THE FIVE FACES OF QUEBEC
Shifting Small Worlds and Quebec’s Evolving Political Dynamics

Alain-G. Gagnon

Centre international de formation européenne | « L’Europe en Formation »

2013/3 n° 369 | pages 39 à 52
ISSN 0014-2808

Article disponible en ligne à l’adresse :
The Five Faces of Quebec
Shifting Small Worlds and Quebec’s Evolving Political Dynamics

Alain-G. Gagnon

Alain-G. Gagnon holds the Canada Research Chair in Quebec and Canadian Studies in the Department of Political Science at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He is director of the Interdisciplinary Research Center on Diversity and Democracy (CRIDAQ) and of the Research Group on Plurinational Societies (GRSP). He is the author of: L’Âge des incertitudes: essais sur le fédéralisme et la diversité nationale and The Case for Multinational Federalism: Beyond the All-encompassing Nation; the editor of D’un référendum à l’autre: le Québec face à son destin; and the co-editor of Canadian Politics (with James Bickerton, 6th edition), Federal Democracies (with Michael Burgess); Political Autonomy and Divided Polities (with Michael Keating) and Multinational Federalism (with Michel Seymour). He received the Trudeau award in 2010, the Marcel-Vincent Award in 2008. He was elected member of the Royal Society of Canada in 2008

Introduction: adopting political narratives through whitewater canoeing

The choice of concepts and narratives in the world of politics as well as in the real world is not a question of details but rather it is a way to impose a worldview, to order priorities, or stated more simply, to advance a political posture. So, it is not insignificant when politicians speak of levels of government rather than orders of government, utilize the notion of sub-national units to discuss binational and multinational states or substitute the notion of region for the concept of founding member of a federation. Similarly, it matters when, in the Canadian context, our best scholars of federalism and veteran politicians use the notions of federal government, central government or the Government of Canada interchangeably. This, of course, contributes to confuse lines of authority and power.

1. The first version of this text was discussed at the International Workshop organized by Michael Burgess on the theme of Small Worlds: the character, role and significance of constituent units in federations and federal political systems under the auspices of the Centre international de formation européenne and Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, 21-26 April, 2013. My thanks go to all participants for their inputs. Special thanks go to Dan Pfeffer, Ph.D. candidate at Queen’s University and visiting researcher with the Canada Research Chair in Quebec and Canadian Studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal for editing and suggestions.

EEF 369.indb 39
EEF 369.indb 39
25/02/2014 14:55
25/02/2014 14:55
relations in the mindset of citizens as if it did not matter where, how and by whom decisions are made. 

Thirty-five years ago, Richard Simeon astutely observed that the concept of “regions [and other concepts for this matter] are simply containers […] and how we draw the boundaries around them depends entirely on what our purposes are: it is an a priori question, determined by theoretical needs or political purposes.” Consequently, when discussing Quebec it is important to come to terms with objectives being pursued by various individuals, groups and communities as well as political parties and political entrepreneurs in positions of influence and authority.

Various uses of key concepts such as political nationality, nation, distinct society, region-state, and multinational democracy have a significant impact on the way one imagines constituent units in federal states. My intention in the following article is to introduce the main faces and narratives that have surfaced and resurfaced since the beginning of the ‘Quiet Revolution’ in Quebec and assess their impact on the mindset of Canadians and Quebecers. However, I want to make it clear at the outset that I chose not to include the notion of stateless nation to depict Quebec, since this political community has developed major state apparatuses active in paradiplomacy, education, culture, economy, and intergovernmental matters that would make many existing countries very envious of its accomplishments. I will also not make use of either the concepts of minority nation, of global society or of province to discuss the Quebec-Canada dynamics since Quebecers generally conceive of themselves as forming one of the two principal political communities in the country. In this article, then, I will focus on five prevailing faces of Quebec, namely, Quebec as forming part of an inclusive political nationality, as a co-founding nation that has supported and valued the principle of co-sovereignty, as a distinct society, as a region-state and, finally, as a multinational democracy.

Face 1: Political Nationality

In the construction of narratives, the place of history matters a great deal as we will shortly see from the first image of Quebec to be discussed. Canada’s begin-
ning is characterized by a series of political events that have had a major impact on how Canadians see themselves. For instance: were French Canadians conquered by the British or did France simply cede its territory north of the 49th parallel to its arch rival? Was Confederation a compact between the French and the English cohabitating on Canadian soil, or was it a political arrangement between the four original provinces and the imperial government? Who was the depository of sovereignty, or, stated differently, who formed the constituent power(s)? Contradictory answers have been provided to these questions based on people’s different visions of the original compact or influenced by one’s dominant identity.

George-Étienne Cartier remains a key figure throughout the last century and a half. Cartier wanted Canada to be built on the acceptance of political allegiance and loyalty to the country as a whole. This loyalty was not to be based on linguistic or cultural belonging. In other words, Cartier promoted a unity respectful of diversity. His understanding of the Canadian experiment, to borrow from Donald Smiley, was a “noble vision”⁵ that repudiated parochialism, majority nationalism and imperialism that did not seek to “impose a single way of life on its citizens.”⁶ “Confederation would be unacceptable if French and English had come together merely to war with each other; it would be equally unacceptable if it created an all-inclusive Canadian nationalism. If Confederation was to succeed, it had to create a new kind of nationality, which Cartier called a political nationality.”⁷ However, it should be pointed out that Cartier’s vision arguably failed to provide values and claims that ought to give a meaning to the fact of being Canadian while being respectful of territorialized and circumscribed identities. Nonetheless, he made it clear that French Canadians would not renounce their culture and identity, albeit they would form a national community of their own respectful of different systems of meaning with which “neither the national origin, nor religion of any individual would interfere.”⁸

That being stated, the advent of a political community such as the one imagined by Cartier never gained the momentum he had hoped. The period preceding the Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II and the advent of the welfare state can be depicted as a tug of war between competing political projects that expressed and revealed different intentions.⁹ Meanwhile, the central government and the member states of the emerging federation were attempting to advance their respective worldviews and to stand up for their constituents. This is why

---

7. Samuel LaSelva, op. cit., p. 25.
authors such as J. M. S. Careless have depicted this condition as being the expression of “limited identities” and made it clear that Canada was not based on a single identity under which all identities were to be subsumed.10

An additional point worth mentioning is the role played by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) between 1867 and 1949 when it was Canada’s final court of appeal (the Supreme Court of Canada took on this role in 1949). The JCPC was instrumental in defending the rights of the constituent member states and contributed to protecting their ‘limited identities’. This has surely contributed to making Quebecers strong defenders of British parliamentary traditions and practices, and to encourage them to invest themselves in the Canadian federation. A final point to add before moving to the second narrative has been the capacity of the central government along with the nine Anglophone provinces to repackaging over the years the notion of ‘political nationality’ as being the expression of Canada as an all-encompassing nation.11

**Face 2: the ‘Two-Nations’ View**

The second image refers to Quebec as constituting one of two nations at the origin of Canada’s federal pact. George-Étienne Cartier was the political leader who best expressed the two-nations view without renouncing to the concept of political nationality. In 1867, at the moment that Quebec entered into Confederation, Cartier made a statement that would be repeated with insistence throughout the following decades: “Such is […] the significance that we must attach to this constitution, which recognizes the French-Canadian nationality. As a distinct, separate nationality, we form a State within a State with the full use of our rights and the formal recognition of our national independence.” 12 For Quebec, what mattered most through this constitutional deal, as we will see shortly, was that Quebec’s civil law was recognized, that provincial autonomy was affirmed and that matters dealing with education, social policies and language fell under the responsibility of Quebec. In the eyes of French Canadians those terms were central to establishing a country that would guarantee the principle of equality between the two founding peoples.

The dualist character of Canada is surely an image that has been used mostly by French Canadians to depict Quebec-Canada dynamics. This image illustrates Canada as the constitutional expression of a compact that brought together two nations or, stated differently, two equal peoples with minority linguistic and reli-

---

12. Quoted in Gagnon and Iacovino, op. cit., pp. 78-79, originally published in the newspaper *La Minerve*, Montreal, 1 July 1867.
gious guarantees secured throughout the country as a matter of right. The prominent historian of Canada, Ramsay Cook, at the time of the Laurendeau-Dunton commission on bilingualism and biculturalism, depicted this view in the following terms:

In the attempt to protect and extend the rights of the religious and linguistic minorities, the theory of Confederation as a compact between cultures, an Anglo-French entente, was developed. According to this theory, Confederation was a partnership of equal cultures whose rights were guaranteed mutually throughout the whole Confederation. It can be said that by 1921 the doctrine of provincial rights and its compact underpinnings had gained the ascendant among Canadian politicians, and was at least partly accepted by legal scholars.13

While the two-nations view gained some prominence from 1867 to the end of the 1920s, it remains that English-speaking historians (Jack Granatstein et al.) have tended to refer to Canada as a single nation, showing a lack of sensitivity toward constitutive components of the federation.14

In contrast, the young Pierre Trudeau, in reference to Canada’s early history, remarked in 1962 that “British Canadians gave themselves the illusion of it [equating the Canadian state with the British Canadian nation] by walling in, as far as possible, the French fact in the Quebec ghetto — whose powers were often clipped by centralizing measures — and by fighting with astonishing ferocity against all symbols which could have destroyed this illusion outside Quebec.”15 This two-nations interpretation certainly gave credit to the view that “Canada” came into being, in 1867, through the voluntary consent of two main political communities. However, there has been much debate on this issue as federal government representatives have often attempted at different junctures to reinterpret such a key formative moment, and have suggested that “Canada” predated the creation of the four original provinces (Lower Canada, Upper Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick).

As a result, upon entering the Canadian federation in 1867, Quebec possessed its own political personality and maintained some of its original powers and institutions which had been formalized almost a century before in the Quebec Act of 1774, and which had been bestowed upon it by the British Crown. In addition, Quebec consented to share some of its powers while relinquishing others with the newly formed federal government that brought together four distinct provinces with the central government. James Tully has argued approvingly in connection with this point that:

The acts of confederation did not discontinue the long-standing legal and political cultures of the former colonies and impose a uniform legal and political culture, but, rather, recognized and continued their constitutional cultures in a diverse federation in which the consent of each province was given.16

Tully’s position has been profoundly influenced by the writing of members of a school of thought rooted in legal pluralism that was clearly influenced by legal experts such as Judge Thomas Loranger and Judge P.B. Mignault. Judge Loranger had summarized his interpretation in his famous 1883 Letters on the Constitution,17 which were later developed by P.B. Mignault. Here is what Mignault had to say on the notions of shared, divided and common sovereignties:

We said that the contracting parties [the federal and the provincial governments] divide their sovereignty and create through common and reciprocal concessions a new power which contains them without absorbing them. We must draw one essential result from this. Each state or province maintains its own existence and the powers it has not yielded to the central government. The province is not subordinate to the central government nor is the latter subordinate to the province. There is absolute equality and a common sovereignty; each government is supreme within its own jurisdiction and within the scope of its power.18

Michael Burgess and I have updated some of those well-anchored federal ideas in Federal Democracies and Burgess has continued this task in a recent and powerful book entitled In Search of the Federal Spirit.19

It should be noted that this take on legal pluralism has been frequently restated and updated by Quebec representatives throughout the last century in various judgments and by various commissions. Some examples are the Tremblay Commission (1953-1956) and the Bélanger-Campeau Commission (1990-1992) as well as various constitutional bouts going as far back as 1961. In the early 1980s constitutionalist Gil Rémillard (who later became Quebec minister of Intergovernmental Affairs during the Meech Lake Accord negotiations) portrayed the British North America Act as a “constitutional treaty that would permit [French Canadians] to assert themselves as a distinct people on an equal footing with the Anglophone majority.”20

17. For a solid discussion of those Letters authored by Loranger, refer to Partners in Confederation.

L’Europe en formation nº 369 Automne 2013 - Autumn 2013
So the image of Canada as a compact between two founding peoples has continued to be used by representatives of the Quebec government. Over the years, though, and especially after the 1982 patriation of the Constitution Act from Britain, the two-nations view has lost important momentum in the rest of Canada (ROC). This is due in good part to the fact that the central government has sought to speak on behalf of all Canadians and to impose its political authority. This loss of momentum is also due to the fact that there has been an important schism between ROC francophone institutions evolving in minority contexts, and the Quebec government asserting itself in the late 1960s.21 This is a matter that political scientists and historians alike should explore at length.

Over time and especially between the advent of the Quiet Revolution in the early 1960s, until the patriation of the Constitution Act in 1982, Canadians and Quebeckers alike have used the notion of dualism to depict the Canadian experiment (Wade and Falardeau, 1960). In proceeding with the patriation of the Constitution from the United Kingdom (UK), Ottawa imposed its view that Quebec ought to be considered as a province like any other. This constituted a major setback for defenders of Canada as a binational political community.

Let us now turn our attention toward a third way of conceiving Quebec.

**Face 3: Distinct Society**

By distinct society people have meant to convey the idea that Quebec possesses a specific culture in North America: a culture that has been shaped by its French language, its Catholic heritage, its civil law tradition and its British parliamentary institutions. Over the years, the notion of distinct society has been transformed to mean a deeper commitment to public policies founded on a more pronounced solidarity in the areas of education, daycare, third sector economy as well as regional development and progressive fiscal policy.

Notions such as *special status* for Quebec, or Quebec as forming a *distinct society*, have often times been viewed with suspicion as they could conceivably constitute a slippery slope pointing towards Quebec’s secession. Pierre Trudeau was very keen to undermine the concept of the distinct society during his tenure as Canada’s Prime Minister (1968-79, 1980-84).

However, Ramsay Cook has reminded us that the idea of Quebec as a distinct society has been present in Canada since the very beginning of Confederation.

---

although we should stress that the use of the notion has been popularized only during the last half of the twentieth century. For example, Cook writes that:

Section 94 recognized the civil law of Quebec as distinct and, if the intent expressed in that provision had been fulfilled (‘uniformity of all and any laws relative to Property and Civil Rights’ in all provinces except Quebec), Quebec would have had a ‘special status’ in that area. In addition the special character of Quebec was recognized in Section 133 which not only made French, for the first time, an official language of Canada, but also made Quebec alone among the original provinces, bilingual.22

The notion of distinct society first entered political milieus in the late-1950s in the aftermath of the Tremblay Commission (1953-1956) as Quebec’s provincial political parties were trying to identify the best ways to assert Quebec’s place within the Canadian federation. Public intellectuals and politicians rallied together aiming to make clear to other partners in the Canadian federation that Quebec needed special instruments to protect its institutions, values, and culture which made Quebec so unique in North America.

Over the years, the notion of distinct society has been interpreted by rival groups either as a dangerous concept that could lead to Canada’s dismantlement, provide a set of privileges or else as a political trick that could only bring about cosmetic constitutional changes that could in no way satisfy Quebec’s political claims. In other words, the concept has been disqualified both by nationalist Canadians and nationalist Quebecers for opposite reasons contributing to discredit the notion among the two main language communities.

Some efforts were made over the years to sensitize Canadians to the presence of Quebec as a distinct society. It is worth pointing to two of Ottawa’s initiatives: the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Constitution (especially its 1972 minority report) and the Task Force on Canadian Unity known as the Pepin-Robarts Commission. At the time that the report of the B & B Commission was tabled, Ottawa decided to convene a federal-provincial conference in 1968 with the aim of revamping the Constitution. Ottawa also struck a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on the Constitution to appraise potential changes. That committee tabled its report in March 1972. What matters here is not so much its main report but the minority report that was signed by Martial Asselin and Pierre De Bané. Both opposed the main report since it did not mention that Quebec constituted a distinct society in Canada. Here is what they wrote: “Nevertheless […] Quebec’s society forms a distinct entity, and one in which it is gradually realizing that it cannot achieve its fullest development without a freedom for action and the presence of certain

psychological conditions which it lacks at the present time.” 23 The two authors also heavily criticized the main report (and the Canadian Constitution) for the reason that “nowhere does it recognize the existence of a distinct Quebec society, a shortcoming which has real consequences[...].”24

It is worth mentioning that this minority report was received coldly in Ottawa and that indeed most MPs chose to ignore it. Nevertheless, in hindsight, we can say that Asselin and De Bané had clearly identified a fundamental shortcoming in the Canadian Constitution.

Following the election in November 1976 of the Parti Québécois (PQ) government in Quebec, the central government launched its Task Force on Canadian Unity that would bring to the fore the concepts of regionalism and dualism. Members of the Task force wrote extensively on the fact that Quebec formed a distinct society, stressing that “Quebec is distinctive and should, within a viable Canada, have the powers necessary to protect and develop its distinctive character, any political solution short of this would lead to the rupture of Canada.” 25 Language politics were specifically targeted by the Task force which gave its endorsement to the Quebec government’s policies, namely Law 101, backing “efforts of the Quebec provincial government and the people of Quebec to ensure the predominance of the French language and culture in that province.” 26 This position was in sharp opposition to the one formally adopted by the Liberal Party of Canada after Pierre Trudeau’s election as party leader in 1968.

Members of the Task Force were concerned that their report might be viewed as an encouragement for the development of asymmetrical federalism so to avoid this they recommended giving all provinces the possibility to act within the same sphere of jurisdictions since, to do otherwise, would be opposed in other parts of Canada. They suggested granting “to all the provinces powers in the areas needed by Quebec to maintain its distinctive culture and heritage.”27 As a result, Quebec’s status as a distinct society was granted to all provinces.28 None of those powers were ever stipulated in order to give Ottawa significant leeway in its negotiations with the provinces. As a result, Quebec’s status as a distinct society was extended to all provinces and rendered much less significant politically. The idea of Ottawa was

27. The Task Force on Canadian Unity, 1979, op. cit., p. 87.
to accept the notion of distinct society for all and imposes a political framework of individual and provincial equality which conflicted with Quebec’s own vision of its status within Canada.

**Face 4: Region-State**

As if Quebec could be depicted as a simple territory, various authors have described it as forming one of five regions in Canada, the others being collectively the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, Western Canada and the North. To build on a recent text I coauthored with James Bickerton, a region can be defined as a territorial entity distinct from either the local or the nation-state level that constitutes an economic, political, administrative or cultural space within which different types of activities take place and where different actors are interacting, and toward which individuals and communities may develop attachments and identities.29 This constitutes a fourth potent face of Quebec.

Michael Burgess aptly uses the notion of ‘political territoriality’ to develop the concept of a region. Burgess states that territoriality “is in reality a composite term that incorporates an amalgam of socio-economic and cultural elements encapsulated in a spatial organization. […] In practice, territoriality interacts with a variety of intervening variables to produce complex forms of political identity.”30 In other words, for Burgess, a region is not an empty shell or an empty container; it has specific contours and it possesses an internal life. Clearly, Quebec has all of these characteristics. But, in addition, Quebec can be said to be a region-state since its political and economic elites are in a position to use state power to provide Quebec with a competitive edge in the world economy while displaying a unique international personality that no other Canadian province has projected with the same resourcefulness and intensity.31

In *The End of the Nation-State: The Rise of Regional Economies*, Kenichi Ohmae argues that with the end of a bipolar world under American and Soviet influence, we have more or less entered an era in which the region state has simply displaced the nation-state as the key player in the world economy. Those region states need not correspond with boundaries of a given nation-state since they are often trans-national. In the end what matters according to Ohmae is that these region states bring together vast natural economic zones with little concerns for national sover-

---

eighty or social cohesion. New dynamics are at play and these are leading to the transformation of power relations. It is important however to distance ourselves from Ohmae who defines the region-state simply as some economic units that happen to be located in contiguous territories. In contrast, I argue that what gives meaning and strength to Quebec’s quest for identity is the fact that over the years it has built a large network of economic, cultural and political institutions that connect the global with the local with the national, and vice versa.

Conceptualizing the region-state as such could contribute significantly to challenging the discourse on globalization and reinvigorating notions of nations, multi-nations, and historical regions as relevant and legitimate sources of identity-building, empowerment and political authority. In short, the concept of region-state, as it is employed here, represents the affirmation of territory as the basis for collective identity and for a genuine system of representation.

However, as Montserrat Guibernau has argued, “Nation-states are the subject and creators of a global network which for the most part disregards regions and national or ethnic minorities as political actors. The nation-state system often ignores the emotional bonds which unite citizens of particular nation-states to some of the sub-state national communities to which they belong.” In response to the domineering position of the nation-state, advancing the notion of the region-state could make a powerful statement with respect to political cohesion, accountability and empowerment. Indeed, the region-state constitutes a key place for social mobilization and solidarity at the community level. As large heterogeneous states often neglect key constitutive components, region-states can provide ways to empower nations seeking to express themselves or to pursue innovative political experiments.

Face 5: Multinational Democracy

To complete our sketch, let us examine the image of Quebec as a multinational democracy which is the one I believe to be most in tune with Quebec citizenry and that can contribute most to reflecting Quebec’s social composition. At least four elements contribute to give shape to this emerging type of political association. And here I am particularly influenced and inspired by the pioneering work of James Tully on this topic.

First, as a modern type of political association, a multinational democracy contains more than one nation. Minimally, members of these nations have the right to exercise internal self-determination and to engage in continuous deliberations and negotiations with a view to develop relations based on trust between partners. Representatives of these nations are free to seek recognition in international forums. However, Michael Keating has cautioned us not to assume that self-determination necessarily leads to political secession. For Keating, there is “no logical reason why self-determination should be linked to statehood, apart from the entrenched dogmas of sovereignty discourse […]. Another way of looking at self-determination is to see it as the right to negotiate one’s position within the state and supranational order, without necessarily setting up a separate state.”

I will return to this second point shortly, but it is important here to stress that we are very far from the standard Westphalian model that conceives democracies as forming a single demos with “internal, subnational ‘minorities’ seeking group rights within,” (but) “societies of two or more, often overlapping nations that are more or less equal in status.”

Second, multinational democracies are also characterized by the fact that they form plural societies. Such is the case in Quebec. A concrete expression of this was given on 20 March 1985 when the Quebec National Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing the existence of the Abenaki, Algonquin, Atikamekw, Cree, Huron, Micmac, Mohawk, Montagnais, Naskapi and Inuit nations. An eleventh nation, the Malecite’s, was recognized in 1989. In connection with this interpretation of Quebec as constituting a plural society, Tully goes as far as saying that in such contexts “[t]he jurisdictions, modes of participation and representation, and the national and multinational identities of citizens overlap and are subject to negotiation.”

Third, multinational democracies adopt the principles of constitutional democracy, which challenge the norm of a democratic setting founded on a single-nation. As such, this “multinational association rests on their adherence to the legal and political values, principles and rights of constitutional democracy and international law.”

---


38. Tully, op. cit., p. 3.

39. Tully, op. cit., p. 3.
Fourth, multinational democracies need to develop institutions that contribute to bring members and representatives of the various nations in permanent contact while encouraging political exchanges. In the case of Quebec, one can view the politics of interculturalism as a clear expression of this desire to erect a polity founded on interconnectedness between societal partners.

So far, Quebec’s main political parties have been too slow in seeking to empower the Inuit and the ten Aboriginal nations. Arguably, Quebec’s National Assembly has been a leader in identifying avenues for economic and social development of the North of Quebec, territory traditionally inhabited by many First Nations, but much more needs to be done to extirpate the colonial heritage which long dominated relations between Quebec and its original peoples. Denys Delâge (1999) aptly reminds us that “current Aboriginal leaders are more involved in fighting for their rights than in engaging in an overall questioning of the colonial system that constrains them. […] The goal would be for aboriginal people to escape the colonial heritage of wardship and the denial of access to full citizenship.” It is here argued that the pursuit of such objectives would contribute to bring Quebecers of all origins and all walks of life together with the purpose of building a better and a fairer world for all to share.

Finally if Quebec does decide to secede from Canada, we should remember that it will have another nation to recognize—that of ‘Anglophone Quebecers’. For the moment however this community identifies itself as part of the Canadian majority and as such does not perceive itself—or is not being perceived in general—as constituting a minority nation within Quebec.

Conclusion

In this article, I have analyzed what appear to me as the five prevailing faces used to depict Quebec, namely, Quebec as a political nationality, as a founding nation, as a distinct society, as a region-state and, finally, as a multinational democracy. Each of these faces tends to propose and promote different characteristics and suggest a unique worldview with particular meaning systems.

These various portrayals of Quebec also suggest different perceptions of power relationships. The uses of those images are not insignificant, as we are reminded by E.E. Schattschneider who argued that “the definition of alternatives [read faces] is the supreme instrument of power; the antagonists can rarely agree on what the issues are because power is involved in the definition. He who determines what politics is about runs the country, because the definition of the alternatives is the choice of con-

---

icts and the choice of conflicts allocates power.”

So, he who determines the face of politics being used gives a special direction to policy preferences and power sharing.

We can bring this short survey of the five faces of Quebec to a crisp close by referring the reader to the observation made by Richard Simeon in the Introduction. It is clear that defining concepts has consequences that go to the very core of a society and can tilt the balance all of a sudden as the patriation and the establishment of a new constitutional order in Canada in 1982 clearly reminds us.

Abstract
Various uses of key concepts such as political nationality, nation, distinct society, region-state, and multinational democracy have a significant impact on the way one imagines constituent units in federal states. My intention in the following article is to introduce the main faces and narratives that have surfaced and resurfaced since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and assess their impact on the mind-set of Canadians and Quebecers. Though I chose not to include the notion of stateless nation to depict Quebec, since this political community has developed major state apparatuses active in paradiplomacy, education, culture, economy, and intergovernmental matters that would make many existing countries very envious of its accomplishments. The concepts of minority nation, of global society or of province proved to be less relevant to discuss the Quebec-Canada dynamics since Quebecers conceive of themselves as forming one of the two principal political communities in the country.

Résumé
Les différents usages de concepts clés tels que ceux de nationalité politique, nation, société distincte, Province-État et démocratie multinationale ont une influence considérable sur la façon dont on conçoit les entités constitutantes au sein des États fédéraux. Mon intention dans ce chapitre est de présenter les principaux visages ou images du Québec et les récits politiques qui sont apparus et qui ont refait surface depuis le début de la Révolution tranquille au Québec (Gagnon et Montcalm, 1990), ainsi que d’évaluer leur impact sur la vision des Canadiens et des Québécois. D’emblée, j’ai choisi de ne pas inclure la notion de nation sans État pour dépeindre le Québec, puisque cette communauté politique s’est dotée d’un appareil d’État considérable. Que ce soit en matière de paradiplomatie, d’éducation, de culture, d’économie ou d’affaires intergouvernementales, les activités du Québec dans ces domaines rendraient de nombreux pays existants envieux à l’égard de ses réalisations. Les concepts de nation minoritaire et de société globale se révèlent moins pertinents pour analyser la dynamique Québec-Canada puisque les Québécois estiment qu’ils forment l’une des deux principales communautés politiques du pays.