

The Management of Nationalism in Canada and Spain

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The contemporary sociological reality of both Canada and Spain is characterized by multinationalism, which means that a segment of the countries' population identifies, at least to a degree, with a different national community from the one projected by the state. This is the case for Québec and, in Spain, for the Basque Country and Catalonia. The Spanish state has been unable to forge a common and un-challenged nation such as the one constructed, largely through cultural assimilation, by the French state. In Canada, the choice of a federal model precluded assimilationist strategies of nation-building, favouring instead the reproduction of a political community with a distinct identity in Québec. The central governments in both Canada and Spain have therefore had to manage nationalist movements, that is, to respond to the claims articulated by nationalist leaders at the sub-state level. This paper compares nationalist management strategies in Canada and Spain.¹

The paper is divided into three sections. The first presents a review of management strategies states can employ with respect to nationalist movements. The second and third sections provide an analysis of how these various strategies have been used by the Canadian and Spanish governments respectively. The conclusion synthesizes similarities and discrepancies between the two cases and offers some reflections on the causes of difference.

Nationalist Management Strategies

There exist various strategies for responding to the claims of sub-state nationalism.² In the context of liberal democratic states, certain options are not available or, more to the point, not acceptable. This is obviously the case for strategies involving the use of violence such as genocide or ethnic cleansing. Similarly, strongly coercive strategies such as population exchanges, segregation or the subordination of one group to the other³ are incompatible with liberal and democratic principles. Perhaps more importantly is the fact that political integration through linguistic and cultural assimilation, an approach favoured by many states in contemporary history and used perhaps most successfully in France, has been rendered problematic by the globalization of minority rights.

States operating in the context of multinationalism typically seek to capture, or recapture, the loyalty of citizens who offer support to a nationalist movement. In other words, states look to deploy their own nationalism.⁴ This might not be a management strategy *per se*, but it represents an option for states looking to counteract the pull of nationalist movements. State nationalism operates in many different ways in multinational liberal democracies. A central force in the process of state nationalism has been the welfare state.⁵ The development of the welfare state meant a 'social citizenship'⁶ whereby national social programs brought citizens together through common sets of rights, responsibilities and values. In other words, social policy was integrated into, and fed, national identity.⁷ Globalization has complicated states seeking integration through welfare politics since states have been under pressure, resulting from global economic competition as well as the constraints and rules of continental integration, to reduce or

eliminate budget deficits. Nevertheless, states in multinational societies understand the value of social policy as a common bond. Social citizenship was central in building post-WWII British solidarity in the United Kingdom. In Belgium, Francophone parties are fighting off claims from Flemish parties to 'de-federalize' Social Security; they are convinced that social protection is the crucial element still holding Belgium together as a political community.⁸

States in situation of multinationalism can also choose to promote and foster a specific, usually dominant, culture. In this context, the state's nationalism involves the projection of historical narratives and symbols⁹ that are, most often, drawn from the experience of the dominant cultural group. This strategy for political integration features tendencies of cultural assimilation that fit into a perspective that some authors have described as dominant ethnicity.¹⁰ As we discuss later, some strands of Spanish nationalism fall into this category.

Most of the time, the explicit promotion of the national identity projected by the state is not sufficient to successfully manage multinational societies. Indeed, nationalist movements will typically fight off these attempts at 'integration' and will look to attempt to secure, for the members of the political community they represent, political power, resources and recognition. In liberal-democratic contexts, states typically respond to these claims through a variety of management strategies that can be used in combination.

A first strategy that can be employed to meet the claims of nationalist movements consists of bolstering the power of the minority group(s) at the center. The most formal and far-reaching way to do this is to construct consociational/power-sharing arrangements.¹¹ The logic of consociational democracy is to accept the presence of distinct national identities and groups within a society rather than seek assimilation, or integration in a larger alternative identity. In other words, consociationalism seeks to build upon multinational structures rather than to destroy or supersede them. From this perspective, it is fairly at odds with the 'state national identity promotion' just discussed. The mechanisms of consociationalism involve the sharing of political/executive power between the groups and the use of collective vetoes on matters deemed to affect vital group interests. This means that consociational arrangements work better in bi-national societies. It also means that the majority group needs to accept *not* to behave as a majority, or have to be presented with certain incentives to do so. In Belgium, for example, the demographically dominant Flemings have accepted to share political power with Francophones at the federal level while Francophones do the same in the Region of Brussels-Capital where they are a majority.¹²

The most serious criticism of consociational arrangements is that it serves to build up, consolidate and politicize identities that are by nature fluid and malleable.¹³ This argument is strong because it is based on the widely accepted idea that identities are constructed rather than primordial. However, transforming identities is a long-term process. Furthermore, the degree of fluidity and malleability varies depending on the level of institutionalization of the distinct national identity. All things considered, consociational democracy is a reasonable solution when nationalist conflicts become too serious. For example, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement that set up consociational arrangements to manage the conflict between Unionists (Loyalists) and Nationalists (Republicans) in Northern Ireland was a more adequate response than any attempt to deconstruct or supersede the respective identities.¹⁴

The empowerment of minority groups at the centre can be operationalized through means other than consociationalism. For example, a certain number of seats can be reserved for representatives from minority groups in the central parliament, or a cabinet position may be designated to articulate the preferences of a group as well as to relate and adopt public policy to it. This was the central accommodation practice in the United Kingdom for Scotland and Wales before devolution. Moreover, informal practices can develop within political parties to give, when they are in power, prominent cabinet positions to members of the minority group. Parties can also make sure that their own internal structure is well-populated by representatives of the minority and that the position of leader is, at least occasionally, occupied by someone from the minority group.

An alternative, or complementary, strategy to empowerment at the center is territorial autonomy. Territorial autonomy can follow one of two models. The first is federalism,¹⁵ where sovereignty is divided between levels of government and the division of power can not be altered unilaterally because it is written into a constitution. In this context, territorial autonomy becomes a general governing principle and there exists multiple units with specified powers. Canada, Belgium and Spain (albeit not formally a federation) are the Western multinational states that fit this model. The second type of model is the granting of autonomy to one or selected territories. Here, autonomy is targeted rather than part of a larger framework and may not be the result of a formal division of sovereignty. Devolution in the United Kingdom, for example, provided autonomy to Scotland and Wales without stripping Westminster of its sovereignty.

Independently of the formal structures used to implement it, territorial autonomy as an approach for managing situations of multinationalism follows a logic whereby the decentralization of decision-making reduces majority-minority conflict. It is therefore no coincidence that decentralized matters are almost always linked to the cultural differences that are central to the discourse of nationalist movements (for example, linguistic policy and education). The theory behind territorial autonomy makes the assumption that policy-making in fields that involve a clear cultural dimension presents great potential for conflict in situations of multi-ethnicity or multinationalism. For example, one group might want to promote a language regime favouring its own tongue or an education curriculum presenting its own vision of the state or national history. Of course, federated units or autonomous territories are not often completely homogenous and units/territories where the state-wide minority group is dominant often needs to coexist with communities from the state-wide majority group.¹⁶ Schemes of territorial autonomy are attractive not only because of the specific policy fields they decentralize but also because they provide minority groups with political power. Territorial autonomy also produces a new forum for political representation, through a regional legislature, as well as a distinct political class for the minority group. These are important references for a group in search of cultural and political security.

Territorial autonomy as a strategy for managing multinationalism represents a framework for territorial governance that can lead to many different actualizations. For example, the extent of the powers assumed by the regional government is variable and subject to negotiations. If cultural and linguistic issues are typically decentralized, disentangling responsibility for social policy, for example, is typically more complex. Financial transfers and arrangements are also

something that typically need to be negotiated, especially since central states often have the greatest revenues while regions typically administer expensive programs (for example, health care). In this context, central and constituent unit governments most often can not live in isolation from one another and there needs to be some mechanisms for inter-governmental relations. These relations can be structured in a variety of way. They can be driven by political parties, particularly if these have a single organization across territorial levels (as in the case of the United Kingdom). They can take the form of central-regional executive meetings (like in Canada). In this last context, inter-governmental relations involve a particularly important potential for conflict. Federal and autonomy arrangements are unlikely to eliminate conflictual relations in multinational societies. In fact, some would say that they can increase conflict and even pave the way towards secession.¹⁷ A more optimistic view is that these strategies may serve to ‘banalize’ conflict by placing it within a complex system of territorial governance and that, if territorial structuring involves several units, the structure of the conflict can be shifting since potential alliances provide fluidity to the situation.

Finally, states in the context of multinationalism can also utilise ‘recognition’ as a political strategy.¹⁸ Nationalist movements can not be compared to interest groups. Their leaders are not primarily in pursuit of material benefits for the group members, although this is often part of the equation. The central concerns of nationalist leaders are to secure for members of their group (including themselves) access to political power and material resources, and to obtain for their group the recognition that they form a nation. This last quest is mainly of symbolic nature, although it typically has political implications. Indeed, the status of nation is closely related to the right of self-determination. Although international law typically reserves secession as a form of self-determination for colonial and dictatorial contexts, all these connections, while alluring to nationalist leaders, are often too close for comfort for states. States may also opt against the recognition option because it goes against the national identity they are trying to project.

The Spanish State and Nationalist Movements

Historically, the Spanish state has used a variety of strategies to manage its diversity. In pre-modern Spain, the state built bilateral relationships with various provinces that remained largely autonomous. In the 19th century, the slow and uneven process of integration through centralization begun by the Spanish state two centuries earlier developed into the modern project of a liberal Jacobin Spanish nation. After this effort failed, and actually gave rise to nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia, the Spanish state experimented with strategies of territorial autonomy and recognition during the Second Republic (1931-1936). During the Franco regime, all of these strategies were abandoned in favour of the imposition, through repression, of a monocultural Spanish nation viewed not only as one and indivisible but also as sacred and eternal.

In the democratic era, the management of sub-state nationalism by the Spanish state has involved a combination of various strategies. One option excluded, for at least two reasons, was integration through cultural assimilation. First, the Franco years had created a strong association between this type of practice and fascist regimes. Second, there was in the 1980s and 1990s an extensive diffusion and institutionalization of a human rights culture, of which minority rights

were a particularly closely scrutinized component. In this context, the Spanish quest for acceptance as a ‘normal’ liberal democracy and, more specifically, for membership in the then European Community, made cultural assimilation, even in a non-violent form, an unattractive alternative.

A central element of the Spanish state’s interaction with sub-nationalism in the democratic era has been the promotion of the Spanish nation and identity. This approach is typically not acknowledged by some Spanish politicians who refuse to see themselves as nationalists of any kind.¹⁹ This is primarily due to the negative connotations attached to the term ‘nationalist.’ Not only was this the term chosen by Franco during the Civil War and thereafter but it is also, of course, the reference for Basques and Catalans who either articulate a different vision of Spain or want to leave it altogether. In this context, the Spanish project of a strong and united Spain, multicultural but not multinational, is typically presented as post-national in nature.²⁰ This is best seen in the discursive practice of branding ‘constitutionalists’ against ‘nationalists,’²¹ which places Spanish politicians at a normative advantage that would be absent if the debate were between ‘Spanish nationalists’ and ‘Basque/Catalan nationalists.’ Behind this discourse is the theoretical and philosophical foundation of constitutional patriotism.²² The Habermasian theory,²³ which celebrates the identification with, and loyalty, to constitutional frameworks of liberal rights, found a warm reception in Spain during the late 1990s partly because of a transformation in the Spanish self-perception. In the years following the democratic transition, the Spanish national identity and the idea of the Spanish nation were heavily marked by links with authoritarianism, Catholic traditionalism, militarism and hyper-centralism. Moreover, the weight of Spain’s history as a perceived failed state (at least, from liberal democratic criteria) and an abnormality in Western Europe was still strong. In the last 25 years, several developments worked to change the image of Spain, most notably the successful democratization, the membership in the European Union (1986) and robust economic growth. In this context, Spain came to be seen as a ‘normal’ Western state: it was liberal and democratic, integrated in the process of European construction, and presented a well-functioning market economy. As a result, Spanish politicians, societal leaders and intellectuals, both from the Left and the Right, renewed with Spanish nationalism.²⁴

There is no doubt that Spanish parties, especially the conservative Partido Popular (PP) starting in the 1990s, have sought to vigorously promote the Spanish national identity.²⁵ But there are different conceptualizations of this identity. Spanish nationalism is a differentiated phenomenon, which ranges from Jacobin visions of the country, where the emphasis is on unity, cohesion and centralism, to more multi-composite views highlighting plurality, diversity and decentralism. One influential vision of Spain, especially popular on the Right, carries the implicit assumption of a nation characterized and united by its Castilian roots and language. For example, PP politicians can still be heard recounting the development of the Spanish nation using references to the *Reconquista* against the Moors.²⁶ From this perspective, Spain’s history thereafter is about the expansion of Castile and the making of the Spanish state, empire and nation. Tellingly, the Aznar governments, together with the *Real Academia de la Historia*, were very much concerned with the way Autonomous Communities taught history in school, fearing a ‘distortion’ of the Spanish historical developmental process.²⁷ For this brand of Spanish nationalism, multilingualism is viewed with suspicion since it is considered to threaten one of the bonds holding Spain together. This vision is strongly present in Spain’s language regime.

Different languages are spoken in Spain, but only Castilian is an official language of the Spanish state, which all Spaniards have the duty to know. Catalan, Basque and Galician are official only within the corresponding Autonomous Community. Despite the multilingual nature of society, Castilian (which, outside Spain, has come to be referred to simply as 'Spanish') seems to assume a status as the only legitimate language when it comes to expressing the Spanish national identity. For example, there is no formal status for minority languages in the Spanish Parliament while in the Senate the use of these languages is allowed only one day per year. The Spanish national identity card is written only in Castilian. The Aznar government, which vigorously promoted the Spanish identity through linguistic references, pushed Autonomous Communities to emphasize a strong education curriculum in the Castilian language and literature.²⁸

Spanish nationalism also comes with a focus on the 1978 constitution. As opposed to the more culturalist articulation of the Spanish nation discussed above, the so-called constitutional patriotism provides, theoretically speaking, room for greater recognition of diversity. At the same time, the emphasis on universality and individual rights may also be used to resist such recognition. There is therefore considerable room for conceptualizing the Spanish nation in different ways while making the 1978 constitution its institutional and normative basis.

The terminology chosen is interesting as patriotism is favoured over nationalism. This is meant to highlight that contemporary Spain is modern, open, democratic and forward-looking. Therefore, the participants in this political project are 'patriots' rather than 'nationalists.' The concept of constitutional patriotism seeks to project a 'civic' nationalism (although, again, this last word is almost never used) where the Spanish nation is united by an allegiance to values (rule of law, liberal rights and freedoms, etc...) described as universal. In the Spanish political context, this constitutional patriotism has taken the form of a staunch defence of the constitution, which is seen as the foundation for all Spanish successes since the death of Franco. For the PP, this focus on the constitution involves a strong preference for the institutional status quo. Under the Prime Ministership of José María Aznar, the constitution acquired a near sacrosanct status and any suggestion by Basque (or Catalan) nationalists that the document should be amended to modify the status of their Autonomous Community was met with stern refusals.

On the Left, the PSOE also considers the present constitution a fundamental reference for the Spanish nation, although it sees its framework in a more dynamic fashion. The fact that current Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero negotiated changes to the Statutes of Autonomy of the many Autonomous Communities reflects this dynamic view of the Spanish political community and its institutions. The PSOE's view of Spain is more compatible with meaningful diversity than the PP's, as shown by the latter's denunciations of the former's efforts at accommodating the claims of Autonomous Communities, especially Catalonia.

Along with promoting attachment to Spain through various and changing national models, the democratic Spanish state adopted strategies designed to manage rather than supersede the Basque and Catalan identities.

Territorial autonomy, expressed through the *Estado de las Autonomías* and the corresponding system of Autonomous Communities, was at the center of the new architecture. The 1978 constitution establishing this model does not formally call Spain a federation but its

specification of a division of power between state and Autonomous Communities makes it a federal system. The rationale of decentralizing decision-making, especially in potentially contentious policy fields involving linguistic and cultural considerations, was at the centre of the Autonomy Statutes for the Basque Country and Catalonia. This being said, the Spanish arrangements fall short of other multinational federal systems such as Canada and Belgium when it comes to the extent of territorial autonomy. Spanish governments have been generally unenthusiastic about transferring the full extent of powers specified in the Statutes of Autonomy. Even in some areas where Autonomous Communities are formally autonomous, this autonomy is often challenged in practice by central policies.

In the case of the Basque Country, a particularly important point is that autonomy pertains to the legislative and executive branch, but not to the judiciary. The Spanish justice system is centralized, and judges working in the different Autonomous Communities are appointed by the Spanish government. As a consequence, the courts are not perceived by Basque nationalists as neutral; rather, they are viewed as the simple extension of the state.²⁹ This is a point of contention in the Basque Country because the problem of political violence politicizes the judicial system. This centralized structure feeds the perception that Basque nationalists may not always be treated fairly. In other words, the judiciary's lack of autonomy translates into a lack of legitimacy that serves to fuel nationalist mobilization. For example, court decisions to close the Basque language daily *Egunkaria* and outlaw the radical nationalist party *Batasuna* (linked to ETA) were seen as having been dictated by the Aznar government and triggered important demonstrations. So did staunch refusals to re-locate ETA prisoners in the Basque Country.

One approach that has not been used by the Spanish state in its attempt to manage sub-state nationalism is empowerment at the center. The new Spanish democracy was built on majoritarian principles. Consociationalism would have been difficult to put into practice for several reasons. First of all, it is unclear how many 'groups' would have needed to be incorporated into a power-sharing arrangement. The Spanish situation is quite complex and fluid. In this context, constructing a consociational arrangement with the Basques, the Catalans and perhaps the Galicians would have had the predictable consequence of triggering complaints for Andalusians, Valencians, etc... Second, defining the exact contours of the majority group (probably Castilian) would have been a tricky proposition. In any case, this group (however defined) would in all likelihood have represented a clear majority of the population, which makes consent to power-sharing less likely. Third, compounding this demographic imbalance is the possibility that power-sharing arrangements might have lacked support in some of the regions involved. Certainly, the Basque Country is a very polarized society where Basque and Spanish nationalists coexist, the latter more supportive of majoritarian practices.

Of course, there are other ways to seek to empower minority groups within central institutions such as having them well-represented in state-wide parties. This has happened to some degree in Spain with Catalan and Basque politicians having played important roles within both the PSOE and PP (Narcis Serra, Josep Borrell, Javier Rojo, Jaime Mayor Oreja, etc...). Of course, the position of politicians from the Basque Country or Catalonia in Spanish politics does not match that of Quebeckers in Canadian federal politics, but Canada can be considered an exceptional case. There is also the possibility of using institutional mechanisms. Spain currently

does not have an upper house that represents the voice of the Autonomous Communities, but proposals for reforming the Senate into a *Bundesrat*-type chamber have been discussed. Nationalist movements have been able to exert political power in Madrid, but that has been as a result of minority government situations. In this context, empowerment at the center has been a matter of constraint rather than principle since Spain's two major parties had little choice but to seek the support of nationalist parties to govern.

A difficult question in democratic Spain has been recognition. As we have seen, Basque and Catalan nationalists insisted at the time of the transition that the new constitution needed to recognize their historical, political and cultural distinctiveness. This was done through an acknowledgement of the existence of 'historical nationalities' in Spain. This was a political compromise since the existence of these nationalities is situated within an indivisible Spanish nation. In the 1980s, the Spanish government's attempt at levelling the status and powers of Autonomous Communities was an early sign of a discomfort with the symbolic implications of this differentiation.

In 2006, the Spanish Socialist government accepted to address the issue of recognition by negotiating with the Generalitat of Catalonia a reform of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy. All Catalan parties, except for the PP, sought to have Catalonia recognized as a nation. This proved very difficult for the PSOE to accept, for it was seen as threatening the integrity of the Spanish nation. In the end, an indirect form of recognition was captured by the reformed Statute, which states that the Parliament of Catalonia proclaimed Catalonia's nationhood. The reformed Statute was opposed by the PP, which launched a judicial challenge to it, largely in relation to the nation reference. In the case of the Basque Country, claims for recognition have centred on the question of self-determination. Basque nationalists want the Spanish state to recognize such a right for the Basques: this was the major obstacle preventing moderate nationalists from endorsing the 1978 constitution and it still represents an underlying source for the conflict in the Basque Country. For Basque nationalists, the Basque provinces never relinquished their sovereignty to the Spanish state; they only agreed to a foral arrangement with Spanish monarchs. As a result, the contemporary Autonomous Community of the Basque Country is said to hold, not only a natural but also a historically-grounded, right to decide its political future independently of Spain. In this context, recognition could have institutional consequences: these might not include secession, although this option is not rejected out of hand.

Canadian Federalism and Québec

Contrary to Spain, the Canadian state never attempted to integrate Québec through centralized unitary structures or repression. (Repressive approaches were reserved for Aboriginal populations). Canada was created as a federation and the constitutional structures of the country prevented any form of centralization that would have entailed the eradication of provincial autonomy. In addition to this constitutionalization of provincial autonomy, the country's liberal-democratic regimes further worked to make policies of assimilation, which were considered by the British Crown in 1840, unthinkable.

For the first century of its existence, Canada's nationalism touched Québec only peripherally. The province's conservative elites were happy to utilise provincial autonomy to

keep most of French and English-Canadian societies separated and Canadian nationalism, as promoted by the federal government, had very strong British undertones.³⁰ Although the creation of the first national programmes in the 1940s certainly had the effect of creating some bonds of social citizenship in Canada, state nationalism was not strongly or consistently deployed to foster the attachment to Canada of French-Canadians living in Québec. In the 1960s, changes in Québec nationalism that saw the end of the province's relative position of isolation in the country in favour of a policy of combative engagement that sought to re-structure federalism combined with a re-conceptualization of the Canadian nation to connect more directly state nationalism to Québec. After the Pearson government gave the country its own flag (a then somewhat controversial decision since it established symbolic distance between Canada and Great Britain), the governments of Pierre Trudeau, prompted by a growing movement for independence in Québec, re-articulated Canadian nationalism by introducing several important new policies and institutions. First was a policy of official bilingualism (1968), which gave a dualism to the Canadian nation. This dualism was however universalist in nature since French and English had no particular territorial anchoring in Canada. Official bilingualism was designed to make Quebecers feel more comfortable in Canada by showing that the country as a whole embraced the French language. This was only partially successful. On the one hand, it is likely that nationalist mobilization would have been greater without the formal equality of languages, although this is difficult to demonstrate. On the other, it was clearly insufficient since the PQ's popularity kept increasing in the 1970s, and Québec governments subsequently enacted language legislation of their own to make French the sole official language of Québec. Second was a policy of multiculturalism (1971), which celebrated the many cultural differences within Canadian society as a way, in part, to transcend the French-English polarity. Third was a Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) that established Canada as a nation of individual rights bearers. Pride in the document was undermined in Québec by the fact that the provincial government did not sign the Constitutional Act that put it into force and the notion of Canada's nationalism as a 'nationalism of rights', although it resonates strongly outside Quebec, has not been popular in that province.³¹

Just as in Spain, there are different views of the political community in Canada and, therefore, different articulations of its nationalism. The so-called 'Trudeau vision' of the country, in addition to stressing the multicultural, bilingual and liberal nature of Canada, understands the country as a federation of ten provinces equal in status.³² Another vision of Canada, which finds most of its support in Québec, sees the country as the product of a pact between founding peoples, French and English.³³ Nationhood in the first vision takes the form of a community of citizens whereas in the second it is more akin to a community of communities.

Although the government of Canada has sought to foster Quebecers' attachment to the country by promoting the idea of a bilingual Canadian nation, liberal-democratic, tolerant and progressive, the centerpiece strategy of Canada's accommodation system for Québec is the territorial autonomy built into the federal structures. The political accommodation of Francophones (Catholics) represented the rationale for making Canada a federal state in 1867. While English-speaking leaders preferred the unitary state model to federalism, which they saw as a weaker and less reliable alternative, French-speaking leaders would not join a union without the political autonomy necessary to protect their community's language, religion and (conservative) way of life.³⁴ The compromise, a fairly centralized federation, proved successful in accommodating French-Canadian nationalism since it allowed its traditional-conservative elites to insulate their community from outside influences.

In the context of the Quiet Revolution, the new Québec elites argued that linguistic and cultural protection, as well as socio-economic catching-up, necessitated transfers of political powers from Ottawa to Québec City. For the most part, the federal government responded positively to these claims by granting Québec power over such policy areas as immigration and pensions. From the early 1970s, Québec governments took their claims for further decentralization to the constitutional arena in an attempt to enhance provincial autonomy and establish new rules for the workings of the Canadian federation. A central target for successive Québec governments has been the so-called ‘spending power’, sometimes used by the federal government to create new programs in provincial jurisdictions.³⁵ From the perspective of Québec governments, this power should be curtailed so as to render the division of power truly ‘watertight’.

State responses to Québec’s demands have varied depending on the party of federal government. For Liberal governments, especially under Pierre Trudeau (1968-79, 1980-84), an active federal government featuring strong representation of Francophones was the most appropriate means of accommodation; any move towards further decentralization was viewed as a triple threat: to the ability of the state to regulate society; to individual rights; and to the integrity of the Canadian nation.³⁶ In contrast, the Conservatives of Brian Mulroney viewed the constitutionalization of decentralizing features as a positive step towards the consolidation of ‘national unity’. Their attempts at constitutional change - the Meech Lake (1987) and Charlottetown (1992) Accords - failed for several different reasons, including strong political opposition against a perceived weakening of the country resulting from ‘concessions to Québec’.³⁷

After the 1995 referendum, the Liberal government turned away from constitutional politics and opted to govern the federation through intergovernmental and administrative agreements, including one that transferred power over labour market training to Québec. Overall, though, the post-1995 Liberal approach to Québec sought to re-assert the Government of Canada’s presence in the province (for example, through a sponsorship program that went awry³⁸). The Conservative Party, which came to power 2006, made the argument that a return to the spirit of the 1867 Constitution, that is, a respect by the federal government of provincial jurisdictions (an approach it dubbed ‘open federalism’)³⁹ was the best way to make Quebeckers feel comfortable in Canada and weaken support for independence. This approach has met with some success and the federal government, as part of its ‘open federalism,’ even struck an arrangement with the Québec government to give the province a permanent representation within the Canadian delegation at UNESCO.

The structures and practices of federalism in Canada have not exclude, at least since the late 1960s, a deliberate strategy of strengthening the representation and influence of Quebeckers in federal politics. The cornerstone of that strategy is official bilingualism. At a symbolical level, a central aim of this policy was to convey to Quebeckers that Canada was also their country. At a more practical level, it guaranteed that Quebeckers could communicate in French with the federal government. Most importantly, official bilingualism had a major impact on politics and government in Canada. Not only did the Francophone presence in the federal civil service increase substantially after that legislation was implemented,⁴⁰ but political leadership has been more representative of the country’s linguistic and cultural dualism as high-level politicians (for example, party leaders) are expected to have a command of French. In this context, Quebeckers have had great access to positions of power. For instance, the Prime Minister of Canada has

represented a Quebec riding for most of the last 40 years. The pattern was much different before the Official Bilingualism Act as most Prime Ministers were unilingual Anglophones and only two were Francophone Quebecers. This situation was not problematic before the 1960s since French-Canadian nationalism was essentially defensive, without a precise territorial basis, and its leaders content to be left alone within the province's institutions and society.⁴¹ In the post-Quiet Revolution era, a prolonged absence of Francophones in the higher echelons of the federal government would be tremendously contentious. Arguably, if the pattern of strong representation of Quebecers within the two major federal parties were to completely break down, nationalist arguments for secession could prove more persuasive.

Two other strategies of empowerment at the centre, consociationalism and the use of a territorial second chamber, have been absent from the Canadian accommodation framework. Canada's political system is majoritarian. There have been some practices which could loosely be dubbed 'consociational,' primarily the alternation between Francophones and Anglophones in the positions of Governor General, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Prime Minister.⁴² However, the Canadian political system is not structured consociationally: there is no organized segmentation, no group vetoes⁴³ and political parties seek to be state-wide rather than to represent groups.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the Canadian Senate, whose members are appointed and have no real legislative power, does not feature in Canada's accommodation of Québec nationalism. Québec leaders have never expressed any desire to reform the Senate so as to give provinces input into federal policy-making; in fact, current proposals for Senate reform are vehemently opposed by the Québec government, which fears a diminishing of the province's power. Québec prefers to interact with the federal government through multilateral and bilateral intergovernmental network where, free of the partisan ties of federal politics, it can exercise greater leverage on the federal government than it probably could through a reconstituted Senate.

The strategy of giving symbolic recognition to Québec was viewed, until recently, with suspicion by federal elites. Starting with the Quiet Revolution, Québec governments have sought additional responsibility to protect and promote the province's French language and culture, including a demand for the political and, eventually, the constitutional recognition of their distinctiveness.⁴⁵ However, under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, recognition as an approach to managing Québec nationalism was rejected because it was seen as opening up the door for secession. On a more philosophical level, it clashed with Trudeau's procedural liberalism and vision of Canada as a just society, where individuals, not communities, should be the primary bearers of rights and where all provinces should be treated similarly.⁴⁶ Rather, the emphasis was put on transcending this minority nationalism by promoting Canadian state nationalism and insisting on the multicultural character of the Canadian nation.

This Trudeau vision of Canada remained widely accepted in Canada outside Québec through the 1980s and 1990s. For example, when the Conservative Party that took power in 1984 crafted amendments to the Canadian constitution that included the recognition of Québec as a 'distinct society' (the Meech Lake Accord and, in a second attempt, the Charlottetown Accord), opposition to this 'special status' for Quebec was very strong and prevented their ratification. Charles Taylor suggested that opposition to the 'distinct society' clause was not only about rejection of symbolic recognition of Quebec's difference, but that it also reflected a fear that the individual rights enshrined within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms would be applied differently in Quebec.⁴⁷

In late 2006, a spectacular political move hinted that the Trudeau vision of Canada might no longer be dominant. After then contender for the leadership of the Liberal party Michael Ignatieff advocated the recognition of Quebec nationhood and the *Bloc québécois* introduced a parliamentary motion affirming the national character of the province, the Conservative government countered with its own motion stating that “the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada.” While this motion has been dismissed by sovereignists as an empty shell and, even if there is no clear momentum suggesting that this type of recognition could soon be constitutionalized, it may have marked a shift in attitude amongst federal politicians that will make the politics of recognition a more palatable choice of accommodation strategy towards Quebec than was before.

Conclusion

Spain and Canada are both multinational states that have employed a variety of strategies in an attempt to secure political stability. This being said, there are several differences in the attitudes and policies the two states have adopted in relations to nationalist movements. Firstly, while both the Spanish state and the Government of Canada have attempted to promote the Spanish and Canadian nations in territories where these notions were contested, these efforts have taken different forms and followed different patterns in Spain and Canada. From a historical perspective, Spanish nationalism consistently attempted, starting in the 19th century, to ‘integrate’ its reluctant territories, frequently through coercion or outright repression whereas pre-1960s Canadian nationalism more or less left Québec alone to operate within its autonomous provincial structures. Also, Spanish nationalism has always been ‘harder’ and more culturally-specific (i.e. Castilian) than Canadian nationalism, which, post-1960, was built on the country’s linguistic and cultural dualism.

Secondly, Canada is perhaps the country, worldwide, most permeated by federalism; as a consequence, accommodation of sub-state nationalism revolves a lot around negotiating powers and fiscal issues through various networks of intergovernmental relations. In Spain, where federal-like structures were accepted only reluctantly by many in the political class, similar claims for more powers, resources and fiscal autonomy are not managed by the types of intergovernmental relations that exist in Canada. The unity of the party structures across levels of government means that, sometimes, managing the relationship between the state and the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia and the Basque Country can be done through parties. Other times, for examples when nationalist parties govern these two Autonomous Communities, interactions basically grind to a halt.

Thirdly, Canada, since the 1960s, has sought to empower Quebeckers within federal politics much more than Spain has the Basques and Catalans. No equivalent to official bilingualism exists in Spain and Basques and Catalans have been much less prominent in Spanish national politics than Quebeckers in Canadian federal politics. There is, of course, a clear structural issue for explaining this discrepancy: Québec is a quarter of Canada whereas Catalonia is only about one-seventh of Spain whilst the Basque Country’s relative demographic weight is even smaller. The differences in the nature of Spanish and Canadian nationalisms discussed above can also account for some of that difference.

Finally, the politics of recognition, while it has proven difficult in both countries, is especially problematic in Spain. For virtually the whole of the Spanish political class, there is only one nation in the country, the Spanish nation, which is proclaimed as indivisible in the 1978 constitution. Of course, in Canada, the constitutional recognition of Quebec nationhood would still prove controversial today; however, the parliamentary motion of 2006, which generated surprisingly little opposition, is the type of accommodation move through recognition that is unthinkable in Spain.

What explains these differences in nationalist management strategies between Spain and Canada? As we have already mentioned, differences in ethno-demography (the greater number of culturally-distinct communities in Spain as compared to Canada and their lesser demographic weight) are important. Spain's territorial landscape might explain why the vigorous promotion of state nationalism has been more important to the Spanish state as it deals with nationalist movements than other strategies of accommodation, especially empowerment at the center. Indeed, the fear of the demonstration effect, that is, the idea that a 'concession' to, for example, the Basque Country, could spur on claims in Catalonia and even Galicia permeates the Spanish approach to its internal diversity.

More important than those types of considerations, however, is the nature of the state in Canada and Spain. On the one hand, Canada was created with the accommodation of (then) French-Canadians in mind. It is not only that its structures are federal but that its condition is⁴⁸. On the other hand, much of the contemporary of the Spanish state has consisted in seeking the elimination of not only challengers to the idea of the Spanish nation, but also non-Castilian forms of cultural expressions and identification, often through coercion or assimilationist tactics, or outright repression. This behaviour is largely the product of the on-going defense of a Spanish nation often elevated to the level of sacred. This type of attitude is mostly absent in Canada, which means that nationalist claims for secession, although not welcomed, are for the most part considered legitimate. No such legitimacy is placed on the nationalist movements in Spain by their adversaries.

These historical and institutional legacies definitely condition opportunities for change. The heavy weight of a strongly cultural Spanish identity that associates unity with centralization and uniformity makes it difficult to use the whole gamut of accommodation strategies. In Canada, the 'federal condition means that there is no escaping constant negotiations between the relative powers, resources and responsibility between the Québec and Canadian governments.

Notes

¹ This paper draws from André Lecours, *Basque Nationalism and the Spanish State* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007), chapter 7 and André Lecours and Nicola McEwen, “Voice or Recognition? Comparing Strategies for Accommodating Territorial Minorities in Multinational States,” *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 46 (2008), 220-243.

² John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation* (London: Routledge, 1993).

³ Ian Lustick, “Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism vs Control,” *World Politics*, 31 (1979), 325-344.

⁴ André Lecours, Alain-G. Gagnon and Geneviève Nootens (eds), *Les nationalismes majoritaires contemporains: identité, mémoire, pouvoir* (Montréal: Québec Amérique, 2007). States operating in a mono-national context also have their own nationalism but it is less easily noticed because typically unopposed.

⁵ McEwen, Nicola, *Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006).

⁶ Jane Jenson “Fated to live in interesting times: Canada's changing citizenship regimes”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 30, (1997), 627-644.

⁷ Daniel Béland and André Lecours, *Nationalism and Social Policy. The Politics of Territorial Solidarity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

⁸ On the debate over social security in Belgium, see Johanne Poirier and Steven Vansteenkiste, “Le débat sur la fédéralisation de la sécurité sociale en Belgique: le miroir du vouloir-vivre ensemble?” *Revue belge de sécurité sociale*, 2 (2000), 331-378.

⁹ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

¹⁰ Eric Kaufmann (ed), *Rethinking Ethnicity: Majority Groups and dominant Minorities* (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹¹ Arendt Lijphart, ‘Consociational Democracy,’ and *Democracy in Plural Societies*; Kenneth McRae, “Contrasting Styles of Democratic Decision-making: Adversarial versus Consensual Politics,” *International Political Science Review*, 18 (1997), 279-296.

¹² On Belgium see Pascal Delwit, Jean-Michel De Waele and Paul Magnette (eds), *Gouverner la Belgique: clivages et compromis dans une société complexe* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999),

¹³ Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison* (London: Sage, 1991).

¹⁴ Brendan O’Leary and John McGarry (eds), *Northern Ireland Conflict. Consociational Engagements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Ronald L. Watts, *Comparing Federal Systems* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, Second edition, 1999).

¹⁶ Henry Hale has recently argued that federations are more likely to collapse when they contain a core ethnic region. See “Divided We Stand. Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse,” *World Politics*, 56 (2004), 165-193.

¹⁷ This has always been a central debate in the field of federal studies. See, for example, Richard Simeon and Daniel Patrick-Conway, “Federalism and the Management of Conflict in

Multinational Societies,” in Alain-G. Gagnon and James Tully (eds), *Multinational Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 339-365.

¹⁸ An advocate of this approach is Will Kymlicka. See *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁹ Former Prime Minister Aznar, for example, saw himself as a ‘convinced Spaniard,’ not a Spanish nationalist.

²⁰ Joan Ramon Resina, “Post-National Spain? Post-Spanish Spain?” *Nations and Nationalism*, 8 (2002), pp.377-396.

²¹ This is a relatively new terminology that has replaced the ‘non-nationalist’ versus ‘nationalist’ dichotomy. This being said, not all ‘constitutionalists,’ view Spain in a similar manner. There are centralists, federalists and autonomists.

²² See, for example, Eudurne Uriarte, *España, Patriotismo y Nación* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2003).

²³ The theory of constitutional patriotism was designed by Habermas with the unification of Germany in mind.

²⁴ For a discussion on this topic, see Xosé-Manoel Núñez, *Los nacionalismos en la España contemporánea (siglos XIX and XX)* (Barcelona: Hipótesis, 1999) and J. Pérez Garzón et al., *La gestión de la memoria. La historia de España al servicio del poder* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2000).

²⁵ Xosé-Manoel Núñez, “What is Spanish Nationalism Today? From Legitimacy Crisis to Unfulfilled Renovation (1975-2000),” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24 (2001): 719-52.

²⁶ This was the case of former Prime Minister Aznar in his inaugural address at Georgetown University in September 2004. Aznar argued that Spain’s problem with Islamic terrorism did not begin with the PP government’s support for the American military intervention in Iraq, but rather with the *Reconquista* described as ‘a long battle to recover its [Spain’s] identity.’ See “Seven Theses on Today’s Terrorism,” September 21, 2004, p.3. <http://data.georgetown.edu/president/aznar/inauguraladdress.html>

²⁷ Joan Ramon Resina, “Post-National Spain? Post-Spanish Spain?” 382. An independent commission judged that more than the minimal legal requirement of Spanish history was taught in Basque schools.

²⁸ This was the *Ley de Calidad de Educación*.

²⁹ The fact that judges are under no obligation to speak the second official language of the Autonomous Community where they are working (if there is one) does not help.

³⁰ James Bickerton, “La question du nationalisme majoritaire au Canada,” in André Lecours, Alain-G. Gagnon and Geneviève Nootens (eds), *Les nationalismes majoritaires contemporains: identité, mémoire, pouvoir*, pp.217-270.

³¹ Guy Laforest, *Trudeau and The End of a Canadian Dream* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

³² Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada. The Struggle for Unity* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³³ Aboriginals also have their vision of Canada where the founding peoples notion takes quite a different meaning.

³⁴ See Arthur I Silver, *The French-Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

³⁵ Hamish Telford, ‘The Federal Spending Power in Canada: Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?’, *Publius*, vol.33, no.1, 2003.

³⁶ Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*.

³⁷ On the failed Charlottetown referendum, see Kenneth McRoberts and Patrick Monahan, *The Charlottetown Accord, the Referendum, and the Future of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

³⁸ The visibility strategy for reaching Quebecers seriously backfired when corruption was exposed in a sponsorship program for cultural and sports events, ultimately provoking the Liberal government's demise.

³⁹ Keith Banting *et al.*, *Open Federalism. Interpretations, Significance* (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 2006).

⁴⁰ The current proportion of Francophones in the federal civil service is approximately 29% compared to roughly 24% in the population as a whole. See Rand Dyck, *Canadian Politics. Critical Approaches* (Scarborough: Nelson, 2000), 522.

⁴¹ See Louis Balthazar, *Bilan du nationalisme au Québec* (Balthazar: L'Hexagone, 1986).

⁴² Speaking of alternation for Prime ministers can be misleading since, over the last 35 years, Francophones (generally taken to be Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien) have had long stints and Anglophones (Joe Clark, John Turner, Kim Campbell and Paul Martin) very short ones. This language issue is further complicated by the fact that some Prime Ministers (Trudeau, Mulroney and Martin) were equally comfortable in both languages.

⁴³ For example, the federal government and the provinces enacted constitutional change in 1982 without the support of Québec.

⁴⁴ The *Bloc québécois* (BQ) is an exception. However, the existence of this party does not point to a consociational system since it is not recognized by other federal parties as the exclusive voice of Québec.

⁴⁵ Éric Bélanger, “‘Égalité ou indépendance.’ L'émergence de la menace de l'indépendance politique comme stratégie constitutionnelle du Québec”, *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises*, 2 (1999), 120; McRoberts, 1997, pp.38-54.

⁴⁶ See Guy Laforest, *Trudeau and The End of a Canadian Dream* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

⁴⁷ Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp.52-61.

⁴⁸ Donald Smiley, *The Federal Condition in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1987).