immigrants, yet Brubaker (1992) considers the French national conception to be "civic" as compared to an "ethnic" German identity.
4. But, see Oberschall (1996) and Keck and Sikkink (1998).
5. In a more recent work, Dion (1987) takes a somewhat similar approach.
6. There is disagreement over the exact timing of this name change. Bernard (in Gougeon, 1994) places the redefinition somewhat later, in the 1820s and 1830s, as the result of new British immigration from the United Kingdom.
7. Examples of such controversies include the Métis rebellions in what is today Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well as the Manitoba school crisis.
8. Trudeau himself is from Quebec, and is representative of a group of resolute Francophone federalists like the current Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien. Again, it must be remembered that collective identities are multiple and not hegemonic over any group of people.
9. While a strong state does not necessarily lead to independence, it can be conducive to eventual separation. In this way, it is possible that federalists who work towards a strong Quebec government indirectly help their separatist opponents. See Cairns (1977) on the social effects that result from competition between federal and provincial levels of government in Canada, as well as Bourque and Légaré (1979) on the consequences of federalism for the maintenance of regional identities.

10. Such a project obviously feeds directly into a quest for independence. Sympathetic Quebec federalists such as Charles Taylor (1993: 155–186) suggest that such a project can still lead to a united Canada if Canada recognizes “deep diversity.” Under deep diversity, some societal groups – such as majority Quebecers – claim Canadian membership through their membership in Quebec, not directly as individuals.

11. This phrase translates loosely into “the perennial” or “enduring French fact.”

12. For the ease of those unfamiliar with French, I cite the English-language version of the bill in this paper. French citations from the *Project de loi sur l'avenir du Québec* (1995) are provided in footnotes.

13. The two previous citations in French read as follows, “Parce que cette terre bat en français et que cette pulsation signifie autant que les saisons qui la réagissent, que les vents qui la plient, que les gens qui la façonnent” and “Notre langue scande nos amours, nos croyances et nos rêves pour cette terre et pour ce pays. Afin que le profond sentiment d'appartenance à un peuple distinct demeure à jamais le rempart de notre identité, nous proclamons notre volonté de vivre dans une société de langue française.”

14. “La nouvelle constitution précisera que le Québec est un pays de langue française et fera obligation au gouvernement d'assurer la protection et le développement de la culture québécoise.”

15. Under the Cullen-Couture Agreement, Quebec is allowed to intervene in the selection of “independent” immigrants; it does not control migration through family reunification or refugee programs. Independent immigrants receive “points” for such things as education level and job experience. With enough points, one is allowed to immigrate to Canada. The federal government gives points to those who speak English or French; Quebec privileges independent immigrants who speak French. Bouchard implies that control over the other types of immigrants coming to Quebec would increase Quebec's ability to be a Francophone society. The French citation is “le contrôle total de notre immigration permettrait d'en arriver plus rapidement à un Québec français. Malgré l'entente Cullen-Couture, 60 pourcent de l'immigration nous échappe . . .”

16. In the 19th and early 20th century, hundreds of thousands of French Canadians moved to New England to work in cotton mills and other factories (Roby, 1990).

17. The French text is “Pour s'épanouir comme peuple francophone.”

18. “Pour ne plus être minoritaire.”

19. An English version, translated by Robert Chodos, was published in 1994. It is cited here.

20. The term “distinct society” has generated heated debate as to what, exactly, it means. Dumont (1995: 59) claims this is a reference to an inclusive Quebec political community, while others have argued it refers to a narrow, ethnic French collective. My own interpretation is in line with the official government stance that Quebec's “distinct society” is a group of diverse individuals unified around a distinct language.

21. In English, “Yes, and it becomes possible.”

22. In French, “des aspirations historiques du Québec.”

23. In English, “The Constitution of our ancestors was torn to pieces.”

24. “Lévesque trahi par ses alliés.”

25. “We are not dupes. We are beyond supplications.”

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THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

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