Published by
Publié par
IRPP

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POLICY
OPTIONS
POLITIQUES

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CHANTAL LÉTOURNEAU

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Dépôt légal 2000
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISSN 0226-5893

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Web site/Adresse internet:
www.irpp.org

Subscriptions
Policy Options is published ten times a year by the Institute for Research on Public Policy. The contents are copyrighted. Subscription rates: Individual, one year $34.95, two years $59.95. Institutional: $45 and $75. For Canadian orders, add 7% GST. Québec residents add 7.5%. US orders please add $15 per year postage. All other orders please add $20.

Policy Options is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association. The contents are indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index and Canadian Magazine Index and are available online at www.irpp.org.

Second class mail registration 09175.

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Options politiques est membre de l'Association canadienne des éditeurs de périodiques. Les articles sont indexés dans l'Index des périodiques canadiens et dans l'Index des revues canadiennes, et ils sont accessibles en direct à www.irpp.org.

Envoi par courrier de deuxième classe 09175.

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IS SEPARATISM DEAD? NOT QUITE YET

Gilles Gagné and
Simon Langlois

Whether in a referendum or an ordinary election, most people vote the way they do for perfectly good reasons, usually having to do with the "social space" they inhabit. The authors use this idea to divide Quebec's voting population into a number of different types, each with its own reasons for voting for or against Quebec sovereignty. The approach yields interesting results: The Yes side lost the 1995 referendum, not because of "money and ethnic votes," but because francophones 55 years of age and older turned to the No side in the referendum campaign's final days. Similarly, sovereignty's recent sag in the polls is mainly a result of its declining popularity in the social group that has always been its main custodian: francophone workers making more than $20,000 a year, and students. The sag's timing suggests, however, that it may be mainly a protest against the tough economic polices enacted by the Bouchard government in the second half of 1999. A rebound in support should not be ruled out.

Qu'il s'agisse d'un référendum ou d'une élection ordinaire, la plupart des électeurs fondent leur choix sur des raisons parfaitement valables, généralement liées à l'" espace social " qu'ils habitent. À partir de cette idée, les auteurs distinguent dans l'électorat québécois un certain nombre de catégories ayant chacune leurs propres raisons de voter pour ou contre la souveraineté du Québec. Cette méthode produit d'intéressants résultats. Ainsi, la défaite du OUI au référendum de 1995 s'expliquerait non pas par " l'argent et des votes ethnique ", mais plutôt par le fait que les francophones âgés de 55 ans ou plus ont décidé d'appuyer l'option du NON au cours des derniers jours de la campagne référendaire. De même, le recul que l'option souverainiste a enregistré lors de récents sondages s'expliquerait principalement par un fléchissement de popularité au sein des groupes qui soutiennent habituellement cette option : d'une part les travailleurs francophones dont le revenu annuel dépasse 20 000 $ et, d'autre part, les étudiants. Toutefois, à en juger par le moment où s'est produit ce glissement, on peut penser que celui-ci exprimait avant tout une protestation contre la rigueur des politiques économiques mises en œuvre par le gouvernement Bouchard durant la deuxième moitié de 1999. Une remontée des appuis ne devrait donc pas être exclue.

Referendum votes on the constitutional future of Quebec have to be distinguished from votes to elect a new government. What is at stake is different. When voters cast their ballot every four years, they are judging the government in power, voting for a political program and opting for an ideological orientation that will guide political choices. A referendum on sovereignty, on the other hand, is about the future, a social project (*projet de société*), and people's ability to imagine themselves in this future and to act as agents of a new project. This is all the more true if the project entails risk, whether real or perceived, which amounts to the same thing from the point of view of the political actor.

If this distinction between a referendum and an election is accurate, then we have to go beyond the standard categories used until now to analyse both voting intentions and the actual vote, based on polls, and try to understand the result of the referendum vote in terms of the abilities of social actors to imagine themselves in the future. We suggest that to analyze a referendum vote we must analyse voters according to their interests, motivations and commitment to the development of this different social project.

A second assumption of this study is that society is not homogeneous. No society is, and particularly not a democratic society in which extremely diverse options confront each other. Like other developed societies, Quebec society is made up of a series of groups with different interests that often clash. Every sociological group—whether union members or managers, workers or pensioners, rural or urban dwellers, young people or old, honest citizens or criminals, immigrants or native-born Quebecers, Francophones or Anglophones, hunters or ecologists, poor or rich—has its own interests, particular demands and specific expectations, and it is up to the duly-constituted state to make it possible for their contradictory interests to coexist.

That Quebec society is divided over the issue of Quebec sovereignty is not surprising. For generations, different groups and social movements have acted as proponents of the sovereignty project. Sovereignists and federalists alike try—democratically—to rally other groups and individuals with differing opinions to their preferred social project.

In this article, we try to distinguish between groups that further the sovereignty idea and those that oppose it. We also identify other social groups that are wavering between these two constitutional options, now crystallized into a referendum question that forces citizens to vote either Yes or No.

In our view, seven assertions are now generally accepted by journalists and commentators, as well as in discussions among ordinary citizens.

- There has been a decline in support for sovereignty since the 1995 referendum.
- Support for sovereignty is dropping in Montreal in particular.
- A lower proportion of women than men support the Yes side.
- All in all, the "Bouchard effect" was minimal during the last referendum (a conclusion of three separate studies by political scientists).
- The victory of the No side in the 1995 referendum really was due to "money and ethnic votes," to use Jacques Parizeau's phase.
- Support for the No side is almost unanimous among non-Francophones.
- Quebecers have ambivalent feelings about sovereignty and federalism.

Our analysis shows that, although these propositions are widely, even unanimously accepted, the facts do not support them. At the very least, they have to be qualified considerably.

Political actors must be situated within the social space in which choices and decision-making develop. Citizens who vote are not simply puppets reacting to propaganda, nor are they manipulated by polls. They vote according to their interests, political convictions, and motivations, which can be extremely diverse, and consistent with their prejudices and preferences. In short, citizens vote for what they see as the very best reasons. We are not arguing that voters make rational choices. Rather, we are suggesting that the good reasons that lead citizens to make their decisions need to be understood, which is not the same thing. Their reasons develop in a very specific sociological space, which differs from one group of individuals to the next.

We presume that individuals are not slaves to statistical parameters such as age, language or gender, but instead vote according to the characteristics of the social space associated with these variables. Thus, if a higher proportion of young people vote for sovereignty, it is because they are Québécois rather than French-Canadians, and also because they are part of a social group inspired by the possibility of building a different society. If Anglophones are strongly opposed to the idea, it is also because they have good reasons to be against it: Canada is their sphere of action and reference. The same is true for immigrants, the majority of whom immigrated first to Canada and took an oath of allegiance to the Queen, Canada's Head of State. Many immigrants, especially older immigrants, would find it hard to vote for what they see as the separation of their adopted country. Thus, concealed behind variables such as mother tongue, national origin and age is a social space in which citizens' reasons for acting are formed. These reasons motivate citizens who are called upon to make political choices and choices about society, as in the case of a referendum.

Rather than separating all voters into descriptive statistical categories, we will break them down in a way that can be used to both predict and explain their referendum vote.

We will identify sociological groupings according to their reasons for voting Yes in the referendum on sovereignty, and complementary groups according to the reasons for voting No. This approach will provide a fresh interpretation of the results of the 1995 referendum vote and of the support for sovereignty in early 2000.

We use four variables to construct our typology: age, occupation, mother tongue and income. (Immigrant status will be considered in a separate analysis.) Although many analyses of polling results have shown lower support for the sovereignist option among women than men we don't include gender as a separate variable. The reason is that our approach does not provide any reasons why women would vote No more often than men; and there really isn't any reason to assume that women, as women, would behave differently from men in political matters. There is no female ontology in politics, any more than there is a Québécois soul. Rather, we suggest that other hidden variables explain these gender differences and that both women and men make decisions according to their role in society. To

verify this hypothesis—successfully as it turns out—we do a separate analysis by gender.

The first variable we examine is age. Older voters are more likely than their younger counterparts to be attached to Canada. The new Québécois identity only emerged in the 1960s and many senior citizens are undoubtedly still attached to the French Canada of their ancestors and the dualist Canada of Henri Bourassa, André Laurendeau and Claude Ryan. They refuse to believe that this dream died and was buried the day that the Meech Lake Accord was defeated. They therefore have good reasons to vote against the sovereignist project.

Senior citizens also focus more on the past and are apprehensive about an uncertain future. They live on their pensions and perceive the uncertainty created by a new political project as a threat to their security. In addition, their main source of income is often the old age pension paid by the federal government. Although other factors may also explain why the majority of senior citizens vote against Quebec sovereignty, we limit ourselves to these. In any case, whatever their reasons, three-quarters of persons aged 65 and over and approximately two-thirds of slightly younger persons (aged 55-64) voted No in the last referendum.

Young Quebecers, on the other hand, have been socialized in a different space. Few identify themselves as French Canadians, a term that has all but disappeared from use among the young. The French-Canadian ethnic identity has been replaced by the Québécois identity and, in the rest of Canada, by regional francophone identities. The idea of independence was advanced by the *Rassemblement pour l'independance nationale* in the 1960s and the sovereignty-association project was born with the *Mouvement souveraineté-association* in 1968. Other political parties in Quebec have also affirmed a new national identity, from Jean Lesage's *Maître chez nous* to *Égalité ou indépendance* by Daniel Johnson senior, and Robert Bourassa's *Souveraineté culturelle*. People who voted for the first time in 1960 are 61 years old today (and were 56 years old at the last referendum). Everyone who is younger has therefore been socialized in a political context that is considerably different from that of the 1950s.

We also presume that the project of political sovereignty for Quebec will receive greater support from voters who are under 55 (this cut-off matches available data, but it is also in line with a sociological reality, that is, the fact of having been socialized politically either before or exclusively after the Quiet Revolution). As we will show, persons in this age group are most likely to imagine their futures and to be able to make plans and projects, including the project to change society.

Canadian Picture Archive

Lucien Bouchard: Does he have the votes?

Ever since the idea was born, Francophones have been the principal custodians of the sovereignist idea. There's no need to dwell on this obvious fact. Conversely, Anglophones have had good reasons for voting overwhelmingly against the sovereignist project. They form the majority in Canada and would become a minority in a new country perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a threat to their historical rights.

Immigrants also have good reasons for remaining attached to Canada. The majority, especially those who came before the 1970s, chose to immigrate to Canada first, only to discover the existence of linguistic conflicts once they arrived. Having identified themselves as neither English Canadians nor French Canadians, but simply Canadians, they have pledged allegiance to the new country that allowed them to build new lives. Their behaviour is therefore like Anglophones', but for different reasons. If we are right, then support for sovereignty among immigrant groups that are closer to the

People who voted for the first time in 1960 are 61 years old today. Everyone who is younger has therefore been socialized in a political context that is considerably different from that of the 1950s.

Francophone community and among those that have established themselves here more recently should be somewhat higher, and indeed, the polls show that this is true. Although the majority of immigrants vote No, more immigrants than Anglophones vote Yes. In total, however, the proportion is still low. Thus we focus here on Francophones in defining our pro- and anti-sovereignty groups. An examination of the differences between anglophone and allophone votes will be made separately.

How about pensioners, as opposed to old people? They are worried about the disturbances that may be caused by a political change that is seen as radical. Will they still receive their pensions? What will become of their investments, if any? They may be more cautious or have a greater "aversion to risk," as an economist would put it. Retirees are also older, and thus more likely to be attached to Canada, in particular to the French Canada of their childhood. But among this group, there are also individuals who still feel resentment about past injustices suffered by French Canadians. Thus, their brand of nationalism could be motivated more by this resentment, or may be completely structured by the imaginary dialogue with "the other." It may be assumed that this orientation to dialogue and search for recognition will be less present among young people. Pensioners—whether or not they are under or over 65—have voted No overwhelmingly (at a rate of 70 per cent), according to the 1995 polls.

Since Alexis de Tocqueville, sociologists have amply demonstrated that the ability to project oneself into the future requires that a person have room to manoeuvre and not be constrained by need.

Since Alexis de Tocqueville, sociologists have amply demonstrated that the ability to project oneself into the future requires that a person have room to manoeuvre and not be constrained by need. This assertion has been well documented in sociological research carried out in the last century and can be demonstrated by dozens of examples. Low-income persons are locked in the realm of needs and what little security they have comes from the state. Persons who are dependent on the state will tend to behave like retirees and will be reluctant to challenge the existing order which ensures their survival. This explains why the poorest, most disadvantaged citizens also vote No.

In contrast, the strongest support for the sovereignist project should be found among persons who are in the labour force. People who work—including the temporarily unemployed as well as students, who are the workers of the future—are first and foremost responsible for themselves. They see their possessions as having been earned through their labour. Working gives them security and self-confidence. Studying and working also provide confidence in the future and make it possible to develop projects and plans. Workers, using the term broadly, are often involved in occupational and professional groups such as unions, corporations and associations, which give them collective strength and a degree of control over their destiny. Finally, workers and students expect the state to establish rules for the economy and to define the space in which they work, or will be working, with such measures as: minimum wage policies, export assistance for small and medium-sized businesses, retraining of labour, funding for universities, hospitals and public services, anti-dumping policies, anti-strike-breaking legislation, defence of the interests of enterprises in international negotiations, monetary policies, and so on.

Through their personal effort, knowledge and associations, and with the support of state policies, workers can imagine their futures and be responsible for them. Because they are more autonomous, they are less threatened by the political change implied by sovereignty. It might be argued that the possible break-up of the constitutional order would threaten jobs, as is usually suggested by No supporters during referendum campaigns. In fact, workers are less influenced by this type of argument than are others who have less control of their lives, and a weaker sense of their "usefulness." As a group, they should be most in favour of the new nationalism of the sovereignist movement, less affected by the dialogue with Canada, and more likely to become involved in a new social project.

Women who are homemakers are also much less in favour of sovereignty. In this sense, they behave much like retirees. According to the polls, approximately 33 per cent of women homemakers voted Yes in the last referendum.

Having justified our focus on age, mother tongue, occupation and income, we now cross-tabulate these factors to construct a typology of voters in hopes of better explaining and predicting behaviour *vis-à-vis* the sovereignist option.

We hypothesize that the main custodians of the sovereignist project will be persons who are aged 18 to 55, francophone, in the labour force and have an income that allows them to buy more than basic necessities. To this group,

we would also add students. This type of voter therefore embodies all the characteristics likely to result in the highest level of support for the sovereignist project. They are francophone; they have been socialized politically in the Quebec of the early 1960s onwards; and they have the greatest ability to imagine themselves in the future. They are therefore a group that will act as a real motor of the sovereignty project and movement.

There will be less support for sovereignty among the other types of voters, and for a variety of reasons. Attachment to Canada, but also resentment, may be stronger among senior citizens—hence the split in their referendum votes. Similarly, anglophone senior citizens will have good reason (from their point of view) to vote overwhelmingly against the sovereignist project. Anglophones will also mobilize against the sovereignist project. But not unanimously: If our theory is right, a proportion of allophone and anglophone workers and students who were socialized in post-1960 Quebec should be expected to support the sovereignist project, and our data analysis show, that they will.

The four variables we use to define the decision-making space of individuals can be dichotomized as follows:

- Persons aged 18-55 vs. Persons aged 55 and over
- Persons in the labour force ("active persons"), unemployed persons and students vs. Persons not in the labour force ("inactive persons"), retirees and homemakers
- Persons with incomes greater than $20,000 vs. Persons with incomes less than $20,000
- Francophones vs. Allophones and Anglophones

Crossing these variables produces 16 possible types (e.g., people 55+, not in the labour force, with incomes greater than $20,000, who are anglophone, or people between 18 and 55, not in the labour force, with income above $20,000 who are francophone, and so on). Of these 16 categories, several are empty or almost empty. We have distinguished Anglophones and allophones only by age, first, because their numbers are low, and second, because they are more or less uniformly opposed to a Yes vote. (That said, Anglophones and allophones do display different behaviour and we intend to distinguish between them in subsequent analyses.)

Respondents who did not state their income were placed in Type II, which is made up of a majority of women (58 per cent) and of persons with a low level of schooling. We decided not to attempt to distribute the persons who did not state their income between types I and II, though we did put professionals and managers who didn't state their income in Type I. In general, a respondent's decision not to state his or her income indicates a reticence which did not appear to fit our sociological definition of Type I people.

The data analyzed here were provided by the polling firm Léger et Léger, which has surveyed Quebecers' opinions on a regular, long-term basis using a standardized, identical data gathering tool, thus making it possible to make comparisons over time. Two blocks of opinion polls carried out in 1995 and 1999 were chosen for the purposes of this study. The first included four polls conducted before the second referendum in October 1995 (on October 1-4, 8-12, 16-20 and 23-26). The 1999 block were conducted in April, May, June, August, September, November and December of that year.

The data from these polls were aggregated so as to create a sufficiently large database to carry out more powerful multivariate analyses.

If our theory is right, a proportion of allophone and Anglophone workers and students who were socialized in post-1960 Quebec should be expected to support the sovereignist project.

Table 1
Composition of the samples, 1995 and 1999

Type of voter	1995	1999
I Francophones, aged 18-54, students, active, $20,000 +	44.9	45.0
II Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	15.9	13.6
III Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	4.6	3.9
IV Francophones, aged 55 and over, inactive	17.9	18.6
V Anglophones and allophones, aged 18-54	12.3	13.7
VI Anglophones and allophones, aged 55 and over	4.4	5.3
Total (per cent)	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	4025	6036

Since approximately 1,000 persons were included in each poll, the aggregated database comprised 4,025 respondents for 1995 and 6,036 for 1999.

Data collected in election polls can serve two purposes: first, to describe and analyse behaviour; second, to predict results for an entire population. Our purpose is to describe and explain the behaviour of citizens. What led them to vote one way or another on the question of Quebec sovereignty as it was worded in the 1995 referendum? How would they vote if the same question were asked today? To do this, we analysed the actual responses to the question on voting intentions. Three categories of responses were examined: Yes, No and Other (which includes both refusals to answer and "Don't knows"). Because we wanted to analyse decided voters, we did not distribute the undecided vote.

Type I voters, whom we have identified as the principal supporters of the sovereignist project, make up the largest proportion of the population (45 per cent in 1999).

The advantage of using aggregated data is that we were able to examine what is happening in groups whose numbers in a single poll would otherwise have been too low, given that they are minorities within Quebec society. For example, though there are few Anglophones in each poll, and fewer still who say they intend to vote Yes, pooling our data allows us to examine the shared attributes of those who do answer Yes.

Before turning to the analysis, we first examine the distribution of our six distinct types and their respective weight based on the aggregate results of the 1995 and 1999 polls (see Table 1).

Type I—whom we have identified as the principal supporters of the sovereignist project—makes up the largest proportion of the population (45 per cent in 1999). The second largest type is Type IV—Francophones aged 55 or older who are not in the labour force—who are 18.6 per cent of the population. Next in order of size is Type II, Francophones aged 18-54 who are not in the labour force or who are low-income workers. The proportion of older Francophones who are still in the labour force (Type III) was only four per cent of the population in 1999, and is declining with the increase in early retirement in recent years. Finally, the majority of Anglophones and allophones (placed in the same type for the purposes of this analysis, even though they have different characteristics) are either in the labour force or students and are under 55. They represent 13.7 per cent of Quebec's population. The older members of this type represent approximately five per cent of the population.

The population structure revealed by the 10 polls is very stable and the comparative analysis of the two years is free of selectivity bias. The differences between the two years correspond to known changes that took place in the social structure in the intervening four years: a decrease in the number of persons with low income (the number of households dependent on social assistance dropped considerably); a decrease in the number of persons aged 55 and over who are in the labour force; and an increase in the number of persons in this age group who are not. There are slightly more Anglophones and Allophones in the seven samples for 1999, which reflects the arrival of new immigrants over the four-year period and a positive net migration for Quebec in the past few years.

We first re-examine the analysis of the 1995 referendum results using our new approach. This analysis actually helps understand what is happening in early 2000, as the debate on the future of the sovereignist option is in full swing both with the public and among political parties. (Look, for instance, at the House of Commons' debate on the *Clarity Act* in winter 2000, preparation of the Parti Québécois Policy Conference in spring 2000, publication of Jean-François Lisée's book *Sortie de secours*, and so on).

Table 2 shows the results of a bivariate description of the voting intentions expressed in October 1995. Aggregate data from the four 1995 opinion polls were used in this description. Table 2 confirms our earlier observations about the known characteristics of Yes and No supporters. Without dwelling on the details, we simply point out that our earlier justifications for the construction of the typology of voters are confirmed by the data compiled from these polls. Note simply that:

- the majority of Francophones support the Yes side;
- more allophones than Anglophones vote Yes (though both groups' support for this option is weak);
- Yes support drops with age;
- a lower proportion of low-income persons vote Yes;
- fewer homemakers and pensioners vote Yes;
- the unemployed and students tend to vote like employed persons.

Table 3 gives the distribution of voting

Table 2
The 1995 vote according to different demographic charasteristics, based on four polls taken in October 1995

	Yes	No	Other	Total Per cent	Total No.
Mother tongue:					
French	52.5	34.4	13.1	100	3326
English	6.0	83.7	10.4	100	436
Other	14.0	72.3	13.7	100	264
Age:					
18-24	55.4	35.4	9.2	100	505
25-34	47.7	42.3	9.9	100	947
35-44	51.2	35.7	13.0	100	865
45-54	46.4	39.5	14.1	100	623
55-64	37.0	52.0	11.0	100	492
65+	27.5	52.1	20.4	100	589
Education:					
Primary	37.6	43.0	19.4	100	402
Secondary	46.0	40.7	13.3	100	1735
Post-secondary	47.4	40.1	12.4	100	1141
University	43.6	48.5	8.0	100	716
Income:					
Less than $20,000	40.1	42.8	17.0	100	808
$20,000 - $39,999	48.2	39.5	12.2	100	1244
$40,000 - $59,999	50.7	41.2	8.1	100	894
$60,000 - $79,999	46.5	43.6	9.8	100	346
$80,000 and more	46.1	51.0	3.0	100	304
Occupation:					
Upper management	28.3	62.3	9.5	100	53
Middle management	46.7	45.9	7.4	100	122
Professional	52.7	37.7	9.6	100	581
Small business	51.5	40.4	8.0	100	198
White collar	43.7	45.5	10.8	100	490
Blue collar	53.7	33.7	12.7	100	820
Unemployed	44.7	38.2	17.0	100	170
Retired	30.6	53.5	15.9	100	719
Student	55.9	37.2	6.9	100	363
Total	44.9	42.3	12.8	100	4025

Support for the sovereignist option is, by far, more marked in Type I, which fits our model. Older persons are more likely to vote Yes if they are active in the labour force.

intentions in the four aggregate polls conducted before the vote. The typology of voters is more discriminating than the variables normally used in electoral sociology, which are shown in Table 2. This result alone justifies the construction of a new method for categorizing voters. By definition, a good measurement tool must discriminate between the objects (in the statistical sense of the word) that it is meant to measure.

Support for the sovereignist option is, by far, more marked in Type I, which fits our model. A lower proportion of persons of the same age group, but who are inactive or are low-income workers (Type II) support sovereignty, which is also in line with our prediction. Similarly, older persons are more likely to vote Yes if they are active in the labour force. Almost all older Anglophones and allophones are against the sovereignty project but this is not true of the younger members of this group. However, while the proportion of younger allophones and Anglophones who planned to vote Yes was two and a half times higher than their older counterparts, the overall result was still low (only 10.3 per cent of the aggregate data).

Table 3
1995 voting intention by groups, average of four polls taken in October 1995

	Yes	No	Other	Per cent	Total No.
Francophones, aged 18-54, students and active persons with incomes over $20,000	61.3	29.3	9.4	100	1810
Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	47.7	33.5	18.0	100	637
Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	48.4	40.2	11.4	100	184
Francophones, aged 55 and over, inactive	34.4	47.6	18.0	100	717
Anglophones and allophones, aged 18-54	10.3	79.5	10.2	100	493
Anglophones and allophones, aged 55 +	3.9	83.1	12.9	100	178
Total	44.9	42.3	12.8	100	4025

Surprisingly, our analysis reveals that between the beginning and the end of the referendum campaign, the proportion of firm Yes supporters in each of the voter types changed markedly.

On the whole, the results are consistent with our hypotheses. The fact of being active in the labour force or a student, aged under 55 and francophone is linked with a higher probability of voting Yes (which is even higher when these characteristics are combined).

On the basis of pre-election polls, the majority of observers and analysts have suggested that, in the end, little happened during the five weeks of the 1995 referendum campaign. The proportion of firm Yes supporters increased only slightly, from 43 per cent to 46 per cent from the beginning to the end of the campaign. However, this overview analysis does not reflect what really happened during those weeks.

Surprisingly, our analysis reveals that between the beginning and the end of the referendum campaign, the proportion of firm Yes supporters in each of the voter types changed markedly. Things do indeed happen in a referendum campaign, just as they do in most election campaigns. In the course of the referendum campaign, which was marked by the arrival on the scene of a new leader, Lucien Bouchard, two contradictory movements were observed on the Yes side (see Table 4). In a way, these two movements cancelled each other out, thus creating the appearance of stability in voting intentions and, more precisely, in the low increase in Yes support, which was a surprise for analysts. Figure 1 provides an even clearer picture of the data contained in Table 4.

From the start of the campaign, through Mr. Bouchard's arrival as its main leader, to the voting date itself, support for the Yes side rose in the groups we have identified as the spear-carriers of the sovereignty project, that is, among francophone young people, students, and labour force participants with more than minimal income. Among these groups, support for sovereignty only grew as the campaign went on. This was not the case for the second type of voters—under-55 labour force non-participants and low-income workers—among whom the level of Yes support, which had been at 47.6 per cent in early October, dropped to 45.4 per cent by the end of the campaign.

Things were different still among those aged 55 and over, who belong to the generation that was politically socialized before the Quiet Revolution. In this case, the drop in support was so significant as to constitute a real abandon-

Figure 1
Proportion of people intending to vote YES in the 1995 referendum, according to type of citizen, data for four polling dates in October 1995

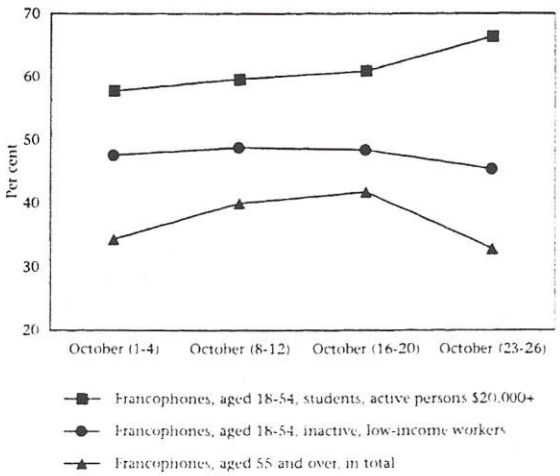


Table 4
Breakdown of Yes voters by group and date of poll

Groups	Date of poll Oct. 1-4	Oct. 8-12	Oct. 16-20	Oct. 23-26	Average
Francophones, aged 18-54, students and active persons with incomes $20,000 +	57.8	59.6	60.9	66.4	61.3
Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	47.6	49.8	48.4	45.4	47.7
Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	52.3	48.8	56.0	36.2	48.4
Francophones, aged 55 and over, inactive	30.1	37.7	37.9	32.0	34.4
Anglophones and allophones, aged 18-54	12.1	12.3	9.7	7.3	10.3
Anglophones and allophones, aged 55 and over	6.7	0.0	4.5	4.7	3.9
Total (per cent)	43.0	45.0	45.9	46.1	45.0
Number of respondents	1011	1003	1003	1001	4018

Within two weeks of the voting date, a proportion of the oldest voters went over to the No side. Mr. Bouchard's arrival did not help reassure senior citizens.

ment of the Yes side. Within two weeks of the voting date, a proportion of the oldest voters went over to the No side. Why? Were they being cautious? Faced with the likely event of a Yes victory, was there a resurgence in feelings of attachment to Canada? Were they worried they might soon lose their pensions? Was it fear of the unknown? Mr. Bouchard's arrival did not help reassure senior citizens, the great majority of whom have always been against the sovereignty option for reasons mentioned above.

These two opposing movements—a marked rise in Yes support in Type I and a sharp fall in Types III and IV—account for the seemingly stable average during the referendum campaign. The division in Quebec society between Anglophones and Francophones is well known. Analysing the referendum vote using our typology reveals another split, one within the French-speaking population itself.

The disaffection of a part of the francophone population over 55 years old caused the sovereignist defeat in the referendum—or the narrow federalist victory, depending on one's viewpoint. Without this decrease, the Yes side would probably have won—narrowly—with

Table 5
Estimate of who voted Yes

Groups	Share who voted Yes	Share of the Yes vote	Weight in the population
Francophones, aged 18-54, students and active persons with incomes $20,000+	71.3	67.7	44.9
Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	49.0	13.9	15.9
Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	38.3	3.7	4.6
Francophones, aged 55 and over, inactive	34.3	12.3	17.9
Anglophones and allophones, aged 18-54	8.1	2.0	12.3
Anglophones and allophones, aged 55 and over	4.7	0.4	4.4
Total (per cent)	49.4	100	100

something like 51 per cent or 52 of the votes.

The Yes defeat was not due to "money and ethnic votes," as Mr. Parizeau suggested on the night of October 30, 1995 It is a known fact that proponents of federalism put a lot of money into fighting the Yes option—thereby contravening the *Referendum Act*—but this does not explain the final result. Money does count, but this kind of explanation is an unsatisfactory *deus ex machina*. Nor can the defeat of the Yes side be explained by "the ethnic vote." Like the Anglophones, the majority of immigrants were opposed to the sovereignty project at the beginning, during and at the end of the referendum campaign. Quebec's sovereignty is not their project. They may, of course, rally around it if it materializes one day, but they will not be the ones to propose or carry it as a social movement, just as they are unlikely to be bearers of the demands of Francophones outside Quebec who are fighting to protect their historic rights. (On the other hand, they are not as homogeneous a group of voters as one would think. Immigrants' support for the Yes side varies according to region, a point we will return to.)

Type I voters represent approximately 67.7 per cent of all Yes votes. Whether referendums are won or lost depends on this group.

What we have analysed so far are voting intentions of decided voters, before distributing the undecided. The final Yes and No results were in fact higher and need to be estimated for each type of voter. To do this, we analyzed the last poll, conducted from October 23 to 26, 1995 (the results of which appear in Table 4). We distributed the undecided between the Yes and No sides as follows: We first determined the proportion of Yes votes that would be needed to reach 49.4 per cent, the final result of October 30 vote. We then pro-rated the undecided according to the proportion of firm Yes's obtained for each type. This implies that, for instance, the undecided in Type I ended up voting the same way as the other members of their group. This estimate is, of course, hypothetical, but until evidence to the contrary is found, it seems to us a useful way of describing what really happened referendum night. The results of our calculations appear in Table 5, which confirms the trends observed in the aggregate polls.

The overwhelming majority of support for the Yes option is found in Type I, that is, among Francophones aged under 55, students and labour-force participants with an annual income of at least $20,000. We estimate that 71.3 per cent of people in this group supported the Yes side in 1995. Since Type I voters are also the dominant type within the Quebec population, they represent approximately 67.7 per cent of all Yes votes. Whether referendums are won or lost depends on this group, somewhat in the way that Quebec and Ontario voters can elect the federal government, as they have done many times. It all boils down to numbers and the mathematics of the majority.

By contrast, 49 per cent of Type II voters, that is, Francophones either not in the labour force or earning a very low income and persons who did not state their income, voted Yes, accounting for just over 13.9 per cent of the Yes votes, which is slightly less than this group's weight in the total population. Support for sovereignty was lower than 40 per cent among Type III voters—workers aged over 55—but this is a smaller social group. All other things equal, the huge gap created by the age variable alone suggests that the difference in voting patterns must have been produced by the combined effect of political socialization, the "French-Canadian" identity and concerns about pensions. It should be kept in mind that people aged 55 and over who are active in the labour force are not "old." Moreover, slightly more than a third of Type IV voters—the retirees—support the sovereignist option. When the two groups are combined, it can be seen that approximately one third of francophone voters aged 55 and over supported sovereignty in 1995.

Finally, and not surprisingly, support for the Yes side was even lower among Anglophones and recent immigrants to Quebec (types V and VI). The level of support was higher among persons in this group aged under 55, however, which shows that there are differences among Anglophones.

These results—including our estimates of the final vote, which we consider realistic until they're proven wrong—highlight the usefulness and relevance of our approach. It is clear that the idea of sovereignty, associated with a partnership with Canada, is supported by a very specific type of voter. Their attributes suggest that they are less motivated by resentment than by a desire to change society. Having been politically socialized after the Quiet Revolution, Type I voters are clearly less sensitive than older voters to the "humiliations" experienced in the past, humiliations that they have not really experienced themselves. For them, voting for sovereignty mainly means voting for the construction of a social project.

How is support for the sovereignist option distributed across Quebec's regions? A number of observers have suggested that the referendum was defeated in the Quebec City region, which did not deliver all the votes the Yes side expected from it. It has also been suggested that support for sovereignty has been dropping in Montreal. What, in fact, is the situation?

Traditional analyses of voting intentions by region do not always take into account the striking regional differences that exist. For example, an overwhelming majority of Anglophones vote against sovereignty and are concentrated in the Montreal area. Language and region become blurred here, but they must be distinguished so as to understand what is really happening in the metropolis. A further complication is introduced by the growing imbalance between the regions in terms of age structure: Remote regions are aging. Differences in age structures may therefore account for some of the regional differences. Cross-tabulating our typology by region allows us to control for the presence of the two variables—language and age—which most differentiate the regions from each other in terms of vote. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 6.

In all regions from Gaspé to Montreal and from Abitibi to Estrie, including the North Shore, Type I voters behaved in a surprisingly similar fashion. The exception is Outaouais, for obvious reasons. In this region, young francophone members of the labour force work in an environment in which the federal government has a strong presence. Many of them cross the Ottawa River daily to earn their living. They perceive Quebec sovereignty as a threat to their jobs. In all the other large regions we examined, however, the same proportion of Type I voters (approximately 62 per cent) told pollsters that they planned to vote Yes in 1995. This result is important because it shows that the sovereignist project is carried along by a social movement that, with the exception of Outaouais, is deeply rooted throughout Quebec. Moreover, the exception proves the rule: Workers, by definition, want to work for a living and thereby ensure their autonomy. This is true everywhere, except that workers in the Outaouais expect the effect of sovereignty will be exactly the opposite of what those in the rest of the province expect—and they clearly have good reasons for thinking this way.

The sovereignist project is carried along by a social movement that is deeply rooted throughout Quebec.

A second important result revealed by the table is that a higher proportion of young Anglophones and allophones outside Montreal and the Outaouais supported the Yes side. At least some people who turned 21 after 1960 and who live in an environment where there are

Table 6
The Yes vote by region, average of four October 1995 polls

Group	Montreal	Belt of Montreal	Periphery of Montreal	Quebec City	Outaouais	Centre of Quebec	Remote regions	Average
Francophones, aged 18-54, students and active persons $20,000+	64.8	62.7	61.4	60.1	32.9	63.6	62.3	61.3
Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	42.1	60.8	48.4	41.8	20.8	5.0	47.9	47.7
Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	45.7	41.7	55.0	50.0	33.3	40.9	59.5	48.4
Francophones, aged 55 and over, inactive	35.4	38.3	36.2	24.1	21.1	27.6	43.4	34.4
Anglophones and allophones, aged 18-54	6.0	19.5	19.0	16.7	9.6	15.8	16.7	10.3
Anglophones and allophones, aged 55 and over	2.9	10.5	6.3	*	*	*	*	4.0
Total (per cent)	35.4	51.8	48.7	46.3	22.5	48.3	53.7	45.0
Number of respondents	1068	581	665	374	182	443	706	4025

*Group too small for analysis.

Quebecers' soul is not torn between sovereignism and federalism. Rather, Quebec society itself is divided, which is quite a different matter altogether.

more Francophones have a different attitude towards the sovereignist option. The same factors responsible for the split observed among Francophones also apparently have an effect on allophones and Anglophones.

Finally, a word on the Quebec City region, which is an enigma for the political analysts and strategists on Quebec City's Grande Allée. In the *post mortem* on the referendum, it was suggested that the Quebec City region had not delivered the quota of Yes votes expected by proponents of this option. Some analysts even argued that the referendum was in fact defeated in the Quebec City region, accusing the capital's public servants of having boycotted the Yes option. Table 6 also sheds some new light on these arguments.

It is a fact that the total Yes vote was lower in the Quebec City region than in the other regions with a francophone majority, except for the Island of Montreal (where Anglophones and immigrants are concentrated) and Outaouais. Had its vote been just slightly higher in the Quebec City region, the Yes side would have won by a small majority, as several analysts pointed out right after October 30, 1995. But our results show that over 60 per cent of Type I voters in the capital region said that they intended to vote Yes. Thus, the answer does not lie in any disaffection of this type of voter. Nor will it be found among Anglophones or allophones aged under 55: 16.7 per cent of them voted Yes, compared with only six per cent for the same group in Montreal. Moreover, there are very few older Anglophones in the Quebec City region.

Weak support for Yes or strong support for No (depending on one's viewpoint) characterizes two specific types in the Quebec City region compared to the other regions. These are types II and IV: Francophones who are not active in the labour force and Francophones earning a low income, regardless of age. These groups are relatively small, of course, though retirees carry greater demographic weight in the Quebec City region. It therefore appears that a more promising explanation for the lower level of Yes votes in the capital region would be the high level of support for the No side among retirees rather than any disaffection with the Yes side among public servants.

What conclusions can be drawn from this initial examination of the data?

First, Quebecers' soul is not torn between sovereignism and federalism. Rather, Quebec society itself is divided, which is quite a different matter altogether. The Quebec soul does not exist. Nor are Quebecers congenitally ambivalent. The explanation is more simple, more sociological and less ontological.

The sovereignist project (including the older *indépendantiste* project) is part of a true social movement which has been built and structured over the years in Quebec. This project is now carried by a social grouping, a group of citizens that share very specific attributes, which we explained in detail above. This group is present throughout Quebec and is made up of the generations who came of age politically after the Quiet Revolution and who reached voting age from 1960 onwards.

For reasons explained above, the sovereignist project is not as strongly supported by older Francophones who were socialized in the French-Canadian political space, not that of post-Quiet Revolution Quebec. Another reason for this divide is that when people are dependent on the state, locked in the realm of needs and outside the labour market or school, their ability to imagine themselves in the future is limited. They therefore find it more difficult to support a project which may radically change the established order. The same split between persons who came of age politically before and after the Quiet Revolution is found among Anglophones and allophones. Younger people who turned 18 after 1960 seem better able to accept the sovereignist project.

We want to stress that Quebec's soul is not divided; rather, Quebec society is divided over a project favoured by a large movement, a significant grouping of citizens. Like all societies, Quebec society is made up of people with quite different interests and motives for action. Canada itself has throughout its history been deeply divided over many issues (free trade being one recent example).

Thus, in attempting to assess future support for the sovereignist option, close attention should be paid to what is happening among the different types of voters. In which groups is support increasing and in which groups is it dropping? Is it just a question of the mood of the time (as characterized by the political context) or is it a long-term trend? We will now address these questions by briefly analyzing the results of the 1999 opinion polls.

Declining support for sovereignty has been widely discussed in the press in early 2000. But *is* support declining? To answer this question, we will examine the opinion polls conducted in 1999. The wording of the question

Table 7
Voting intentions, 1995-2000

Years	Yes	No	Others	Total Per cent	Total Number of respondents
1995	45.0	42.3	12.8	100	4025
1999 (April to June)	43.9	51.1	5.0	100	3010
1999 (August to December)	40.3	53.6	6.1	100	3013
February 2000	40.5	54.5	5.0	100	984

asked by the polling firm Léger et Léger in each of the polls conducted since the last referendum was as follows: "If a referendum were held today on the sovereignty of Quebec with an offer of economic and political partnership with the rest of Canada, would you vote *for* or *against* the sovereignty of Quebec?"

A number of factors affected public opinion in 1999. Mr. Bouchard's government decided to eliminate the deficit quite rapidly, and had to rationalize public spending in the face of reduced federal government contributions. Quebec government employees negotiated a new collective agreement in the difficult context of cutbacks in jobs and services to the population in order to achieve fiscal balance. During negotiations in the summer of 1999, there was a nurses' strike and in the autumn the federal government tabled its "Clarity Bill."

Because the first half of 1999 differed greatly from the second half, we examine two blocks of opinion polls: those conducted in early 1999, from April to June, and those conducted later in the year, from August to December, during a tougher labour relations context and also at a time when Stéphane Dion's Clarity Bill was being considered by the House of Commons.

It is important to realize that data obtained from polls conducted at various points throughout the year on voting intentions in an eventual referendum cannot strictly be compared with the results of polls conducted during a referendum campaign. Opinions can change a great deal during a referendum campaign, as Figure 1 showed. People will mobilize both for and against the referendum option in an emotionally-charged context, as was the case during the first two referendums in 1980 and 1995.

A final point needs to be emphasized. Commentators and analysts often compare the results of a given poll with the final score of the 1995 referendum (49.4 per cent of votes for the Yes side). This approach is questionable: Unlike the final vote, polls include undecided voters, and it is wrong to compare the proportion of firm Yes supporters (before distributing the undecided) with the actual results of October 30, 1995. Polls should at least be compared with other polls to assess the change in public opinion.

A careful examination of last year's polls shows that the diagnosis of declining support for the Yes side does not quite square with reality. On the contrary, the solid support for the Yes side hardly changed between October 1995 and the early months of 1999. The average of firm Yes votes was 44.9 per cent in the pre-referendum polls and 43.9 per cent in the first three polls of 1999—a difference smaller than the usual margin of error (see Table 7). In polls conducted after July 1999, however, the proportion of Yes supporters dropped to 40.3 per cent as the Bouchard government went through the difficult period of negotiations with government employees and the labour dispute with nurses. It should be stressed that this is the number of firm Yes votes, before any allocation of undecided voters. At the time of writing, the most recent available Léger and Léger poll was that conducted in February 2000. It shows that the level of Yes support remains low, at 40.5 per cent before distributing the undecided.

We should not focus solely on disaffection with the Yes side, however. Rather, the strong increase in the proportion of firm No supporters, which rose from 42.3 per cent in 1995 to slightly over 50 per cent in 1999, should also be considered. In February 2000, support for No reached 54.5 per cent, with many undecided voters apparently having joined the ranks of the No side. The question is whether this rise in No support was due to a passing emotional reaction to a difficult context or, on the contrary, to growing strong opposition to sovereignty.

Once again, it is necessary to find out what is concealed behind the averages by closely

The question is whether the rise in No support was due to a passing emotional reaction to a difficult context or, on the contrary, to growing strong opposition to sovereignty.

Table 8
Voting intentions on sovereignty by type of voter and date of poll

Group	YES			NO		
	1995 Oct. 23-26	1999 Apr-June	1999 Aug.-Dec.	1995 Oct.	1999 Apr-June	1999 Aug. Dec.
Francophones, aged 18-54, students and active persons,$20,000+	66.4	59.6	53.2	26.8	37.0	42.0
Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	45.4	52.0	50.0	28.4	40.1	39.4
Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	36.2	39.6	42.1	57.4	57.7	54.5
Francophones, aged 55 and over, inactive	32.0	33.1	31.2	44.9	60.2	63.1
Anglophones and allophones, aged 18-54	7.3	16.0	13.0	82.1	80.6	80.7
Anglophones and allophones, 55 and over	4.7	7.5	8.2	79.1	85.5	84.3
Total	46.1	43.9	40.3	40.7	51.1	53.6

Almost all of the recent disaffection with the Yes side has been among Type I voters, those identified as custodians of the sovereignist project.

scrutinizing the changes in opinion in the six types of voters we have identified (see Table 8). We begin by analysing the change in support for the Yes side between 1995 and 1999. (Our reference point for 1995 is the data from the last poll conducted just before the vote—between October 23 and 26—because it best reflects the state of public opinion as expressed on voting day.) Our main finding is that almost all of the recent disaffection with the Yes side was among Type I voters, those identified as custodians of the sovereignist project. When the average result observed is compared with that of the last 1995 poll, the decline from early 1999 onward is striking. By contrast, the results for Francophones more than 55 years old show no change at all in Yes support over the four years. Support even increased a little among those in the labour force, just as it increased among Anglophones and especially among allophones, though here again any interpretation of these data must take the usual margins of error into consideration.

Disaffection with the Yes side continued during the second half of the year, which was marked by a new drop in support for sovereignty among the Type I voters. For the other types, voting intentions hardly changed. They seemed to be characterized by long-standing ideological convictions and to be less influenced by government policies than Type I voters, among whom the decrease in support for the sovereignty option is concentrated. Yes support is quite firm among the other types of voters, and has even increased among allophones and Anglophones, a case which should be re-examined in a more in-depth analysis.

In fact, the process that was at work during the last referendum has been seen here again: It was among Type I voters, the bulwark of the sovereignist project, that all the action took place. Did Type I voters want to openly express their dissatisfaction with the government in power? Were they influenced by the federal government's offensive in tabling a bill to "clarify" the conditions for holding an eventual new referendum?

The preceding analysis is confirmed by an examination of changes in support for the No side. While the proportion of Yes supporters remained quite stable from 1995 to early 1999, the proportion of No supporters increased considerably, rising from 42.2 per cent to 51.1 per cent in total (see see Table 8).

The proportion of voters intending to vote No continued to rise in 1999, but it rose most of all among Type I voters between 1995 and 1999, an increase which continued during both halves of 1999 (with the No vote rising from 37 per cent to 42 per cent). No such change took place among other types of voters.

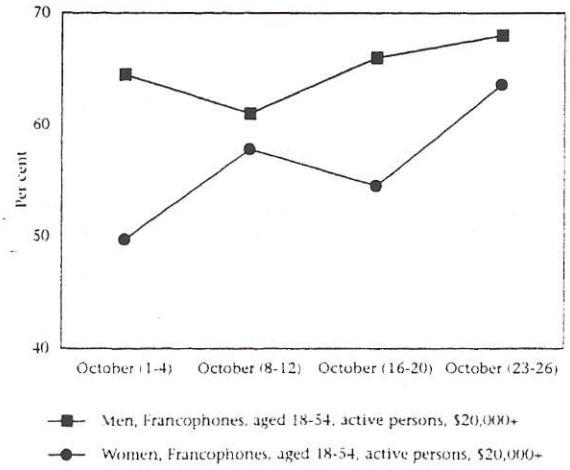
Table 9
Voting intentions on sovereignty according to gender and date of aggregate polls, 1995 and 1999

Year		Yes	No	Others	Total Per cent	Total Number of respondents
October 1995	M	51.4	38.8	9.8	100	1943
	F	39.0	45.5	15.8	100	2080
April-June 2000	M	46.0	49.8	4.2	100	1473
	F	41.8	52.3	5.9	100	1545
August-December 1999	M	44.6	50.7	4.7	100	1471
	F	36.2	56.4	7.4	100	1546

This trend of declining support for sovereignty in Type I voters during 1999 suggests that, in this group of workers and students, there was a significant mood change among sovereignists dissatisfied with government policies. Otherwise, why would the decrease in Yes support and increase in No support have been concentrated in Type I alone? If the hypothesis regarding the effect of the federal bill was true, there should have been an increase in No support in the second half of 1999. That didn't happen, however: No support remained quite stable in all types, except in Type I, where it increased. The hypothesis of a protest movement by workers and students would thus adequately explain what happened.

The question now is whether support for the No side will remain above the 50 per cent mark. We leave predictions to our political science colleagues and political commentators. Our task is to identify the sociological processes that will be at work beyond the current period. Our answer is that if the disaffection with the Yes side among Type I voters was in fact a protest movement by students and workers against the Péquiste government in power, this group's demographic weight means a sudden reversal of the situation is possible. As Figure 1 demonstrated, these voters have shown that they are capable of mobilizing during a referendum campaign. The possibility of this happening again should not be excluded. We are dealing with a social movement that was launched a long time ago and is well established in all the regions of Quebec (except, as we have seen, in Outaouais). The voting group that has been its most persistent supporters is quite large enough to tip the balance in favour of it, if it wishes.

Figure 2
Proportion of people intending to vote YES in the 1995 referendum, according to type of citizen, data for four polling dates in October 1995



It is well known that fewer women than men vote in favour of sovereignty. Various polls conducted in the past indicate that the overall difference between men and women is approximately 10 per cent. Table 9 shows voting intentions according to gender from the aggregate polls of 1995 and 1999. It should be recalled that these results do not give an estimate of the vote but instead average the distribution of firm Yes or No voting intentions over a certain period of time, before distributing the undecided. This analysis shows that the gaps between men and women have been decreasing during the last four years. The increase in No support among women in the second half of 1999, which was marked by the nurses' strike and other events, deserves a more in-depth analysis.

If the disaffection with the Yes side among Type I voters was in fact a protest movement by students and workers against the Péquiste government in power, a sudden reversal of the situation is possible.

Table 10
The Yes vote on sovereignty, average of seven polls conducted April-December 1999

Groups	Montreal	Belt of Montreal	Periphery of Montreal	Quebec City	Outaouais	Centre of Quebec	Remote regions	Average
Francophones, aged 18-54, students and active persons $20,000+	57.5	59.1	56.7	49.9	36.1	61.1	60.0	56.4
Francophones, aged 18-54, inactive and low-income workers	53.3	52.9	49.5	44.3	34.5	52.0	51.0	50.2
Francophones, aged 55 and over, active	41.1	33.3	36.4	31.4	57.1	52.5	41.9	40.9
Francophones, aged 55 and more, inactive	39.1	37.4	28.5	31.1	14.0	25.2	32.4	32.2
Anglophone and allophones, aged 18-54	12.9	10.9	11.5	13.2	28.1	23.7	34.3	14.4
Anglophones and allophones, aged 55 and over	6.0	12.1	6.1	*	5.9	*	*	7.9
Total (per cent)	35.5	45.6	43.0	41.8	28.8	47.7	50.3	42.1
Number of respondents	1660	1170	751	830	243	646	729	6029

*Group too small for analysis.

Age is also a factor in the differences between men and women. The majority of senior citizens are against the sovereignty project and there are more women in this group. Thus, it is important to examine gender differences while controlling for the age effect.

It is necessary to go beyond the usual analysis by variables in order to understand the impact of gender on the vote. Women are not a homogenous group. Although their behaviour is certainly shaped by their gender, the fact is that women, like men, are members of society and their behaviour is affected by other characteristics which are also shared by men. These characteristics, in particular their occupation, help explain their electoral behaviour. If we're right, there should be fewer differences between men and women in Type I, the principal promoters of the sovereignist project. Our data show that this is indeed the case.

As the 1995 referendum campaign unfolded, the gaps between the Yes voting intentions of men and women closed markedly for the entire population—from 14.8 per cent in the first poll at the beginning of October 1995 to 7.2 per cent in the last poll. (Once again, it can be seen that opinions changed significantly during the referendum campaign.)

The rapprochement between men's and women's voting intentions occurred mainly in Type I, where there was a surge of support for the Yes side among women. Type I men already largely supported the sovereignty option and had done so since the early days of the referendum campaign (see Figure 2). In contrast, Yes support dropped drastically among women who were over 55 years old and active on the labour market. But since there are more women in Type I than in Type III (older women in the labour force), the increase in Yes support had greater impact than the increase in No support. This result shows clearly that women's vote is highly diversified and is largely explained by their role in society.

Table 10 shows the distribution of voting intentions by region (using aggregate data). Due to the low number of respondents in some of the regions, it was impossible to distinguish between the two periods of 1999.

For 1999, a more accurate breakdown of data for the Greater Montreal Area is available. On the whole, Yes voting intentions seem lower on the Island of Montreal (35.5 per cent) than elsewhere in the metropolitan area, where they average out to 45 per cent in all the polls, before distributing the undecided. This is a well-known and widely debated phenomenon. However, this result is mainly explained by the demographic make-up of the Montreal area and not by a difference in citizens' behaviour. There are

more Anglophones on the Island of Montreal, and the majority of Anglophones vote No. If voting intentions are broken down by type of voter, Type I voters behave essentially the same way in the three areas of Greater Montreal. In comparison with residents in the suburbs or periphery of Montreal, a higher proportion of older Francophones in Montreal support the Yes side, whether or not they are in the labour force. Montreal Francophones have hardly deserted the Yes side.

The level of Yes support is also high (around 60 per cent) in all the other regions except Outaouais, where it is lower for the reasons explained above. The Quebec City region appears to have been somewhat different from the other regions in 1999. Disaffection with the Yes side was stronger in the first three types and particularly in Type I, whose importance has already been discussed. The question is whether negotiations with government employees, the attempt to rationalize the budget and the cutback in public service jobs have caused concern among the region's residents, to the point where Type I voters (most of whom are active) withdrew their support for the Yes side as a form of protest.

Finally, a new trend can be seen: the rise, especially outside Montreal, in Yes voting intentions among allophones and Anglophones in all regions. This is a new phenomenon that needs to be examined further using other databases that include more people. Nevertheless, the aggregate samples contain enough cases for the trend to be noted.

Existing studies on the 1995 referendum and the political behaviour of Quebecers have produced much collectivist social psychology, but little in the way of sociological analysis beyond simple description. As a result, our thinking about the 1995 results has been confined within the historical paradigm of French Canada, which stresses either the historical ambiguity of "Quebec" or the manifestation of the traditional ambivalence of the French Canadian "people." Or, better still, it has been celebrated in terms of the language and doctrine of the democratic pluralism of contemporary Quebec society. Normative perspectives such as these, although perfectly legitimate in themselves, have little analytical value. To remain wedded to these perspectives as the basis for philosophizing about the Quebec soul ultimately serves to cloud the issues.

The theoretical approach we have adopted suggests that, as a political entity, Quebec is a whole only in as much as the orientations of its institutions—which regulate internal social practices and define the political status of the province in relation to the outside world—are subject to conflicts and debates between its constituent social groups. It is possible, of course, to express an opinion on the cultural orientation of a civilization ("Eskimos see the world as..."); but it is dangerous to try to portray the political choices of a society made up of different social groups in the same terms. Analysis which focuses on particular variables undoubtedly leads to the recognition of the anthropological, historical, cultural and social characteristics that have so heavily influenced political attitudes. By the same token, however, this kind of analysis overlooks the fact that, in politics, citizens are all of these things at the same time, and that there are typical combinations of certain of these "traits" that are linked to the general structure of society and to the social rifts reproduced in political institutions. By choosing to study social groups and their possible links to social movements, we avoid raising to the stature of mysterious and "ontological" differences that are, after all, less the product of the current political logic of society than yet another expression of historical forces.

Just as support for sovereignty (or its rejection) is strongly marked by the "typical" orientations that are associated with membership in specific social groups, changes in patterns of support and rejection since 1995 are also strongly differentiated according to the same types. Focusing on the overall trend therefore gives us a very inadequate picture of the nature of these changes. On the basis of the data we have examined, we have advanced the hypothesis that the concentration of the decline in support for Quebec sovereignty in a single category of voters (Type I), indicates that the members of this category are highly sensitive to the direction of public policy, and that their support for sovereignty is characterized less by a permanent ideological conviction rooted in historical experience than by a stance in favour of the political structuring of the world of work.

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In comparison with residents in the suburbs or periphery of Montreal, a higher proportion of older Francophones in Montreal support the Yes side. Montreal Francophones have hardly deserted the Yes side.