Interpreting National Trajectories with Gellner, Anderson and Smith: The Case of Quebec

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ABSTRACT Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith have had a significant influence in debates and theoretical discussions concerning the understanding of nations and nationalism. However, one should not accept such classic theories ipso facto without questioning their theoretical assumptions. Hence, we find that one way to better understand the way these theories are still relevant (or not) for the understanding of nations and nationalism is to confront their explanatory potential with a specific case. This is precisely the main objective, and therefore contribution, of this paper. We thus focus on a "problematic" or "abnormal" case relative to a more general understanding of what a nation and nationalism ought to be. We look at the Canadian province of Quebec, a minority nation that possesses its own independent institutional and societal culture, while evolving within a more encompassing sovereign state — the Canadian federation. Our goal is less to provide an exhaustive account of socio-historical settings than to use Gellner, Anderson and Smith's theories to provide a fair interpretation of the way Quebec has evolved as a minority nation within the Canadian federation. To our knowledge, no other study has applied a similar framework — these theories of nationalism and their testing — to the Quebec case.

KEYWORDS minority nations; nationalism; Quebec; Ernest Gellner; Benedict Anderson; Anthony D. Smith; modernism; ethnosymbolism.

Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith have had a significant influence in debates and theoretical discussions concerning the understanding of nations and nationalism. In fact, they are still some of the most important authors in this field of study, and the vast majority of contemporary academic works that focus on nations and nationalism simply cannot ignore their contribution, in particular Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*

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[1983], Anderson's *Imagined Communities* [1983], and Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* [1986].[1]

If one understands the meaning of "classic" as a must-read on a given topic, then all three are classics in this sense. Students of nations and nationalism ought therefore to understand the theoretical foundations upon which they rely and the practical implications of their conclusions. However, one should not accept such classic theories *ipso facto* without questioning their theoretical assumptions.

Hence, we find that one way to better understand the way these theories are still relevant (or not) for the understanding of nations and nationalism is to confront their explanatory potential with a specific case. This is precisely the main objective, and therefore contribution, of this paper. We thus focus on a "problematic" or "abnormal" case relative to a more general understanding of what a nation and nationalism ought to be. We look at the Canadian province of Quebec, a minority nation that possesses its own independent institutional and societal culture, while evolving within a more encompassing sovereign state — the Canadian federation.

One should keep in mind that, for Gellner, nationalism refers to "a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent".[2] Smith and Anderson share a similar perspective. In general, their respective theoretical frameworks rest on the assumption that nations ought to be sovereign states[3] within which there should be only one majoritarian nationalist movement as opposed to also having a minority movement within its midst: "the nation is […] *a* deep, horizontal comradeship",[4] its members "are similar and alike in those cultural traits in which they are dissimilar from non-members".[5]

1. Cf. Guénette and Mathieu, "Nations et nations fragiles"; Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms*; Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*; Larin, "Conceptual Debates"; Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*; Dieckhoff and Jaffrelot, *Repenser le nationalism*.

2. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.

3. Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 106 and 154.

4. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7. Our emphasis.

5. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 26. However, as we will discuss below, in his book *National Identity*, Smith does take into account the specific cases of minority nations.

Hence, federations, such as Canada, and regional states, such as Spain, which harbour subnational communities pose serious challenges to the theories of all three.[6] Therefore, are such theories relevant to explaining and understanding nationalism and national trajectories in cases where minority nations exist? This question holds even if the theories were designed to explain the historical course of majority nations, and to elude the question of minority nations. In other words, *can* Quebec as a minority nation be explained and understood by the theories of Gellner, Anderson, and Smith?

In this article, we focus on Quebec's national trajectory since the 18th century. Our goal is less to provide an exhaustive account of socio-historical settings than to use Gellner, Anderson and Smith's theories to provide a fair interpretation of the way Quebec has evolved as a minority nation within the Canadian federation. To our knowledge, no other study has applied a similar framework — these theories of nationalism and their testing — to the Quebec case.

We argue, on the one hand, that the theories advanced by Gellner, Anderson, and Smith are relevant for explaining minority nations' trajectories and nationalism despite the fact that their analytical frameworks tend to reject them as problematic cases, or as an anomaly set that will eventually disappear over the course of modernity. Discussing and confronting such theories with an "abnormal" case may then help us identify limits to their explanations of the national phenomenon. But, most importantly, it is a stimulating way to bridge the gap between some of their theoretical expectations — in particular, that nations ought to be sovereign states — and their potential in explaining and understanding the trajectory of minority nations.

On the other hand, let us clarify that our objective is not to refute their theories — that would be well beyond the scope of this article. More simply, it is to challenge some of the basic assumptions upon which they rely. Of course, many more theories could have been included in the discussion. As these theories unequivocally represent some of the most widely discussed theories in the literature, we narrowed our focus down to those of Gellner, Anderson and Smith. But that does not mean that the equally "classic" theories put forth

6. Cf. O'Leary, "An Iron Law of Nationalism", 280.

by Hans Kohn, Elie Kedourie, Tom Nairn, Eric J. Hobsbawm, etc., should not receive similar attention in future studies.

First, we synthesise the *modernist* theories that Gellner and Anderson propose, followed by the explanation of *ethnosymbolism* as understood by Smith. Then, we confront Quebec's national trajectory with Gellner, Anderson and Smith's theories, testing whether or not these frameworks can be applied to minority nations. This article does not suggest *ipso facto* that all minority nations' trajectories are to be explained and understood by those theories, but rather that *a* minority nation's experience, perhaps Quebec's, can. Nonetheless, we think scholars will find interesting perspectives by confronting such "classic" theories of nations and nationalism with minority nations and other "problematic" experiences. Whether federations or regional states break up or assimilate their subnational constituents — and thus corroborate Gellner, Anderson and Smith's theories — or if they find institutional arrangements which allow for peaceful cohabitation as formal multinational democracies or federations, such authors are still relevant for the study of nations and nationalism, in either its majoritarian or minority expression.

1. "Classic" Theories of Nations and Nationalism

On the following pages, we offer a synthetic account of Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, and Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Of course, the arguments articulated by all three have gone beyond the three books under examination. However, those works contain their central arguments, which is why they are being used here.

The first two addressed here — the theories of Gellner and Anderson — rest upon a *modernist* approach.[7] Modernist theories of nations and nationalism can be understood, first, by their complete rejection of *primordialism*. Primordialism suggests that nations and their pre-modern ethnic versions are universal and timeless characteristics of mankind.[8] But, as Larin suggests, "sociobiologist Pierre van den Berghe is almost alone among specialists in

7. This brief presentation of the basic rationale and promoters of primordialism, modernism and ethnosymbolism was inspired by Mathieu (2017: 143-144).

8. Cf. van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon*.

supporting it".[9] Modernism proposes instead that nations and nationalism are by-products of modernity, or more precisely that they are the results of some typically modern social phenomena, such as capitalism, industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation, and the emergence of the modern bureaucratic state. As for the third and final theory we present, Anthony D. Smith's account rests upon an approach of which he was one of the founders: *ethnosymbolism*. Smith rejects the idea of a modernist approach altogether; however, he finds that primordialism goes too far in its interpretation of the meaning of pre-modern groups for nations and nationalism to emerge. While ethnosymbolism clearly accepts that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, Smith argues that one must study the emergence of nations and nationalism over a longer period of time (*longue durée*) in order better to understand the historic and symbolic continuity linking pre-modern *ethnie*s to modern nations. We shall begin by providing an overview of the central arguments of all three theories, after which we will challenge them, mobilising Quebec's national trajectory.

1.1. Ernest Gellner: The Era of Nationalism and the Emergence of *High Cultures*

For Özkirimli, Gellner's theory can be considered "as the most important attempt to make sense of nationalism".[10] In fact, Gellner was primarily motivated by the idea of formulating a general theory, different from primordialism, in order to explain what he named of the *era of nationalism*. Gellner suggests nationalism is not the advent of a gradual historical process where an idea — nationalism — finally appeared in people's minds.[11] In short, according to Gellner, nationalism is a by-product of modernity.

The era of nationalism emerged precisely in reaction to a change in the overall socio-organisational structure, which had, in turn, been caused by a transition from agro-literate to industrial societies. As we have already indicated, he defines nationalism as "a political principle, which holds that the political

9. Larin, "Conceptual Debates", 440.

10. Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 98.

11. Cf. Hobsbawm, "Introduction".

and the national unit should be congruent".[12] Gellner therefore understands "nation" as a human construction that connects many different individuals through common language, customs, and conventions — what he calls a *high culture*.[13] It is because individual members of the nation see and portray themselves as equal bearers of that high culture that these same nations unite and explore large-scale social solidarity.

For Gellner, modern nationalism emerges within industrialism, which results from a major change in the socio-organisational structure. Before the "human historical stage" of industrialism, people lived in agro-literate societies where most individuals worked on farms, functioned socially in small-scale, face-to-face, sociological segments, and were usually dominated, politically, by an elite.[14] Those few with legitimate power ensured both political and spiritual authority. For this agro-literate *stage* of human history, political units varied greatly in both size and power. Gellner points out that their common denominator is the *ethos* of the elites: elites were privileged bearers of a specific culture, which they preferred not to share with their subjects. They cared more about maintaining what seemed to differentiate the two sociological classes — theirs (the governing) and the governed — and about ensuring no one questioned their governing legitimacy. In such cases, there was neither any common high culture nor any attempt to harmonise the political with a "national" community — which are, for Gellner, necessary conditions for nations and nationalism to emerge.

With the development of industrialism, major changes occurred in the socio-organisational structure. Industrialism effectively rests on the core principle of living and relying "on sustained and perpetual growth, on an expected and continuous improvement".[15] To live and to rely on that principle means that social changes and mobility must be made possible for every individual. Industrialism, then, renders it necessary to rethink the social division of labour, where everyone ought to be able to adapt according to market demands, and, more importantly, be able to change jobs and learn new skills quickly. Therefore, an industrial society needs a common educational

12. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1.
13. Ibid., 6-7.
14. Ibid., 13-14.
15. Ibid., 22.

system transmitting the same basic, standardised culture to everyone, a task that only a *modern* state can achieve.[16] Hence, modern or industrial society differs from agro-literate society since everyone, the governed as well as the governing, shares the same high culture. In consequence, the state becomes the "guardian" of said high culture, and individuals are no longer loyal to a monarch, land, or faith but instead to a culture.[17]

According to Gellner, high cultures cannot tolerate the presence of *folk cultures* or social segments in their territory, now firmly delineated within state borders, for that would undermine the very nature and overall rationale of said high cultures. Indeed, nationalism lives by the impetus of making its own high culture the only great, legitimate and truly powerful one for the nation. But even if all nations emerge as a consequence of socio-organisation re-engineering and gravitation around the propagation of a high culture, Gellner suggests that three different trajectories can actually be followed.[18]

The first refers to the classic experience of the Habsburg-like trajectory, where the elites of the agro-literate stage monopolised the high culture-to-be and excluded their subjects from it. For the transition to the next "stage", industrialisation simply homogenises and propagates the high culture to everybody, thus overcoming all other folk cultures within the national territory. The second trajectory consists of *unificatory* nationalism, where pre-industrial elites already share the same culture as everyone else. In this case, industrialisation brings the unification of numerous small entities into a common national state. Finally, the third trajectory refers to *diaspora* nationalism, roughly modelled on the Jewish experience.

All in all, for Gellner, nationalism emerges only within industrial societies living by the principle of sustained and perpetual growth, which necessitates a modern state in order to propagate a homogenous common high culture, rendering possible an effective and efficient social division of labour. Individuals then develop special loyalty to and pride in their own high culture. Moreover, individuals genuinely know they are sharing a high culture with their co-nationals by the fact of speaking a specific language and being

16. Ibid., 26.

17. Ibid., 35.

18. Ibid., 94-99.

bounded within a given territory — where other sovereign nations exist outside that territory. Therefore, nationalism is simply the proper expression of this specific, modern form of social solidarity.

1.2. Benedict Anderson: Nations as *Imagined Communities*

Anderson published *Imagined Communities* in 1983, the same year as Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*. Although he offered another modernist theory, Anderson's account tried — and succeeded fairly well in — "de-Europeanising" the theoretical framework for the study of nations and nationalism, focusing principally on East-Asian cases. For Anderson, one should understand nationality and nationalism as "cultural artefacts of a particular kind".[19] Accordingly, Anderson proposed one of the most famous definitions of the nation: "it is an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".[20]

The nation is *imagined* in the sense that any member of any given national community will never meet and know every, or even most, of his co-nationals but still develop a sense of community. In his or her mind, there is a conviction of their existence, thus forming a kind of *communion*. It is also imagined as *limited*, because, even in the case of the largest nation, members know of the existence of other nations beyond certain boundaries. The nation is then imagined as *sovereign*, "because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm".[21] Finally, it is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of social inequalities, the nation represents a "deep, horizontal comradeship".[22] Given the fact that nations emerge as a consequence of the Enlightenment and democratic revolutions — where there were significant secularisation movements —, this new, distinctly modern, form of "making society"[23] fulfilled the need for continuity. Hence, it devel-

19. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4.

20. Ibid., 5-6.

21. Ibid., 7.

22. Ibid., 6-7.

23. See Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité*.

oped the ability to transform fatality into meaning, just as religion used to do.[24] Anderson adds two necessary conditions for nations to emerge.

First, amplifying the decline of the "great religiously imagined communities", Anderson refers to the ebb of Latin and rise of vernacular languages in terms of both legitimacy and, consequently, mass popularity. Books were translated, so more accessible versions were available to the masses. Much wider readerships were created and were soon mobilised for political-religious purposes.[25] Second, Anderson brings to our attention the resulting rising industry of print-capitalism, where smaller communities within Christendom were beginning to imagine themselves as bounded, and eventually as sovereign communities, each sharing a particular vernacular. In addition to printed books, Anderson notes printed newspapers as never-ending one-day-best-sellers. People from a given territory read the same news, perceiving the world from a common perspective, and therefore knew or presumed — the difference does not matter here — that their *co-nationals* expressed similar feelings. Consequently, print-capitalism laid the basis for formal national consciousness to emerge: "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation".[26]

In addition to the rise of popular vernaculars and printed-capitalism, Anderson considers that two other phenomena were of major importance for nations to emerge. On one hand, a significant increase in physical mobility was rendered possible by industrial capitalism and the construction of railways, steamships, and the overall general development of motorised transport.[27] Members of a given nation could now travel effortlessly within its national territory, and could thus gain a tangible representation of the nation. On the other hand, there was the establishment of national bureaucratic apparatuses coupled with modern-style educational systems, both functioning through a common language. Nevertheless, other factors and mechanisms are also important for Anderson's understanding of the emergence of nations and

24. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

25. Ibid., 40.

26. Ibid., 46.

27. Ibid., 115.

nationalism — including national censuses, with which nations started to produce systematic quantifications of their inhabitants; maps, with which nations began to represent themselves with regard to other sovereign nations; and the establishment of national museums, where nations gave meaning to their past and produced specific narratives to mark their historical continuity.[28]

In short, nations are, for Anderson, cultural artefacts — which is not to say that they are false compared to "real" communities. Rather, understanding nations as imagined communities — imagined both as inherently limited and sovereign — is simply to acknowledge that they are neither natural nor timeless divisions of mankind, but very modern expressions of human creativity. For that matter, language, print-capitalism, by-products of industrialism — secularisation, the establishment of modern-style bureaucratic apparatuses, and educational systems — are all key factors in Anderson's understanding of nations and the emergence of nationalism.

1.3. Anthony D. Smith: *Ethnosymbolism*, or the Ethnic Origins of Nations

Anthony D. Smith, a former student of Ernest Gellner, proposed an original theoretical framework bridging the gaps he noted within the modernist account on one hand, and correcting the flaws he considered inherent to primordialism on the other. Smith's central thesis is that "modern nations cannot be understood without taking pre-existing ethnic components into account".[29] By and large, Smith's ethnosymbolist theory emphasises subjective dimensions — myths, symbols, memories, and values — to reveal significant continuity between pre-modern *ethnies* and modern nations. In so doing, Smith acknowledges that nations cannot be properly understood by focusing solely on their modern expressions. He also recognises that pre-modern *ethnies* are neither objective nor timeless divisions of mankind. Walking in the footsteps of Umut Özkirimli, we therefore suggest that Smith's theory is to be understood as providing answers to three fundamental questions.

28. Ibid., 164-185.

29. Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 148.

The first is "*Who* is the nation?" For Smith, every nation set to eventually exist as such needs a common identity. Yet, for this identity to emerge, the formation of myths and reliance on a specific memory — albeit possibly selective — are necessary conditions.[30] For that matter, to question which myths and what memories are constitutive of a given nation is to inquire about its pre-modern history as an *ethnie*. For Smith, *ethnies* may be defined as "named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity".[31] Therefore, the nation — i.e. a human group with a collective name, a myth of common ancestry, a shared history, a common culture, a homeland, and a sense of solidarity[32] — is simply, for Smith, the modern expression of a pre-existing *ethnie*.

The second question is "*Why* and *how* does the nation emerge?" Smith argues that a *triple revolution* facilitates the conditions through which nations emerge.[33] He begins by recalling the "social division of labour revolution", where agrarian and feudal societies turned into industrial and capitalist ones. Then he refers to an "administrative revolution" or the capacity for generating economic and political resources within a given territory, consolidated by administrative and military apparatuses. Finally, Smith shows the significance of a "cultural revolution" with the implementation of an educational system establishing a common culture for the people.

The final question is "*When* and *where* did the nation arise?" Quite simply, the nation arises when the *ethnie* politicises itself.[34] This politicisation is a consequence of the "triple revolution", yet the very features that characterise the nation depend on the type of pre-modern *ethnie* from which it originates. If it emerges from a *territorial-civic* type of *ethnie*, the nation will consist of a community of laws and legal institutions — emanating from a single and sovereign source —, where its members will obtain uniform rights and obligations. In principle, no exceptions on grounds of race, age, religion, etc. can

30. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins*, 2.
31. Ibid., 32.
32. Smith, *National Identity,* 21.
33. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins*, 131-134.
34. Ibid., 157.

exclude one from the nation if one lives within its boundaries.[35] However, if the nation comes after the politicisation of a *genealogical-ethnic* type of *ethnie*, it usually relies on "elements like genealogy, populism, customs and dialects, and nativism",[36] where ethnic demography, not territory, is understood as the basis of the unit in question. Hence, "ethnic concepts of the nation tend to substitute customs and dialects for the legal codes and institutions that provide the cement of territorial nations".[37]

Ultimately, there is no doubt that, for Smith, nations are a modern phenomenon. Nonetheless, Smith argues that to understand the emergence of nations properly, an inquiry into the symbolic universe inherited from their pre-modern expression is required. To understand nations, one has to understand the historical process that led to the edification of common myths and memories, nurtured by every nation. Whether these myths are true or not, and whether the memories partial or amnesic, Smith suggests they are necessary for a nation's conception of its *raison d'être*. Hence, historical(re-) interpretation of the nation's past — or, more precisely, of its pre-modern form of *ethnie* — is necessary for a nation to make sense of its present, as this offers possible trajectories for its future. The making of myths and memories are, then, an unfinished or ongoing process, where every generation dialogues with the past, and thinks anew of the nation's course. In short, for Smith, the nation is the political expression the *ethnie* must adopt in order for the nation to preserve its existence and adapt to modernity.

Having synthesised Gellner and Anderson's *modernist* theories and Smith's account of *ethnosymbolism*, we will now confront them with Quebec's national experience to test whether or not these frameworks can be applied to minority nations.

35. Ibid., 135.

36. Ibid., 137.

37. Ibid., 137.

2. National Trajectory and Classic Theories of Nationalism: The Case of Quebec

We now consider whether or not the theories that have been presented here are useful for explaining Quebec's national trajectory. For obvious reasons, the following pages do not aim to provide an exhaustive account of the sociohistorical settings that influenced Quebec's development into modernity. Rather, we focus on some of the most significant events, and see how Gellner, Anderson and Smith's theories may be of help in providing a fair interpretation of them. We will also discuss and try to overcome some of these theories' shortcomings as means of understanding Quebec's national trajectory.

Quebec is one of ten provinces within the Canadian federation, and represents itself as the homeland of one of the founding peoples of modern Canada. It has a long and complex history of struggles and competition with the central government (situated in Ottawa), and with other provinces, due to the fact that it wants to be formally recognised as a distinct culture and as a specific national community within Canada.[38] With roughly eight million inhabitants, Quebec represents about a quarter of the Canadian population. On one hand, this means that Quebec is a minority nation within Canada, yet its francophone culture stands out as majoritarian within its borders as more than three quarters of Quebecers speak mostly French at home.[39] Moreover, Quebec cannot properly be understood as a "nation without state"[40] since it indeed possesses a "national government"[41] and legal bureaucratic apparatuses, in addition to various autonomous political and social institutions.[42] More precisely, Quebec enjoys considerable "ability and autonomy to develop its societal culture within the Canadian federation".[43]

38. Laforest, *Interpreting Quebec's Exile*; Mathieu, *Les défis du pluralisme*.
39. Office québécois de la langue française, *Rapport,* 5.
40. Guibernau, *Nations Without States*.
41. The provincial legislature is even referred to as the *National Assembly*.
42. Gagnon, "Five Faces of Quebec".
43. Mathieu and Guénette, "Introducing a Societal Culture Index", 232.

On the other hand, Quebec State[44] is not independent — Quebec's population have twice rejected seceding from Canada, following highly dramatic referendums in 1980 and 1995. Although Quebec is said to be *sovereign* within the specific range of its own legislative competences, as are the other provinces with regard to the jurisdictional powers the Constitution grants to them — mostly through sections 91 to 95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* —, it also benefits from shared competences with the central government — in matters of immigration and integration, for example. That being said, social affairs (health, education, etc.) are explicit jurisdictions that are granted solely to the province of Quebec, making the Quebec provincial government quite important in the daily lives of its inhabitants.

In the following argument, we challenge Gellner, Anderson, and Smith's theoretical frameworks' ability to characterise Quebec's national trajectory, going as far back as the British Conquest (1759). We will show how these theories explain Quebec's national trajectory, even though some of their basic assumptions would consider the province as an anomaly doomed to disappear eventually. Finally, we show that all three authors can contribute a significant insight into Quebec's national movement — even though none of them can provide a complete understanding of it.

2.1. Quebec's National Trajectory Explained by Gellner

As we have already said, Quebec's national experience expresses itself within the Canadian federation. Initially, that would have meant for Gellner either that Quebec has failed to become an independent state and ought to dissolve into the Canadian high culture, or that Canada has failed to absorb Quebec's "folk" culture into its high culture. One way or the other, both Quebec secessionists' and Canadian federalists'[45] attempted political actions would support Gellner's basic assumptions.

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44. In the 1960s, Quebec officials decided to begin referring to the province of Quebec as "the Quebec State", indicating that Quebecers' first and foremost national allegiance was toward their provincial government, not the central state in Ottawa.

45. In Canadian politics, a "federalist" usually refers to someone who wishes to preserve the Canadian political order, with or without any particular affection for the principles related to "federalism" or the "federal spirit". See Burgess, "The Federal Spirit"; *In Search of the Federal Spirit*.

For example, Quebec's contemporary independence movement tried to secede from Canada twice (in 1980 and in 1995), and Canada has tried numerous times to assimilate French Canadians into the former British colony (the Royal Proclamation of 1763; the Durham Report and the Union Act of 1840, etc.) or to overcome Quebec's national distinctiveness within the Canadian federation (from Pierre E. Trudeau and the patriation of the Constitution in 1982 to Justin Trudeau celebrating Canada as the first "post-national state",[46] etc.). That said, Gellner's theoretical framework remains relevant if one seeks to understand or explain Quebec's national trajectory.

Rapid industrialisation in Quebec, after a slow start compared to other cases,[47] is key to anchoring the process within Gellner's theory. Let us keep in mind that nationalism, for Gellner, is a by-product of modernity occurring in reaction to major changes in the socio-organisational structure. In Quebec, industrialisation peaked with the arrival of a renewed Liberal Party in government in 1960 — with Jean Lesage's famous "équipe *du tonnerre*" — which coincided with what we now call the *Quiet Revolution*. One can legitimately characterise Quebec society prior to 1960 as an agro-literate (national) community incrementally becoming an industrial one. To be fair, though, 48 percent of Quebec's population was already living in urban centres as of 1910,[48] roughly 65 percent in 1941, and more than 85 percent in 1950.[49] Nonetheless, as Michael Behiels puts it:

> In the thirties, the rural way of life was still perceived as the ideal, symbolised by a vigorous "back to the land" movement […]. By 1960, the vast majority of Quebec's inhabitants owed their livelihood to occupations related directly or indirectly to the industrial economy. The urban way of life, with its promise of better education, social anonymity, occupational mobility, and, for many, a higher standard of living, finally supplanted the "rural" ideal.[50]

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46. A few weeks after the 2015 general elections at the federal level, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau famously stated that "[t]here is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada. […] There are shared values — openness, respect, compassion, willingness to work hard, to be there for each other, to search for equality and justice. Those qualities are what makes us the first postnational state" (quoted in Lawson, 2015).

47. See McCallum, *Unequal Beginnings*.

48. Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms*, 51.

49. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution*, 11-12.

50. Ibid., 11.

Hence, for the nationalism of *la survivance* [literally: survival] — the period between the Union Act (1840) and the Quiet Revolution (1959-1965) —, the French Canadian nationalist movement operated largely within small-scale rural parishes where the religiously-oriented culture was that of the clerical elites.[51] There was clearly a French-Canadian (high?) culture, resulting from animosity toward the Anglo-Saxon industrial and materialist ideal.[52] In other words, French Canadians still embodied the need for propagating the "true civilization" (i.e. Catholicism) in North America,[53] and considered industrialisation a threat to its core identity and "mission".[54] For the nationalism of *la survivance*, the French Canadian "national community" was not delineated within the province of Quebec. Instead, it was largely oriented towards all French descendants — no matter where they lived in Canada.[55] It was not political in scope. In fact, French Canadian nationalism was profoundly intertwined with Catholicism, putting greater emphasis on spiritual matters than on temporal or political issues.[56]

Gellner's modernist account also fits into Quebec's transition to industrialisation insofar as Quebec's rapid modernisation — between the end of World War II and 1965 — laid the foundations for the emergence of a *modern* nation, i.e. a named human group that was *territorially* concentrated and had *political* aims. With the Quiet Revolution (1959-1965),[57] a new Francophone middle class "successfully challenged the traditional middle class for control of the provincial state and the social and educational bureaucracies".[58] For this new political elite, industrialisation was no longer a threat to its identity.[59] Rather, it saw the State and its bureaucratic apparatuses as the best means for national emancipation.[60] Therefore, the Quiet Revolution consisted of a

51. Coleman, *The Independence Movement*, 46.

52. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 83-84.

53. Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité*, 297.

54. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 116.

55. Dumont, *Genèse de la société Québécoise*, 276.

56. Ibid., 227; Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 124.

57. In writing about post-war Quebec, "it is conventional to refer to the period between the death of Quebec's former premier Maurice Duplessis in September 1959 and the beginning of 1965 as the Quiet Revolution" (Coleman 1984: 92).

58. Coleman, *The Independence Movement*, 5.

59. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 116.

60. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution*, 98.

proper modernisation programme, making Quebec competitive with other advanced industrial societies.[61] That said, while the new ruling elite emphasised the importance of social change to the provincial government, it accentuated the territorial delimitation allowing for the emergence of a modern national community,[62] and at the same time demarcated more precisely the "French Canadians" living within Quebec's border from the others.[63] Overall, the *Quiet Revolution* significantly redefined the basis of Quebec's national identity: people were no longer "French Canadians", but instead became "Quebecers" — emphasising the territorial dimension —, and the very criteria for being a member of the nation was no longer religious or genealogical, but territorial and institutional.[64] Henceforth, the "new community of reference was now meant to be culturally pluralist" — or territorial-civic, as Smith would say —, "with the use of French as the integrating force".[65]

With respect to educational and cultural matters, the Quiet Revolution corresponds to the period when the Quebec government began taking responsibility for prerogatives previously delegated to the Church. In 1961, the Liberal government adopted the first (modern) language bill, which later led to the creation of the *Office de la langue française*.[66] The same year, the Quebec government created a department of cultural affairs,[67] which led to the creation of a Quebec national museum (*Musée de l'Homme d'ici*). In 1964, it also created the *Ministère de l'Éducation*, allowing the state to define its pedagogical content, and finally, in 1965 the state-run *Université du Quebec* was established.[68]

In sum, between 1960 and 1970, six new ministries were created and the total number of Quebec's state agencies rose from 39 to 64.[69] The provincial government was not simply redefining its national identity, it was also

61. Balthazar, *Nouveau bilan*, 141.
62. Ibid., 147.
63. Laniel and Thériault, *Retour sur les états généraux*.
64. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 90; Bouchard, *Genèse des nations*.
65. Coleman, *The Independence Movement*, 150; Gagnon, "Five Faces of Quebec".
66. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 106.
67. Coleman, *The Independence Movement*, 139.
68. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 125.
69. Ibid., 130.

making the State of Quebec the guardian of its own high culture. Moreover, one must remember that the Quiet Revolution occurred as a continuation of the struggle between provincial and federal governments in deciding who would build the welfare state, and for which people/*demos*.[70] According to McRoberts and Posgate, the Lesage government succeeded by underlining the question of whether Quebecers would ally themselves with the provincial or with the federal government.[71]

Therefore, Gellner is a key reference for understanding Quebec's national trajectory. In particular, his theoretical framework helps to explain the ongoing socio-organisational changes that occurred due to the Quiet Revolution. The Quebec government, while re-engineering the national identity, became the guardian of Quebec's own high culture. Quebecers were no longer loyal "to a monarch or a land or a faith [...], but to a culture".[72] Moreover, while embracing industrialism, Quebec nationalism was able to live thanks to the impetus of perpetual growth, where a broad division of labour and social mobility were made possible due to educational and administrative reforms.

2.2. Quebec's National Trajectory Explained by Anderson

Anderson's definition of the nation is not only one of the most famous in the literature, it also accurately depicts the emergence of Quebec's modern nationalism. First, the Quebec nation is *imagined*, because, even though no Quebecer will ever meet all their co-nationals, they are nonetheless certain of their existence, and believe they are living with them in a type of "communion".[73] Second, it is imagined as *limited*, where Quebecers cogently know — as they are sometimes bluntly reminded by the other constituent partners of the federation[74] — that outside their provincial boundaries there lies the Canadian "majoritarian nation".[75] In addition, the transition from designat-

70. Balthazar, *Nouveau bilan*, 155-156.

71. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 145.

72. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 35.

73. Bouchard, *Raison et déraison du mythe*.

74. Laforest, *Interpreting Quebec's Exile*.

75. See Bickerton, "La question du nationalisme majoritaire".

ing themselves as French Canadians to Quebecers highlights the fact that the national identity is henceforth limited to Quebec soil.[76] Third, the Quebec nation is imagined as *sovereign*, not as fully sovereign, but as sovereign enough given that the Constitution provides it with considerable jurisdictional power.[77] Finally, it is imagined as a *community* since Quebecers do see themselves as having a "deep, horizontal comradeship". On that matter, Coleman shows that the economic programme empowered by the Quiet Revolution was designed for creating sustainable, competitive capitalist enterprises controlled by Francophones, therefore allowing them to compete on equal footing with Anglophones in North American economic markets, but also to benefit from equal opportunity as an authentic, yet minority, national community.[78]

According to Anderson, a significant factor contributing to the emergence of modern nations was the rising industry of print-capitalism. Daily newspapers, understood as "one-day-best-sellers", make those reading the same news relate to feelings which they know their co-nationals express in a similar fashion, be they living in Montreal, Chicoutimi, Hull or Quebec City. As Anderson shows, such newspapers were soon to be used as mobilisation tools for the masses, and for political-religious purposes, thereby contributing to the development of a national sense of community.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, newspapers were founded for political and religious purposes: *Le Nationaliste* (1904-22); *Le Devoir* (1910-); *L'Action* (1911-16); *L'Action française* (1917-26); *L'Action canadienne-française* (1926-27); *L'Action nationale* (1933-), to recall but a few, and some still have similar missions today. *Le Devoir*'s first edition, published on 10 January 1910, clearly states its ambition:

> To ensure the triumph of ideas over wants, of the public good over party spirit, there is only one way: to awake in the people, and especially in the ruling classes, a sense of public duty in all its forms: religious duty, national duty, civic duty.[79]

76. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 90.
77. Gagnon, "Five Faces of Quebec".
78. Coleman, *The Independence Movement*, 92.
79. Quoted in Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms*, 68.

Representative of the French Canadian nationalist spirit, *Le Devoir* underlined that the goal was to change the ruling classes' mentality in order to effectively democratise a given national (high) culture. This also made it possible for Quebec's national community-in-the-making to imagine itself as a bounded community sharing a specific religion, language, and economic condition. With the Quiet Revolution, the nationalist movement became secular, and the political nation — and its language — replaced religion as the core identity marker.[80]

In the second half of the twentieth century, when French Canadians re-invented themselves as Quebecers, religion was no longer a core national identity marker.[81] For modern Quebec nationalism, the core traits of national distinctiveness are the French language on one hand, and the feeling of being members of the same "social class" with regard to North American Anglophones on the other.[82] The Lesage government (Quebec Liberal Party), like most Quebec governments that followed, attempted to empower both these national traits. Quebec governments simply began to perceive the provincial state as the best means of enabling Francophones to emancipate themselves as a people, both economically and politically.[83] With the *Caisse de dépôts et de placements* (1965), the Quebec government began investing in enterprises and projects benefitting Quebecers as a national community, and the provincial government also began nationalising key industry sectors, such as Hydro-Quebec, in 1962.[84]

To protect the French language and make it the dominant social integration tool, the Lesage government adopted the first language bill in 1961, which led to the 1977 Charter of the French language (Bill 101). With Bill 101, the newly elected (in 1976) separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) wanted to make the Charter more than a linguistic matter: it was designed to be a nation-building measure.[85] Bill 101 states that the French language, the "official language in Quebec", "is the instrument by which that people has articulated its identity",

80. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution*, 48.
81. Bouchard, *La nation québécoise*.
82. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 84.
83. Balthazar, *Nouveau bilan*, 141.
84. Savard, *Hydro-Québec et l'État Québécois*.
85. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 106.

and that the National Assembly of Quebec is resolved "to make French the language of Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business".[86] Consequently, the PQ ensured that immigrants had to integrate their children into the French school system rather than choose between the French and English systems.[87] As the 1978 PQ White Paper *A Cultural Development Policy for Quebec* states: "A language is not simply syntax or a string of words. It is an expression of the most meaningful aspect of community life".[88]

Therefore, since it has empowered the economic and industrial sectors for Quebecers, by making French the official and public language in Quebec, and has also undergone the general educational and administrative reforms, Quebec has met the necessary conditions for the emergence of a modern nation according to Anderson (2006). We have also seen that Quebec's modern nationality fits cogently with Anderson's definition of the nation. Additionally, the government of Quebec has established national museums for Quebecers to make sense of their history and national trajectory.[89]

2.3. Quebec's National Trajectory Explained by Smith

Anthony D. Smith's theoretical framework is of considerable help for understanding Quebec's nationalist experience vis-à-vis its pre-modern expressions, for one cannot properly understand the French-Canadian nationalist movement (1840-1960) without considering the *Patriotes'* Rebellion (1837-1838) and the Canadian nationalist movement (1791-1840). It is indeed hard to understand Quebec's modern nationalism without grounding it in the Canadian and French Canadian experiences. Hence, the merit of Smith's theory is that it provides answers to three fundamental questions, which we will show helps us to understand Quebec's national trajectory better.

86. Quebec, *Charter of the French Language*.

87. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 291; Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 108.

88. Quebec, *A Cultural Development Policy for Quebec*, 43.

89. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 164-185.

The first question is "Who is the nation?" On that matter, the Quebec nation is the modern expression embraced by the French-Canadian *ethnie* to preserve its existence and adapt to modernity.[90] However, before explaining the transition whereby French Canadians renamed themselves Quebecers it is necessary to go back to the Canadian *nationalist* movement, where many of Quebec's modern *myths* take roots.[91]

Scholars often depict Quebec's social thinking prior to 1960 as a "Great Darkness",[92] when the population had to obey the clergy. As a matter of fact, Catholicism was indeed of great significance after the 1759 British Conquest since it distinguished the colonised from the coloniser.[93] Moreover, in accordance with the fact that anti-Catholicism had been a core element of English nationalism, the Royal Proclamation (1763) was designed to assimilate French Canadians.[94] Thus, Quebecers still perceive the Conquest and the Royal Proclamation as omnipresent tragedies of abandonment by their former kin-state of France.[95] Yet, a few years later the *Quebec Act* (1774) was adopted, granting a number of collective rights to the French Canadian Catholic community, such as the free exercise of Catholicism, and establishing a specific jurisdictional cohabitation or legal pluralism where French Canadians were able to use their own *Civil Code*.[96] According to constitutionalist Eugénie Brouillet, the *Quebec Act* was the first legal milestone allowing the Quebec nation to express a distinct national culture within Canada.[97] Additionally, Bouchard suggests that the Act represents the awakening of a national consciousness.[98] Fourteen years later, the rights granted to French Canadians with the *Quebec Act* were legally consolidated through the 1791 *Constitutional Act.*[99]

90. Balthazar, *Nouveau bilan*, 162.
91. See Bouchard, "The Small Nation With a Big Dream".
92. Beauchemin, *L'histoire en trop*; Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité*.
93. Dumont, *Genèse de la société Québécoise*, 117; Bouchard, *Genèse des nations*.
94. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 44.
95. Gagnon, *La Raison du plus fort*, 39; Létourneau, *Je me souviens?*
96. Gagnon, *La Raison du plus fort*, 40; Otis, *L'adoption coutumière autochtone*.
97. Brouillet, *La négation de la nation,* 111.
98. Bouchard, *Genèse des nations*, 96.
99. Gagnon, *La Raison du plus fort*, 40.

That said, for the emergence of the *national* movement at the dawn of the nineteenth century, religion was not a central issue. Before the *Union Act* (1840), the *Patriotes* rebellion was clearly republican and liberal in nature, not religious — as personified by its dominant figure, Louis-Joseph Papineau.[100] In fact, the Catholic clergy was opposed to the vision celebrated by the *Parti Canadien* — which mutated into the *Parti Patriote* in 1827 — because it was both politically and territorially oriented.[101] Protesting against the Anglophone minority's political and economic domination of the Francophone majority in Lower Canada (today's Quebec), *Les Patriotes* rebelled against their coloniser in 1837-1838.[102] They were harshly defeated by the English regime. Lord Durham's Report, inquiring about the causes of the rebellions, concluded that it was due to the presence of "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state".[103] Consequently, the *Union Act* of 1840 was instituted, clearly, as an attempt "to promote the assimilation of French Canadians".[104] In fact, the Act united Lower and Upper Canada into a single body, dominated politically by Anglophones, even though they represented less than a quarter of the total population at the time.[105] The Rebellions, Durham Report, and Union Act still resonate as powerful myths for Quebec's modern nationalism.[106]

While the *nationalist* movement of *Les Patriotes* tended to be inclusive — i.e. "[t]heir nationalism had little in common with the ethnocentric and xenophobic variety that caused such misery in the twentieth century"[107] —, its re-engineering was "more conservative, inward-looking, and Catholic [in] orientation after the defeat of the rebellions".[108] As stated by Durham in his Report, only *great* nations survive into modernity. Therefore, the French-Canadian nationalist movement that emerged — with an emphasis on the *French* adjective[109] — thought of itself as having to rely on the impetus of

100. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 75; Chevrier *et al., De la république en Amérique*.
101. Kelly, *La petite loterie*, 23; Balthazar, *Nouveau bilan*, 67.
102. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 72.
103. Quoted in Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms*, 43.
104. Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms*, 43.
105. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 100.
106. Létourneau, *Je me souviens?*
107. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 75.
108. Ibid., 90.
109. Ibid., 122.

traditionalism if it were to survive.[110] Hence, between the *Union Act* and the Quiet Revolution was the period of *la survivance* nationalism.[111]

Although it is fair to think of this period as "*ce long hiver de la survivance*" (literally: that long winter of survival),[112] important political transformations occurred both for the Quebec nation and Canada as a federation. The constitutional law, from which modern-day Canada emerged, dates from 1867; the writers of that Act generated a political compromise acceptable to both French and English Canadians.[113] In fact, the *Constitution Act, 1867* is the logical continuation of the spirit of the *Quebec Act* (1774). Nonetheless, the nationalism of *la survivance* — for which being French Canadian and Catholic were intertwined[114] — significantly marked Quebec's modern social thinking.[115] The corollary to it was unquestioned support from the Catholic clergy, since the nationalist movement in question was driven by a "distaste for the secularism, materialism, individualism, and hedonism conveyed by Anglo-American mass culture".[116]

Thus, from the 1920s onward, Abbé Groulx led the French Canadian nationalist movement.[117] One can find the most succinct and exhaustive synthesis of that French Canadian nationalist expression in the Tremblay Report,[118] the *Royal Commission of Inquiry on Constitutional Problems* (1956), which was commissioned by Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis.[119] Indeed, the Tremblay Report put forward the social doctrine of the Catholic Church: it was

110. Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité,* 260.

111. That said, as James Kennedy (2013) cogently shows, a parallel *liberal nationalism* was flourishing with the *Ligue Nationaliste* led by Henri Bourassa, Olivar Asselin, and Armand Lavergne.

112. Dumont, *Genèse de la société québécoise.*

113. Laforest, *Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream*, 254 ; Laforest and Mathieu, "Le fiduciaire, le financier et le poète".

114. Balthazar, *Nouveau bilan*, 119.

115. Beauchemin, *L'histoire en trop.*

116. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 249.

117. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 84.

118. See Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution*, 98.

119. The Duplessis regime (1936-1939 and most importantly 1944-1959) is often associated in social thinking as the political regime of *la survivance par excellence* (Beauchemin, 2002). It can be seen as symbolising a genealogical-ethnic nationalism, just as Quebec modern nationalism represents a territorial-civic one. One can understand this Commission as a direct

defending French Canadian traditions against liberalism as well as against social and political forces for change, and it channelled an anti-materialist spiritual orientation.[120]

Therefore, to answer "Who is the nation?", one has to understand "nation" as the modern expression French Canadians used to preserve their identity while adapting it to modernity. As for the second question, "Why and how does the nation emerge?", one has to look at the "triple revolution" that occurred after the Second World War. The first is the revolution regarding the social division of labour, or, as we discussed previously using Gellner, the transition from an agro-literate to an industrial society. This was followed by the "administrative revolution", where, as demonstrated using both Gellner and Anderson, Quebec's bureaucratic apparatuses were multiplied — mostly — with the arrival of the Lesage government in 1960. The third is the "cultural revolution", described through the lenses of the theories of Gellner and Anderson, whereby Quebec significantly reformed its educational system, and empowered its language and specific culture through political and jurisdictional actions.

Finally, "When and where did the nation arise?" Quite simply, Quebec's modern nation arose when the French Canadian *ethnie* was politicised through the Quiet Revolution, as it delineated its national attractiveness within the borders of the province.[121] The politicisation of the French Canadian *ethnie* in order to become Quebec's modern nation did not occur overnight. As Stevenson demonstrates, as early as 1867, French Canadians began to politicise their nationalism.[122] In particular, one can recall the execution of Métis leader Louis Riel by the federal government in 1885 as a key episode, which amplified Quebec's need for political autonomy:

> In Quebec, Riel's execution resulted in the provincial administration, the coalition Parti national, an alliance [...] led by Honoré Mercier. Mercier's administration was the first to openly espouse a conservative, Catholic French Cana-

answer to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, which, in contrast, promoted a centralised conception of the polity.

120. Keating, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne*, 84.

121. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 106.

122. Stevenson, *Parallel Paths*, 162.

> dian nationalism, which demanded that Ottawa respect provincial autonomy. In this way, Quebec nationalism and provincial autonomy became entwined.[123]

That said, what really empowered the politicisation of the French Canadian *ethnie* was the federal centralisation of powers and fiscal resources after World War II.[124] Coupled with the fact that French Canadians had recently been conscripted for the War against their will — as they had been similarly conscripted for the Boer War and World War I[125] —, the Duplessis government called for the Tremblay Commission to inquire into constitutional problems.[126] The Commission — which rehabilitated the idea of dualism and the two founding peoples to better understand the Canadian federation — recommended that the Quebec provincial government collect its own tax revenues. Duplessis passed a bill in 1954 applying these recommendations. Furthermore, in the early 1920s, as industrialisation ran its course in Québec, it was monopolised by the Anglophone minority.[127]

Therefore, it is specifically when a new elite was elected to the provincial government in 1960 that the French-Canadian *ethnie* was politicised. This is the point when a *national* government worked hard so that Quebecers could overtake their industrial condition,[128] and cease to be perceived and to perceive themselves as those "American White Niggers" (*Nègres blancs d'Amérique*), a description coined by Quebec's famous novelist Pierre Vallières. In other words, the politicisation of the French Canadian *ethnie* resulted from the "triple revolution", which occurred between the end of World War II and the mandate of the Lesage government (1960-1966).

3. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

As we have just shown, Gellner, Anderson and Smith undoubtedly provide interesting approaches to explain and understand nationalism as it applies to

123. Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms*, 46.
124. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution*, 58.
125. Oliver, *The Passionate Debate*, 19.
126. Coleman, *The Independence Movement*, 66.
127. Oliver, *The Passionate Debate*, 38.
128. McRoberts and Posgate, *Développement et modernisation*, 17.

minority nations, even though these authors did treat these cases as anomalies set to disappear eventually. Scholars should consider the relevance of such authors while studying minority nations, even though it might seem paradoxical at first sight.[129]

None of the theories explored in this paper depicts the whole picture — for example, they do not examine the impact of communication mechanisms as Karl Deutsch's theory might, and they do not explain, as Michael Billig's argument would, the (post)modern phenomena of *banal nationalism*.[130] Smith's account may appear more exhaustive than Gellner's or Anderson's, but one must remember that Gellner's theory is necessary in order to understand the significance of socio-organisational changes that occurred with the Quiet Revolution, just as Anderson's definition of the nation significantly matches the re-engineered national identity embraced by Quebecers since the 1960s.

Smith's ethnosymbolist approach makes it possible to understand Quebec's national experience in the *longue durée*. Additionally, it helps us understand Quebec's modern national identity vis-à-vis its pre-modern Canadian and French Canadian expressions. However, it only seems fair to us to add that, even if Smith's contribution is of great importance, it still needs to be understood in the context of *modernism*. We will not settle the ongoing debate as to whether he wrote a completely new chapter or only added a footnote to this school of thought — but we are convinced that, either way, be it a chapter or a footnote, his contribution remains of great significance. In particular, it helps unpack the idea that "nations ought to be sovereign states". As he later indicated in his book *National Identity*: "The idea that nations can be free only if they possess their own sovereign state is neither necessary nor universal".[131]

Put otherwise, Smith ultimately accepts that "some nationalists have been more concerned with home rule and cultural parity in a multinational state than with outright independence".[132] Together with Gellner and Anderson's modernist theories, this highlights the fact that multiple cultural and national identities can flourish and be sustained within a single sovereign state.

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129. See O'Leary, "An Iron Law of Nationalism", 280.

130. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*; Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.

131. Smith, *National Identity*, 74.

132. Ibid., 74.

While classic modernist theories of nationalism tend to see the modern expression of the nation-state as unitarian and centralised in nature, ongoing processes of decentralisation and federalisation in many states draw attention to some theoretical blind spots. That does not mean that the theory is overtly flawed; it only provides us with the opportunity to adapt it to new and enduring sociopolitical realities.

Indeed, the phenomenon of having two competing societal/national projects in a polity such as Canada shows that a federation provides the institutional capacity for more than one order of government to play a significant, autonomous role in shaping a high culture. In fact, maybe the very possibility, provided through a federal system, of having sustainable multinational polities *is* the missing link in the modernist theory, for in such "political associations" minority populations can possess and identify with their own subgovernment and substate territory, even though it is not purely sovereign in all matters.

Hence, Smith's ethnosymbolist account has proven to be more mindful of the existence of minority national communities than the modernist theories of Gellner and Anderson. This is, at least, one interesting conclusion that can be drawn from our testing of such "classic" theories of nationalism using an "abnormal" case. This line of reasoning may be the starting point for a new understanding of modernism theories of nations and nationalisms, a step along the way to better explaining how two competing nations can indeed participate in the formation and consolidation of two high cultures within a single sovereign state.

Smith's theoretical framework also gives us the opportunity to formulate interesting hypotheses for understanding contemporary national debates in Quebec. Political struggles during the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century have been centred largely, in Quebec, on discussions concerning immigrant integration.[133] In short, a considerable proportion of Quebecers seems to fear the presence of "too many immigrants".[134] The former pictures its distinct identity as threatened by the "accommodations" the state

133. Lamy, *Laïcité et valeurs québécoises* ; Mathieu and Laforest, "Uncovering National Nexus's Representations"; Seymour and Gosselin-Tapp, *La nation pluraliste.*

134. Bouchand and Taylor, *Building the Future.*

grants to the latter.[135] As Thériault suggests, given the fact that Quebecers know that they are a minority nation, many come to see immigrants as a threat to their national integrity,[136] as newcomers may be perceived as undermining or transforming "the communal heritage, with its characteristic myths, memories, values and symbols".[137]

In addition, echoing ethnosymbolism theory, Bouchard accurately shows that "[t]wo master myths have been particularly influential in shaping the Québec way of thinking […], acting as powerful symbolic engines".[138] These myths link modern preoccupations with Canadian and French Canadian historical traumas. The first master myth "speaks of collective oppression, humiliation, exploitation and dependence".[139] It is strongly associated with *la survivance* and the defeat of *Les Patriotes*. With regard to what we have presented in this article, we suggest that this myth has gradually transformed into a symbolic engine for social emancipation and a desire for reconquering the national trajectory, which might help to explain Quebec's desire to secede from Canada, or rather to remodel the Canadian institutional architecture into a formal multinational federal democracy.[140]

The second master myth, according to Bouchard, draws "on the widespread and enduring perception of a fragile, threatened cultural minority status, [which] has inspired self-protective behaviours, even withdrawal and the fear of change".[141] Therefore, this second myth might, in turn, explain both the political orientation of the nationalism of *la survivance*, as well as recent debates concerning immigrant integration and the apparent need for a *Charte de la laïcité*.[142] The nationalism of *la survivance* indeed centred its agency on a static conception of national identity, which mostly revolved around Ca-

135. Bock-Côté, *Fin de cycle*; *Le multiculturalisme comme religion politique.*

136. Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité*, 167; Gagnon and Mathieu, "La richesse des (petites) nations".

137. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins*, 49.

138. Bouchard, "The Small Nation With a Big Dream", 7.

139. Ibid., 7.

140. See Quebec, "Quebecers: Our Way of Being Canadians".

141. Bouchard, "The Small Nation With a Big Dream", 7; Mathieu, *Les défis du pluralisme,* 149-159.

142. Charter for a French-oriented secularism, which was at the forefront of the Quebec political debate during the PQ's short mandate in 2013-2014; it has just regained some en-

tholicism. It was defending French Canadian traditions against liberalism as well as social and political forces for change, and it was spiritually oriented as anti-materialist.[143] Also, concerning the recent debates over the possible adoption of a *Charte de la laïcité* and Quebec's allegedly fundamental values there is no doubt — in our opinion — that this is a self-protection-inspired endeavour. Put otherwise, it responds to the enduring perception of Quebec being a *fragile nation* vis-à-vis the growing ethno-cultural diversity it has to manage due to ongoing immigration.

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ergy with the election of a majority government formed by the *Coalition Avenir Quebec* on 1ST October, 2018.

143. See Grant, *Est-ce la fin du Canada?*, 76.

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