

## The Quebec Question and the Political Geography of Canada

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**Abstract:** The Quebec-Canada problem arises some ambiguous and contradictory issues with Quebec itself being the source of the current facets of the crisis. Political geography is able to contribute to a greater understanding of the crisis by clearly demonstrating some of the classic concepts drawn from the discipline: geography of federalism, political viability and centrifugal forces, ethnic separatism, territorial integrity and linguistic territoriality, nationalism, and regionalism, territorial ideology, international frontiers . . . Evermore, Quebec appears to be the unique case of a national state. The gravitation of Canada's population towards the West has a direct impact upon the Quebec situation, with the eventual independence of the Province bringing about *ipso facto* a Pakistanisation of the country as a whole. Currently, one may observe an ever-widening lack of communication between Quebec and the rest of Canada. In order that Europeans (and many others) may fully understand the Quebec situation, a sort of mental debriefing must take place.

The reality of the last two decades has projected Canada and Quebec into the spotlight. However, well before political specialists began to examine the Quebec question and the future of Canada, the French academician André Siegfried (1875–1959) had already underlined, in two prophetic books, the contradictory and ambiguous elements of the Quebec-Canada problem. He discussed such issues as the factitious aspects of national unity, the inexistence of a truly unified people, continental provincialism and the irresistible magnetic effects of the United States (Siegfried 1906, 1937). Also, he made known the political geography and the psychology of Canada to the public at large. He described an immense transcontinental state *a mari usque ad mare*, little populated, a crushing vast country where area and distance combined into homogeneous generators of tedium and problem. In brief, Siegfried concluded that any European wishing to understand such a country would necessarily have to undergo a sort of rethinking or mental debriefing.

The political drama that Canada is going through today is the type of situation which lends itself easily to analysis by political geography. In common with most industrialised

countries, Canada suffers from the two curses of the world wide economic crisis, inflation (+13 % in 1981) and unemployment (1.3 million unemployed in 1982). However, more important than its economic problems are Canada's political and constitutional ones. The current aspects of the Canadian crisis find their origins embedded in Quebec; the so-called Quiet Revolution of the early sixties, the apparition of separatist groups from 1962 to 1966, General De Gaulle's famous "Vive le Québec Libre!" on the 22nd of July 1967 in Montreal and the foundation of the Parti Québécois in 1968 . . . Today's episode actually began on the 15th of November 1976 with the election victory of the Parti Québécois whose political objective is to attain an independent Quebec having internationally recognized self-sovereignty (Beauregard 1980).

The contribution of political geography to this double debate may be underlined by different aspects drawn from this branch of the discipline: federal organisation of the State of Canada, political viability and the effects of centrifugal forces, Quebec and ethnic separatism, the territorial integrity of Quebec . . . Indeed, it is these aspects that this paper will deal with for the purposes of clarification.

## Federal Organization of the State of Canada

Geographers have accorded particularly little attention to the study of federalism despite the fact that it remains one of the most geographically expressive forms of government. In effect, spatial interactions are more easily recognizable in federal states than in centralized unitarian states. Appearing as an especially complicated form of government based on Western style democracy, federalism is a far more dynamic process than a static phenomenon — as is proved by the Quebec case and the Canadian example (Dikshit 1971, 1976). Knowledge of the essential characteristics of the Canadian federal system is necessary in order to fully understand the problems currently occurring. The Canadian federal system is an extremely heterogeneous one.

In a subtle and inexorable manner, the federal Canadian wielding of power over the provinces is starting to manifest itself by two means: territorial development and new constitutional matters. Contrary to the American constitution which specifies the jurisdiction of the central government and leaves aside that not identified with all 50 States of the Union, the fundamental law of Canada establishes the jurisdiction of the Provinces and awards all that is not expressly mentioned to the auspices of Federal jurisdiction. However, since 1867, a multitude of new fields of jurisdiction has appeared on the Canadian political scene. As none of the ten Provinces possesses its own Constitution, new sectors have been ignored or left unexploited and the Federal authorities armed themselves with new powers; nuclear energy, television, scientific research, air transport . . . With territorial development the centralized Canadian State has at its disposal another means of control. Its budgetary capacities, being greater than those of each Province, enable it to influence local development by a play on agreed frameworks. Furthermore, just as Ottawa has jurisdiction over certain territorial domains such as international airports and national parks, it follows that there is an ever-increasing Federal hold over the country, significant examples being the Saint Lawrence Seaway, Montreal's Mirabel International Airport, and the container terminals at the major ports. One therefore has the impression of an indomitable march, rushing towards centralization. Added to this constitutional imbroglio is the fact that the Canadian federal structure has never been consecrated by a national referendum, either in 1867 or at any later date.

Normally, classic political geography distinguishes four (4) types of Federal State: an imposed federal State, a centralized federal State, a federal State of compromise, and the federal State of mutual interest (Glassner 1980). In reality Canada does not belong to any one of these categories by itself but rather to all four at the same time. Clearly then, Canada is the perfect prototype of the *Hybrid Federal State*. The new state being in no way like any of the others. Firstly, the federal State was imposed in 1867 by the bestowing of a charter from Great Britain, its

colonial power and guardian. Secondly, it was at that particular period, a federal State based on the mutual interests of the Anglophone residents of British North America little interested in partaking in the American fold (United Empire Loyalists). Thirdly, it was a federal State of compromise for the French landowners of Manitoba, Quebec and Acadia, who saw it as a less repressive solution as it permitted that their language and religion be respected. Today, many of the Provinces consider Canada as being a centralized federal State. In effect, wars and economic crises have themselves been factors in the extension of the powers of the central authority. Quebec secessionism places the stress on a major structural and economic division while other Provinces, such as Alberta and Newfoundland, do not wish to share the revenues gained from oil exploitation with Ottawa.

In order to better understand the federal organization of the Canadian State, it is worthwhile underlining the *geographical mutation* which has occurred since 1867 (Fig 1). These changes are structural in nature. Originally, Canada was composed of four (4) co-founding Provinces, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, who occupied approximately equal amounts of area at the time. However, firstly, the four founding States now occupy areas completely different from those established in 1867. Quebec, for example, lies between the 45th and 62nd parallels (Hudson Straits). Secondly, the federal framework was imposed on the six other Provinces added to the Confederation from 1871 until 1949. Thirdly, numerous frontier changes have occurred, notably that of Labrador being seized by Newfoundland at the cost of Quebec. Towns like Lloydminster found themselves divided by inter-Provincial boundaries, in this case the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. These divisions engender, today, far-reaching consequences to the domains of industry, commerce, agriculture, banking and fiscal affairs (Dykstra and Ironside 1972). Fourthly, important changes have also occurred in the distribution of the population which affects the balance of power among the Provinces. Fifthly, these changes are continuing even today — the two federal territories of northern Canada are now requesting Provincial status, the conflict over Labrador between Quebec and Newfoundland remains unresolved, the country's population centre of gravity is sliding away from its original base and the Provinces are changing their administrative subdivisions (Krueger 1975).

The official name of the country is the term Canadian Confederation; however, there reigns a certain degree of confusion concerning this term. Any authentic confederation is a phenomenon of International Public Law. In theory, a confederation exists by virtue of an agreement or treaty and not by a particular constitution. It becomes quite evident then that Canada as it stands today is not a confederation. On the other hand the Parti Quebecois Sovereignty-Association thesis lends itself totally to a confederalist perspective. As applied to Canada, the term confederation stems quite simply from the lack of vocabulary



Fig 1 The Political Space of Canada

precision used by the State's founding fathers in 1867. Inversely, any authentic federation is the result of internal constitutional law, as is explicit by the British North America Act of 1867.

**Political Viability and Centrifugal Forces**

The concept of political viability and centrifugal forces are well known in the field of political geography (James 1978). Indeed, such a thematic applies ideally to Canada, where a cursory analysis of the country shows that seven significant factors are working against the integration and development of the Federal State.

The first centrifugal force is one that we may designate as the *Canadian geographical contradiction*. In 1937, Siegfried had already questioned the assumption that Canada was a country that had been established contrary to its geography. Noticeably, the general physiography of North

America is orientated north/south: Pacific Coast, Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, Saint Lawrence/Great Lakes/Mississippi, Appalachians, Atlantic Seaboard ... Therefore, the inhabited regions of Canada represent only small sections of the large natural divisions of North America. Inversely, the Canadian political axis has an east-west orientation. The two transcontinental railways (Canadian Pacific and Canadian National), the two principal airline companies (Air Canada and CP Air), the Transcanada highway, the Alberta-Ottawa oil pipeline and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation network are all oriented along an east-west axis. In symbolic terms, one may say of Canada that its geography stems from the age of the meridians whereas its politics stem from the age of parallels. However, the east-west axis suffers from an indeterminable elongation and too, from the vast distances involved in the country. *A mari usque ad mare* is indeed the Canadian motto. The physical geography of the country has always fought against Canadian unity, rendering even more visible the artificiality of

the 49th parallel as an international frontier. In reality, across the Great Plains and in the Pacific region relations are primarily of a north-south nature. Vancouverites do their shopping in Seattle and agricultural workers from Dakota and Montana work in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Whereas, the railroad networks of the Great Plains demonstrate the disrupting effect of the frontier, in contrast, the spatial aspects of the highways completely ignore the border. This tends to indicate the economic, cultural and physiographic unity of the Great Plains region (Wolfe 1962).

A second centrifugal factor resides in the *unequal spatial distribution* of population over Canada's territory. Indeed, the too difficult environment of Canada's North has as its consequence, the transition of the country into a ribbon-like State, 200 km wide, along the American frontier. In more concrete terms, the vast majority of Canadians live no further than 160 km from the United States. Although Canada is the second largest country in the world in terms of area, its total population does not exceed 25 million and even these, with the exception of some 300,000 Amerindians and 22,000 Eskimos, are only established in various pockets of concentration, the Vancouver area, Edmonton/Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, the Greater Toronto conurbation, the Main Street Windsor/Quebec corridor, and the Halifax area. Consequently, the actual form occupied by the country is one of extreme East-West elongation, 40 times longer than wide. The rest of the territory is formed of Nordic fringes of North American habitable and uninhabitable spaces. The result of this situation is a natural tendency for relations orientated towards the South, the direction of the American neighbours. This brings about great difficulty in forging interprovincial relations (Mackay 1958, Minghi 1963).

A third centrifugal factor resides in Canada's *cultural geography*. Officially, Canada is a bilingual and multi-cultural country, this double phenomena manifesting a clear spatial incidence. The French-speaking minority, 27% of the total population, is primarily concentrated in Quebec with outposts in Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick. However, the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec have few relations with the Province. Added to this, in Canadian psychology there exists a very real division between French and English-Canadians; their political aspirations are different, their perceptions of Canada are different and their attitudes towards the Queen, the flag and national heroes all diverge considerably. Although, not separated geographically from the three surrounding Provinces, Quebec manages to live in a cultural world apart from that of English Canada.

A fourth centrifugal factor is the intense *Provincial regionalism* which exists throughout Canada. Each Province functions as a unit defending its own interests. Each Province is extremely jealous of the primary sectors of its own economy: fishing in British Columbia, oil in Alberta, potassium in Saskatchewan, wheat in Manitoba, heavy-industry

in Ontario, hydro-electric power in Quebec, off-shore oil in Newfoundland . . . Fiscal coordination is another problem which is renewed annually. On the economic scale, the area occupied by Canada is a juxtaposition of five relatively autonomous sub-groups, each with its own particular politics: British Columbia, the Prairie Provinces, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. This type of regional structure has two results. Firstly, the differences in the standards of living between the Provinces are enormous — what similarity is there between the professional unemployed of New Brunswick and the oil-worker of Alberta? Secondly, economy relations between the different Canadian regions stem from the centre-periphery paradigm. Until recently, both the East and the West have felt the economic domination of Ontario and Quebec; consequently, regionalism and provincial identity often dominated the National identity and too, Canadian nationalism. Citizens were first and foremost citizens of their province before being Canadians.

A fifth centrifugal factor exists in the *electoral geography* of Canada. Until recently, political leadership was always founded on the Ontario-Quebec partnership. Clearly, as Quebec and Ontario hold the majority of the seats in the House of Commons, it suffices for a political party to obtain a majority in the two Provinces for it to take control of Ottawa's power, even with feeble support of the Eastern and Western Provinces. Therefore, Federal politics have always had a tendency to serve the needs of Quebec and Ontario. Canada's electoral geography today is strongly centrifugal. There exist three major Federal parties, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party (a sort of Canadian Labour Party). However, none of these three major parties is supported on a pan-Canadian scale. The Conservatives and the New Democrats are practically absent from Quebec, which has 75 Federal seats (74 Liberal, 1 Conservative). The Liberal Party is really only strong in Quebec and is totally absent west of Manitoba. The result of the May 1979 and February 1980 Federal elections was a paradox. First a Conservative government without any support in Quebec and then a Liberal government with only feeble support outside Quebec and Ontario. Further, none of the 10 Provincial governments is Liberal; therefore, Canada has arrived at the point where its electoral geography constitutes a political problem. Neither of the two major Canadian political parties is capable of establishing a lasting relationship between Quebec and English Canada. Further, the last Ministerial Cabinets of Clark and Trudeau were unbalanced in terms of Provincial representation.

A sixth centrifugal factor affecting the political viability of Canada is the absence of *compromise and consensus*. Concepts and perceptions overshadow this problematic. Notions of people, nation and federation do not carry the same sense or import in all discussions. Both provincialism and metropolitanism are opposed to the centralistic policies of Ottawa. Provincialism overhangs regionalism and con-



tests the central power in several domains, notably, those of natural resources. To this war of "isms" are added the contradictory views of certain politicians concerning the definition of Canada. A country founded by two peoples, a country of two communities, a country of minorities and individuals, a binational country . . . (Beauregard 1980).

A seventh and last centrifugal factor rests on the plethora of *pluralism and diversity*. A kaleidoscope of interests and loyalties is inscribed in the territory which is Canada. This essential reality, combined with the crucial question of the sharing of power, renders Canadian unity a very difficult objective (Bernier 1980). The equation of diversity-consensus enables one to see that Canada is a State far more divided than it may appear at first sight. A divided State where one part, the Amerindian and Eskimo, is literally colonized and where the other part, the European, is broken into a two-fold, ethno-cultural and regional plan. Canada is not just one large country but rather, a quantity of smaller countries whose borders are defined by regional conscience (Merrill 1970). For some, Canada is an existential country as it exists only by forces of inertia.

To sum up, Canada is an immense area endowed with an abundance of natural resources which are for the most part, localised beyond the centers of ecumene. Strung along the American frontier, Canada's population is comprised of three founding nations that have never integrated. Having the United States as its only neighbour, Canada survived in the past only because it had a European counterweight. In 1984 a quick glance at Canada as a whole will reveal five distinct images: 1. The Maritime Provinces beyond the economic feast and searching for a better footing; 2. Quebec at the height of ethnic nationalism and tempted by independence; 3. Ontario, satisfied and content; 4. Alberta and British Columbia whipped-up by the economic boom and oil fever; 5. The vast and distant North, full of mineral and energy resources. In order to restrain American expansionism, Canada has been built like a State — an assembly of scattered mosaics which originally had very few bonds in common. All the foregoing renders it very difficult for the emergence of a truly *Canadianness* today.

### Quebec: National State and Ethnic Separatism

The principal elements of temporal and geographical order in systems and processes of political organisation are without doubt, the Nation and the State. Is then, Quebec a Nation, a State, or a National State?

A nation must have a people on which to base itself in order to exist. Such a nation is a human community sharing an ethnic and cultural unity and, occupying a clearly identified geographical space. This is incontestably the case of Quebec; therein one finds an ethnically homogeneous society whose cradle was peasant communities originating from western France in the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-

turies. This ethnic homogeneity is reinforced by two supplementary cultural dimensions, Catholicism and the French language. Therefore, Quebec has the same culture, the same historical patrimony and shares common social ideals, traditions and attitudes. The nation of Quebec is a part of humanity, an area of land and a spiritual heritage upon which grows a collective aspiration, a project to create a society.

Organised politically, state and space serve to manage the territory of a national community. Often, the State is the political outcome of the nation which precedes it in historical time — as is Quebec's case. The nation of Quebec emerged little by little after the French withdrawal of 1760, but the federated state of Quebec was not created until 1867 — until the birth of a federal Canada. In fact, Quebec did not properly come about until the "Quiet Revolution" of the nineteen-sixties. Quebec endowed itself with a Ministry of Education, nationalized its electricity supplies, created General Delegations (mini-embassies) in certain foreign capitals, named its Parliament the National Assembly and controls the planning and development of its territory and social welfare.

A national state is the stable and permanent synthesis of a nation and a state. Territorially, it is a matter of direct coincidence of the legal parameters of the state and the territorial perimeter of the nation. The national state defends the identity and development of the nation. This is so especially since the accession to power of the Parti Quebecois on the 15th of November 1976, and the following establishment of certain organic fundamental laws that seemingly set the Province apart as a national state. With the advent of Bill 101, the French Language Charter, Quebec made French its only official and by the same token national language. Resulting from the implantation of this law, English has, for the most part, disappeared from public places since 1982. Independence-oriented Quebec nationalised the asbestos industry; it has established a Quebec Ministry of Immigration which shares jurisdiction over immigration matters with its federal counterpart. Quebec produces its own daily newspapers and has its own television network, Radio Quebec, separate from the federal network, Radio Canada (CBC). Since 1976, Quebec has installed its own important state-run public organisations; health services, lotteries, steelworks, oil, forestry, mining and automobile insurance. It has entered very sincerely into the domain of scientific research and has established its own network of public universities — the University of Quebec. On the international scene, Quebec is a member of the Cultural and Technical Agency of French-speaking countries, where it has its own seat, apart from that of Canada.

The originality of this national state, unique in the world, is that it has no *elbow room*, that is to say, it does not hold internationally recognized sovereignty and must evolve within a known federal union, rightly or wrongly

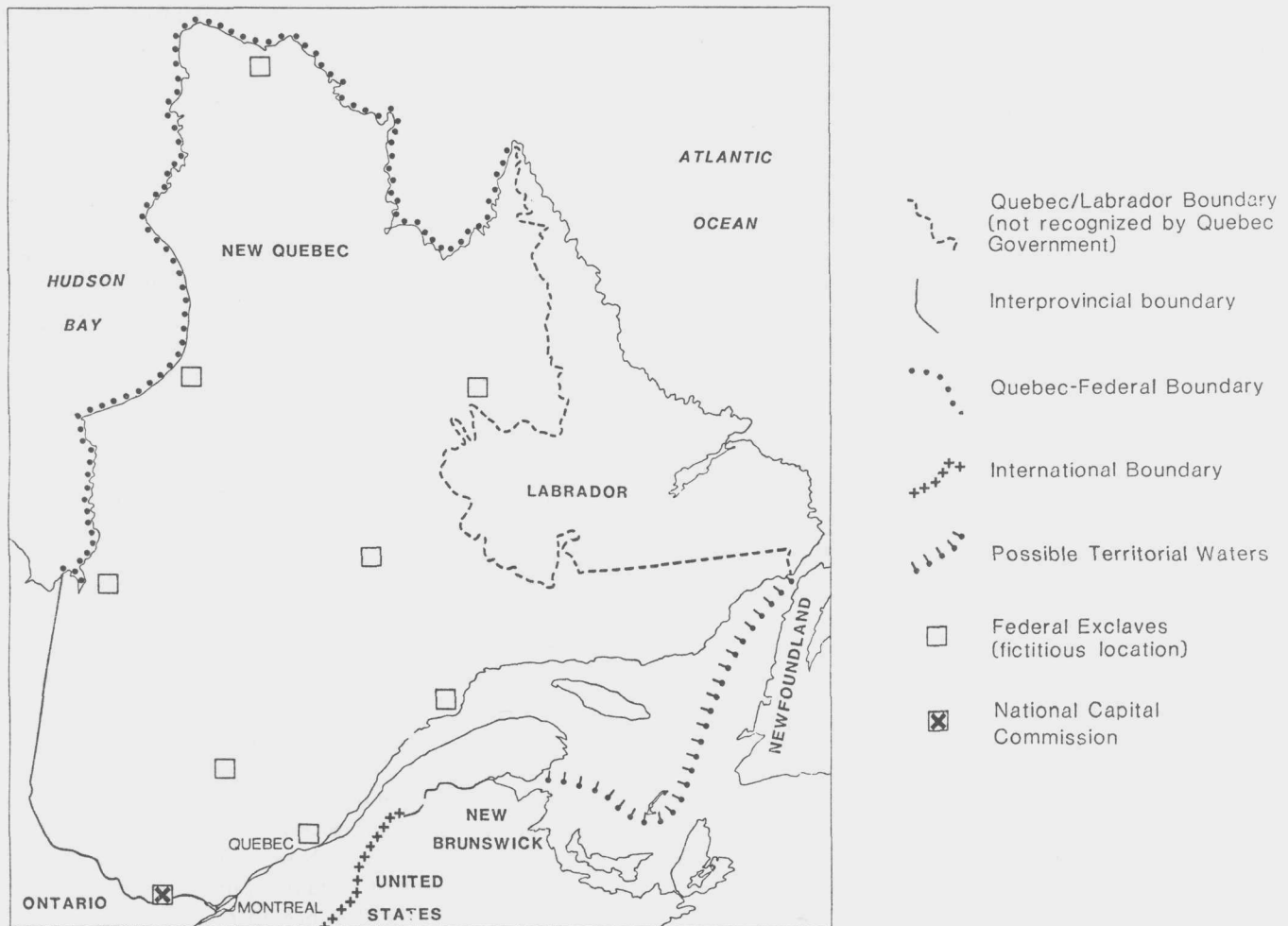


Fig 2 The Political Space of Quebec

perceived as restrictive, centralist and outmoded. The notion of a national state of Quebec finds support in an interesting aspect of the everyday: in popular vocabulary, the adjective French-Canadian has now been replaced by the word "Quebecois".

The basis of Quebec's separatism rests on a strongly revived ethnic conscience. Nationalism has always been a predominant trait in Quebec's politics since the 1837 *Patriotes Movement*; however, until now, it has been contained within a federal structure which accommodated a political elite. Contemporary Quebec has reformulated the basic principles of self-determination: a radical new ethnic elite originating from the bureaucracy and technocracy has played the leader's role in the development of a separatist ideology (Williams 1980). Social mobilisation and modernization of the State dominate policy since the Parti Quebecois came to power in 1976. Yet, one cannot help but raise some of the inherent contradictions of the Parti Quebecois' politics, notably, the ambiguity of Sovereignty

Association and, the objective of creating an essentially Quebecois nation through the promotion of French culture, without taking into account or consideration the minorities installed on its territory.

The current situation also has another source of politico-geographic origin. The Canadian State created in 1867 has not been able to sublimate either French-Canadian or English-Canadian nationalism into one superior nationalism, a Canadian nationalism. This has resulted in a clash between these two nationalisms, which has had the effect of turning French-Canadian nationalism into a Quebecois nationalism which is today claiming complete political sovereignty for Quebec (Burghardt 1971, Roy 1980).

One should not perceive Quebec as a homogeneous state of very similar populations. In spite of its 6,300,000 inhabitants, Quebec possesses three important ethnic minorities, English Quebecers (900,000), Amerindians (30,000), and the Eskimo (4,000). The Anglophone minority, primarily concentrated in the Montreal region and having

important outposts in the Ottawa Valley, the Eastern Townships and the Lower North Shore, feels itself to be increasingly marginalised since the appearance of the French Language Charter and the gradual withdrawal of the presence of English in the public place. As far as the Eskimo and Amerindian societies are concerned it is a question of their being cloistered in tribes, clans and villages, and, further, marginalised by forced settling onto reserves. Unhappily though, we must recognize the fact that they count little in the current political debate.

### Quebec's Territorial Integrity

Without doubt Quebec is the North American state for which the demarcation of territory poses the most acute problem. Canadian Constitutional Law engenders extremely important geographical consequences (Dorion 1980). Not only does there exist vertical geographic sharing i.e., federal-provincial, but there also exist horizontal sharing agreements, i.e., inter-Provincial. The sharing of jurisdiction, territory, allegiances, and technocracies organise themselves into a structural sharing which constitutes the heart of a federalist geography. The territorial integrity of Quebec is at the heart of its links with Canada. This problem, much worried about by jurists, involves many diverse facets (Brossard 1970).

The internal and external frontiers of Quebec make up the first dimension of this problem. The most delicate frontier being that of Labrador with Newfoundland. We know how, in 1927, the Privy Council in London awarded Labrador to the British Colony of Newfoundland without any consultation whatsoever with the government of Quebec. Since the entry of Newfoundland into the Confederation as the 10th Province in 1949, this dispute has become the responsibility of the Federal authorities as it concerns two federated States of the Canadian Union (Dorion 1963). However, this is not the only border to pose problems for Quebec; for example, how far does Quebec's sovereignty extend over Hudson Bay and its annex James Bay? At a period characterized by intensive exploitation of ocean resources and fierce competition by states to seize control of them, the question arises of whether or not Quebec has a maritime domain in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence where not only do schools of cod abound, but where there is also the possibility of offshore oil and polymetallic nodules. Further, what to do about the domains of the Amerindians and Eskimos, not to mention the Federal territorial rights within Quebec itself.

Another problem of territoriality apparent in Quebec is the presence of Federal enclaves in the very heart of Quebec's territory. These enclaves are essentially made up of Indian reserves, military bases, national parks, and railway stations, and yards, airports and seaports. In these places, English is placed on the same footing as French, as

is stipulated by federal constitutional laws. This thorny problem has brought forward the notion that *territorial integrity* be considered, after a certain fashion, as the consequence of territoriality. The idiom of territorial integrity serves to indicate that the territory of a state remains, has not suffered and should not suffer any dismembering (Dorion and Lacasse 1973, 1974). The most sensitive situation in the regard is furnished by Quebec's part in the *National Capital Commission* (NCC), the federal agency created in 1958 and charged with the management of the 2,900 km<sup>2</sup> Ottawa agglomeration, of which 1,130 km<sup>2</sup> are situated in Quebec. The NCC is the most vivid prototype of a metropolitan government being stronger than the local civil administrations. One comes to the crux of Quebec's territorial integrity problem when one realises that federal laws have precedence over provincial ones. From this, the NCC through its power of expropriation, is gradually consuming the territory of Quebec which falls under its jurisdiction (Sanguin 1980).

The reason that territorial integrity presents itself as a political challenge is due to the fact that certain communities exercise dominatory behaviour over others. In the example of the NCC there exists a sort of dominator/dominated hierarchy. Hence the reason that the double spatial dimension of federated States always brings about a problem of territoriality — any federated state supports on its territory a more or less variable hold by the central government.

With regard to Quebec itself we have even considered the issue of *linguistic territoriality* (Sanguin 1978). Linguistic territoriality has been defined simply as the right of any federated state to determine, within its territory, all linguistic matters not governed by the federal constitution. By applying this right, the federated State preserves and defends its linguistic unity against any outside elements attempting to alter or place it in danger in any way. Therefore, linguistic sovereignty avoids the unity of a linguistic region being placed in danger by immigration of those of a foreign tongue. This danger is fully checked by their linguistic assimilation. An example of this situation is readily seen in Switzerland. However, until now this principle had never been applied to Quebec; hence, the proliferation of English. Voted into effect in August 1977, the French Language Charter has brought about a radical revolution in the linguistic geography of Quebec. Now, immigrants are obliged to enroll their children at French schools and since 1982, with exception to federal enclaves where bilingualism is the rule, English has disappeared from public signs, including those posted in private enterprises.

### The Conditional Future of Quebec

The politico-geographic approach to the viability, feasibility and desirability of an independent Quebec is composed of

a great number of different aspects. First and foremost it is a question of territory. What area would an independent Quebec occupy? That of the Province as it is today without any territorial waters? That of 1867 i.e., the territory without the 1898 and 1912 annexes? That of 1984 with the addition of Newfoundland's Labrador? Quebec is a peninsula and its form, size and position are important factors in its geopolitical strategies. Quebec's geographic situation, meaning its position on the continent and its relations with its neighbours, remains a fundamental element in the elaboration of any future scenario.

Competent geographers have meticulously scrutinized the geographic basis for the viability of an independent state of Quebec (Cermakian 1974). Quebec compares favourably with two similar countries, Sweden and Switzerland. However, unlike these two States, Quebec does not control its own economy and further, it maintains illusions of self-sufficiency. For a long time now, Quebec jurors have established and defined the politico-judicial conditions and modalities for the accession of a sovereign Quebec (Brosard 1976). Three scenarios for an independent Quebec could occur. The first would be of a symbolic independence, as is exemplified by the case of Monaco. After all Monaco is a sovereign State but geopolitically it depends on France. A second scenario would be that of integral independence, sovereignty without any compromise whatsoever. The third scenario could be one of autonomous independence. For this latter, no less than 49 different versions exist already in Quebec's political discourse.

However, four geopolitical connotations should be enounced. Firstly, from many points of view the separation of Quebec has already taken place. Secondly, the international character of Quebec is not a future project; it is already a reality. Thirdly, Quebec is near-sovereign over its own cultural domain. Finally, other domains that would eventually be subject of control by Quebec are just as negociable in the independentist context as in the federalist (Valaskakis 1980).

Other spatial dimensions which are little invoked should be brought forward too. The slide of Canada's center of gravity towards the West effects a direct impact on the Quebec question. Quebec is in danger of being dismissed to the periphery or being "Maritimized", i.e., relegated more and more to a manifestly peripheral role such as the Maritime Provinces. The second factor threatening Quebec with marginalisation is the battle between what is known as the Snow Belt and the Sun Belt. For at least three reasons production factors have a tendency to emigrate towards the sun. Firstly, energy is usually less expensive in the south. Secondly, labour costs also have a tendency to be less in the south. Thirdly, and equal to the economic advantages, investors prefer to establish themselves in the sun. Therefore, we are witness to a double migratory movement, which is at one and the same time both East to West and North to South. Being in

the North and East, Quebec finds itself potentially, and doubly so, menaced. If these two tendencies are prolonged, Quebec may find itself completely marginalised, similar to the Maritimes, with a diminished Montreal having a stature similar to that of Milwaukee.

### Conclusion: Canada . . . Cancelled for Lack of Interest

Better than any long dissertation, four very recent political dates serves to exemplify the Quebec-Canada dilemma. *February 18, 1980*: strongly supported by the Quebec electorate, the Federal Liberal government headed by Pierre Elliott Trudeau regained the reins of power after nine months of Joe Clark's Conservative government.

*May 20, 1980*: Quebec's referendum concerning Sovereignty-Association results in a victory for the NO (60 % of votes cast) and therefore a failure for the Parti Quebecois.

*April 13, 1981*: The Parti Quebecois is returned to power in Quebec's National Assembly with 80 seats against the Liberal Party's 42.

*April 17, 1982*: At Ottawa, Queen Elizabeth II signed the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, until that time charged to Westminster. This act definitively cuts Canada from Great Britain and the country becomes totally independent. Quebec's and Canada's native peoples are fiercely opposed to the repatriation which attacks their ancestral rights and tries to turn Canada into a centralised federal state.

The eventual independence of Quebec will bring about, *ipso facto*, a Pakistanisation of Canada. Such a secession would divide Canada into at least three parts and would push their reorientation away from the centre (Burghardt 1980). This raises the crucial question of whether or not a dismembered Canada would wish to remain independent of the United States? It would not be surprising to see, over the next 20 years, the exercise of intense pressure favouring a continental union between Canada and the United States. One is forced to agree that the weakening of ties with Europe and the displacement towards the west of Canada's economic activity have been nefarious to the cause of Canadian unity.

Lacking in Canada is a *territorial coalition* and continuity within the density of the population. Does geography justify a political Canada of ten Provinces and two territories? Instead of having repatriated the old B.N.A. Act in 1982, which consecrates the current territorial divisions, a new geographic vision of Canada would have permitted the creation of a new map, a new constitution and a new symbol. The observable crystalization of the internal frontiers of the Canadian Confederation renders very difficult the restructuration of a territorial system dating from 1867. The project of a *Five State Canada* (Pacifica, Alsama, On-



tario, Quebec, Acadia) is aimed at the country's sociological inertias and emotive opposites. On a different scale, whether the internal restructuration of Quebec is into urban communities, into ten (10) administrative regions or into 94 regional municipalities, they all appear to be heading towards the same obstacles.

Is Quebec part of Canada? Quebec looks at the exterior world on a small scale, but looks at itself through a larger scale; which brings about inevitable discordancy, Canada is an island drifting more and more towards the South, towards the United States. By its Anglo-Saxon mentality, Canada better understands the American model which it imitates and adopts in various domains, rather than other

models. Quebec is experimenting with a totally different and original route, which produces an increasing risk of non-communication between Quebec and Canada.

Quebec offers a fascinating terrain for geography of territorial ideologies. Old colonial territory, Quebec has known a long evolution in this field (Claval 1980). An exceptional case in North America, second largest French-speaking nation in the world, the ethnic sentiment is tending to take on a territorial form. However, behind these words, the realities are quite different to those found in Europe. In order for those of the Old Continent to fully understand Quebec, a type of mental reorientation or debriefing is necessary.

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