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Tutor: Bo Bjurulf

Department of Political Science

Characters: 88 311

Public Attitude Towards the Union

The EU and Canada Compared

Sébastien Beaudet

Abstract

Euroscepticism has been portrayed as the corollary of increased integration. The rapid EU development of the last fifteen years has, somehow, caused a breakdown in public support for integration. From a relative mass quiescence associated to the traditional permissive consensus over integration, European citizens have shown growing discontentment towards the EU and its orientations.

This study is an attempt to conceptualise the main explanatory factors accounting for support – and shortage of support leading to sceptical attitudes. I develop a bi-dimensional model of utilitarian (specific) and affective (diffuse) factors which are associated to different degrees of scepticism: from hard to soft attitudes.

The main innovation of this study lies in its comparative approach. Several authors have tried to understand the emergent phenomenon by comparing Member States with one another with relative success. I take the debate over the Atlantic and compare the EU and Canada, another highly complex and plurinational post-modern entity. The model developed using European theoretical works will reveal very accurate to conceptualise Canadian alienation as well as significant for the EU.

Key words: EU, Canada, Euroscepticism, alienation, support, attitude, utilitarian, affective.

Résumé

Le processus d'intégration européenne est intimement lié à l'augmentation de l'euroscepticisme. Le développement rapide qu'a connu l'UE ces quinze dernières années a d'une certaine façon provoqué une cassure entre le soutien populaire et le processus d'intégration. Traditionnellement, le 'consensus permissif' s'était traduit en appui plutôt généralisé. Cependant, les Européens semblent de plus en plus réticents et mécontents envers l'UE et ses orientations.

Cette étude présente une conceptualisation des principaux éléments en mesure d'expliquer le soutien populaire et ses limites, qui mènent au scepticisme. J'y développe un modèle bidimensionnel présentant les facteurs 'utilitariens' (spécifiques) et 'affectifs' (diffus) qui permettent d'évaluer le degré d'intensité des attitudes eurosceptiques : de dur à mou.

La contribution particulière de cette étude est liée à son approche comparative. Un certain nombre d'auteurs ont cherché à comprendre l'émergence du phénomène en comparant quelques uns ou plusieurs Etats-membres. Je transporte le débat outre-Atlantique et compare l'UE et le Canada ; une autre entité post-moderne, plurinationale et grandement complexe. Le modèle développé à l'aide d'instruments théoriques Européens s'avère très concluant dans le cas Canadien alors qu'il démontre un intérêt significatif dans le cas Européen.

Mots clefs : UE, Canada, euroscepticisme, aliénation, support, attitude.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Subject and Purpose of the Study

The European Union has achieved what has been the goal of several individuals throughout history: unifying Europe. However, the grandeur of the project pushed forward by European Elites now seems to be facing growing discontent from the European populace. What was perhaps a lack of interest or understanding from citizens in the early days of the project has now grown towards tangible disapproval in the most recent years. ‘Euroscepticism’, by opposition to ‘Europhilism’, has grown fiercely in recent times and has yet become an important voice/movement in Europe. The purpose of this study is to understand why Euroscepticism has taken such proportions, and most precisely: on what grounds?

Essentially, Euroscepticism is perceived to be the corollary of increased integration (Taggart 1998: 363). Above and beyond this assertion, there must be factors, variables capable of providing explanations to the growing phenomenon of alienation found – evenly or not, in a Member State to another. There are indeed various factors and possible accounts interfering, and sometimes overlapping in such analysis. The economic rationality (specific) and identity (diffuse) explanations are the most common aspects studied in the literature to account for support variations. Moreover, party politics (and national politics) is also predominant in the field for its interaction and influence on public opinion.

Ultimately, I am interested in the uniqueness of the phenomenon. Or reversely, how unique is Euroscepticism? Can similar attitudes of alienation be found in a different system elsewhere on the globe? And if so, can something be learned or help clarify the trend?

1.2 Relevance

There are growing signs of indubitable dissent among European populations on the integration path the Union is taking. However, protest behaviours are uneven among Member States. The last four referendums on the Constitutional Treaty proposal have shown a great ditch in support: between the strong Spanish approval (77%) to the surprisingly sturdy Dutch rejection (62%). Already in 1992, the French *petit oui* to the Maastricht Treaty referendum – and the Danish

rejection, had revealed a disconnection between Europeans and the project's orientations. The misfit only worsened in the spring 2005 with the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty proposal by two of six original Member States. This has seriously accentuated the worries of many on future prospects for the Union and has led Europe to face an alleged 'personality' crisis. Also, the 2004 European Parliament elections have shown increased support for Eurosceptic parties and other opposition parties, within the 15, but also within the new Member States. We also have witnessed national political parties taking positions against the EU on certain issues whereas some national parties have made the rejection of the EU membership component of their electoral platforms. Nevertheless, the link between support to Eurosceptic parties, referendum results, and Eurobarometer data is far from obvious. If popular Euroscepticism has been relatively stable since the early 1990s – according to Eurobarometer data, party-based Euroscepticism's relative success gives the impression that the problematic might be underestimated. Furthermore, referendum campaigns have revealed greater popular apprehension and discontent towards European integration and the path it is taking. One may allege, such as Taggart and Szczerbiak (2005) that “the long term trend is one of stable levels of support and opposition to the EU”.

The EU and Canada can both be described as post-modern and plurinational entities. Canada is “another highly complex multi-national and poly-ethnic entity, which has never succeeded in becoming a nation” (Fossum 2005: 1). Also, the high degree of decentralisation prevailing in the Canadian federation permits such comparison. It is precisely on these fundamentals that Canada and the EU can be compared: as regard to their respective internal and structural pressures. I am expecting to make findings out of this comparison between popular perceptions that may enlighten Europeans on realities and experiences that have long roots.

The last referendum on Quebec's secession (1995) could hardly have had closer outcomes. The “No” side won by 54 288 votes (50,6%) which meant for the Quebec sovereignists they would have to stick to *status quo* a little longer and try again, for a third time. Or, in the words of Jacques Parizeau, former Premier¹ of Quebec: “Let spit in our hands and try again”. Furthermore, the current political situation in Canada is quite revealing about the delusion Canadians have of their 'Union'. The latest federal elections held in January 2006 brought to power the Conservative Party²; a party with strong roots in the 'conservative' west but far from the common values of the Centre-East. The Conservative Party was even able to make gains in the 'progressive' Province of Quebec on the sole base of rethinking the 'Union'. The commitments of Stephen Harper, now Canada's Prime Minister, can in good part explain his success despite his social positions and agenda. There are several factors that influence the outcomes in a Canadian election, most of the time this has little to do with left-right positioning.

¹ The Premier is the First Minister of a Canadian province. To avoid confusion with Canadian Prime Minister (There is no distinction in French language: *Premier ministre*).

² (CPC) Minority government: only a third of the House of Commons' seats.

1.3 Methodology

Many authors and scholars have studied and continue to try to understand the bases and fundamentals of Euroscepticism, often by comparing domestic political realities of a few – if not all – member states. However, authors may have neglected to look outside Europe to find significant tools for understanding the phenomenon. The uniqueness of the European Union makes comparison with other entities difficult: not quite a federation, nor simply an international organisation, the EU is generally keener to export its model than do the other way around. Scholars and students of comparative politics are often inclined to look over the Atlantic to compare the EU with the US: the only ‘significant other’. However, in this case, a comparison with the US’ northern neighbour seems much more relevant. Both entities, the EU and Canada can be considered as plurinational and ‘unfinished’ polity, whereas the US shows greater cohesion in these regards. The struggle over Mega constitutional debates and identity crisis in Canada since the early days of the ‘confederation’ may enlighten Europeans on a pacific, but highly complex story.

1.3.1 Comparative Approach

In order to provide the best results possible, and despite evident ‘travelling problems’, I will conduct my research using a relatively loose comparative approach of the European Union and Canadian integration. More specifically, I will study the main factors (variables) that have impacts on popular attitudes (support) towards the two respective ‘Unions’. In so doing, I am aiming to discover if Euroscepticism really is unique or if similar phenomena can be found elsewhere. If results are concluding, this might give European scholars and analysts, tools to better understand what is perceived to be European *sui generis*.

1.3.2 Most Similar Case Study

The method I am using is the most similar case study. With only two cases, the study will be oriented on the similarities and differences of the selected variables on the two study cases. I will therefore often use different literature, authors, facts, as well as surveys and electoral outcomes to better understand the implication of those variables on the attitude towards the ‘Union’. Basically, following Lijphart’s (1971) conception of the method: as one “of discovering empirical relationships among variables, not as method of measurement”. Furthermore, the approach will be analogous and follow the same logic as “the man that realises the limitations of not having a thermometer and still manages to say a great deal simply by saying hot and cold. Warmer and cooler”. (Sartori *in* Lijphart 1971: 683)

If there are many explanatory factors to partially explain variation in support: identity and economic rationality are generally identified as major factors suitable to both Canada and the EU. I will therefore devote large attention to those factors that are predominant in the literature of both entities. In addition, I have preferred to study popular scepticism rather than party-based scepticism in order to go to the really heart of the phenomenon.

1.3.3 The Travelling Problem

Already, the ambitious task of comparing the two entities finds limitations as regard to the so-called ‘travelling problem’. Firstly, a semantic problem occurs when it come to identify concepts – as closely related they might be, the problematic will have to be surmounted. Euroscepticism, for example is related to the degree of disapproval one has towards the EU: it sees ‘the EU as a bad thing’. In Canada, such attitude would rather be labelled: ‘alienation’, ‘autonomist’, ‘independentist’, etc. In order to overcome those limitations, I often opt for an intermediary formulation. That is why I am keener to use ‘attitude towards the Union”, for instance. Nevertheless, what might seem to be a limitation may as well become a strength: forced to find wordings capable of including different realities, those, sometimes become more complete and inclusive. The attitude towards the EU for instance includes attitudes from Euroscepticism to Europhilism passing by indifference which ultimately suggests that attitudes are not static but rather that they can be influenced and forged. This is, somehow, an integrated part of the exercise: to which extent attitudes may be influenced – or not, and by what factors.

Also, similar problems occur when it comes to compare data, statistics, and surveys since political realities and tools are often fundamentally different. I will highlight those difficulties in the empirical analyses.

1.4 Plan of the Study

This study is further divided in five sections wherein chapters 2 and 3 are designed to set a common ground for comparison. The three following chapters are dedicated to individual analyses of the EU and Canada which will be further complemented by a more systematic comparative analysis of the two cases in chapter 6.

More in specifics, chapter two will enlighten the reader on the development of both entities and more importantly on the development of its corollaries: scepticism and alienation. The distinction between soft and hard-scepticism is introduced and will be further used in a set of assumptions. Chapter 3 is an attempt to encompass the wide range of literature and models relative to support to the Union that have been developed over the years. I present the most important

explanatory factors accounting for support, and shortage of support, along the bi-dimensional model introduced by Lindberg and Scheingold in 1970. The 'utilitarian' (specific) and 'affective' (diffuse) will become important when combined with 'degree' of scepticism.

Chapter 4 covers the main elements susceptible to bring about alienation in Canada. Identity and economic rationality are of first importance although only alienation based on identity may lead to hard-scepticism. Western alienation and Quebec secessionist movements are presented. A similar exercise is conducted for the EU. Again, the significance of identities and utilitarian factors are portrayed as at least equally important. I also look at the referendum results (2005) to illustrate the dilemmas. Notwithstanding the separated aspect of the two analyses, the connexion between the two is important as the comparative logic is well present.

Before concluding, I look at the findings of both analyses in a more methodical comparative manner in order to highlight the main similarities but more importantly the differences. I also raise some paradoxes found between Canada and the EU and, to some extent, adopt a rather normative approach.

2 Attitude Towards the ‘Union’

2.1 Introduction

This part is meant to enlighten the reader on the relevancy of a comparison between the EU and Canada as regard to the features and realities the two entities share, or not. Firstly, the European integration process will be covered as well as its implication on Euroscepticism, which will also be defined. Then secondly, a similar pattern will be used for Canada – although more thoroughly, to make clear to the reader on what stands can the Canadian experience be compared with the European, and the other way around.

Besides the descriptive aspect of this part, the ‘travelling problem’ associated to the respective concepts will be revealed and partly solved by settling for unique uses when it is possible and needed.

2.2 The European Union and Euroscepticism

There are multiple sources and forms of Euroscepticism. Primarily, one should make a distinction between popular and party-based Euroscepticism which often show distinctions in support as well as in bases. Euroscepticism commonly refers to a certain degree of popular disengagement in the project: from complete rejection of the European Union, to a more issue specific demonstration of discontentment. There have been several attempts to define and categorise the phenomenon. The overall contribution of Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak is undeniable in this field of European studies. Most of their works on Euroscepticism have been oriented on the misfit between the popular and party-based phenomena. They strongly advocate that it is necessary to include parties in any evaluation of the impact of Euroscepticism on European integration (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002: 3). Political parties are vehicles, and not “empty vessels” in the European integration process (Taggart 1998: 364). Not biffing their contributions, on the contrary, I nevertheless focus on popular Euroscepticism which is stressed to be caused by integration. Party-based Euroscepticism could also be studied but will be kept out of the scope of this study.

Generally, Euroscepticism is quantified (Eurobarometer), interpreted and therefore studied as synonymous to believing the European Union is ‘a bad thing’. The limits of such interpretation are obvious and hardly relevant for one that aims

to understand what truly Euroscepticism is. Rather, as Paul Taggart suggests, Euroscepticism is “an encompassing term that expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (Taggart 1998: 366). Also, a too narrow interpretation of Euroscepticism evacuates variation in support which is of first importance for one that is interested in gauging public opinion. Moreover, the available data from Eurobarometer often lack of consistency in their incapacity to camp respondents on one side or the other, giving too much weight to neutral responses.

The relatively new apparition of Euroscepticism, not necessarily as a term but mostly as a phenomenon, may be said to have emerged (in intensity) consecutively to increased integration. This is not surprising but rather revealing about the origins and bases of the contestation. Prior to Maastricht, the EC was not really on the attention forefront. The EC/EU’s relatively weak supranational institutions and small policy provisions and almost insignificant budget were probably perceived as armless in the populace. Moreover, the highly decentralised decision-making process combined to the unanimity prerequisite among Members did not cause steaming overreactions from Europeans, especially considering that most major national parties (and elites) were favouring and being strong advocates of the Community. Maastricht and the further creation of the EU clearly acted as a breakdown component. From the Danish rejection of the Treaty to the French *petit oui*: an important clash between the people and the project appeared to the face of Europeans. Eurosceptic parties grew in number, and Eurosceptic MEPs would be called to seat in greater number in the European Parliament. For many, integration has just gone too far.

For the purpose of this study, I will use Taggart and Szczerbiak’s (2002) twofold typology of *Euroscepticism* which was originally formulated for describing political parties’ positions. The same model shall nevertheless also be used for Canadian popular alienation. The distinction between hard and soft-scepticism should in short be understood as complete rejection versus discontentment of the Union. The model will also be combined to utilitarian (specific) and affective (diffuse) explanatory factors in the following chapter.

- Hard Euroscepticism: “is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European Integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.”
- Soft Euroscepticism: “is where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU’s trajectory.”

2.3 The Canadian Project

The Canadian confederation will ‘celebrate’ its 140 years in 2007. It can be said to have been through intense development and integration since its early days, and beyond. The Canadian confederation is recognised as a grand achievement for conciliating unity and diversity. The ‘confederal’ model adopted by the fathers of the Constitution was clearly oriented in this perspective. The previous attempt of united Lower-Canada (Quebec) and Upper-Canada (Ontario) in 1840 (United-Canada) into a single Assembly with equal number of seats revelled to be completely unsustainable as no decisions could be taken due to ethno-linguistic and class conflicts (*cf.* Kermis and Gagnon 1996: 444).

Moreover, the prospect of an American invasion combined to the need for an internal market caused by London’s suppression of preferential tariffs led to the British North American Act (BNA) and the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. Among with Quebec and Ontario, two other colonies joined the Union: New-Brunswick and Nova-Scotia. From four original members, six other provinces (and three territories) also ‘joined’ over time: the last one, Newfoundland did in 1949, after three referendums on the adhesion question.

2.3.1 Canadian ‘Scepticism’

Scepticism is probably not the best term to label the rather negative evaluation and attitude one might have towards the ‘Canadian Union’. Firstly, Canada’s political integration process seems to have reached its limits quite some time ago and secondly, because most Canadians recognise the ‘Union’ as a country; being legitimate or not. Thus, it is more common – and part of the Canadian reality to articulate those attitudinal conceptions around terms such as ‘sovereignism’ and ‘autonomism’, as opposed to ‘federalism’ and ‘centralism’. Even if this use is more profoundly salient to Quebec in which the attitude is strongly related to cultural, linguistic and historical traits, some other provinces and regions of the Union may as well be labelled as autonomists, a softer attitude which implies respect of provincial jurisdictions, and to certain extent; decentralisation of the Federation.³ The trend is also referred to as ‘alienation’, which in itself refers most primarily to ‘Western alienation’: those provinces, far from the decision-making process and net contributors to the pan-Canadian welfare⁴.

Nevertheless, one that persists using ‘scepticism’ for Canada should then make the distinction between soft-scepticism (autonomism) and hard-scepticism

³ Confederation and federation are interchangeable terms in Canada, probably for semantic reasons but also because the ‘confederal’ spirit has somehow disappeared in the turn of the 19th century.

⁴ British-Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, but more importantly Alberta as regard to economic matters.

(secessionism) which is merely an option outside Quebec. Finally, both attitudes can be portrayed as some form of alienation, of course.

2.3.2 Integration Process

From two relatively equal partners (nations) in the first political attempts, the Union grew up to ten provinces (plus three territories) where seventy percent (70%) of the population still resides in the two original member states and where English language is the majority in nine out of ten provinces. The weight of the French-speaking population (85% living in Quebec) within the federal institutions was therefore greatly diluted over time due to the Union's 'enlargements'. This was a prelude to the Crisis of Mega constitutionalism that has emerged in the 1960s resulting from the threat of Quebec secessionist movement. Subsequent constitutional reforms such as the repatriation of the Constitution (1982) and inclusion of the Canadian Charter of Rights have only contributed to worsen the problem.

In addition, the nature of the federal Union has significantly changed over the years, and to the profit of the federal level of government. What originally was a highly decentralised confederal polity has greatly integrated throughout the 20th century. The Great Depression of 1929 and the Second World War have been two major turning points in the Canadian history in this regard. Concerned with social problems and costly war efforts, the Federal government was able to 'borrow' room of taxing from the provinces: a provision that was never returned after the Wars. Instead, the federal government used the money to create new social programmes and increase its relative influence in the governance system. The provinces' reactions to this new role were different from a province to another and from time to time. But generally, in English-Canada⁵, financial help was welcome even if this meant for provinces to give up autonomy on specific jurisdictions such as health care provisions or education. Most of the time, this invasion in provincial competences took form in shared financing programmes. This enabled the federal government to override the Constitutional established division of powers as well as to set standards, norms, often conditional for its financial support.

This new role (spending power) of the federal government has, somehow, contributed to the establishment of a common identity in English-Canada while it has had the reverse effect in Quebec which was sometimes permitted to opt-out the pan-Canadian programmes as long as it would establish comparable programmes.

⁵ The author recognises the presence of French-speaking minorities outside Quebec, as well as English-speaking in Quebec.

3 Theoretical explanatory Factors

3.1 Introduction

Consequently to the rapid and extensive integration of the EU in spheres traditionally exclusive to sovereign States, the accuracy of the theoretical material related to public support for European integration may now be perceived as anachronistic. Classically, the main contributions to this field of studies have been following logics proper to economic rationality. This is perhaps not surprising because prior to Maastricht, the EC/EU essentially was an economic project of market liberalisation. Nevertheless, the identity factor seems to be increasingly important as the Union integrates. In an effort to encapsulate the most relevant literature and influential models on support for integration, I will use Lindberg and Scheingold's (1970) model that distinguishes 'utilitarian' (utility-specific) from 'affective' (diffuse) explanatory factors.

The 'utilitarian' aspect of support for integration can still offer a great deal of explanations in this regard as well as to explain 'lack of support'. On the other hand, the 'affective' perspective has been dismissed in the 1990s as irrelevant but seems to become increasingly important when it comes to explain the reverse phenomenon: lower support repeatedly observed since 1992, and Euroscepticism. Both approaches will be presented in this section as well as the works and hypotheses of their major contributors. This should lead to a more comprehensive analysis of support for the European and Canadian 'projects' which is the main concern of this study.

Attention should therefore be paid to both perspectives especially because both diffuse and specific supports for integration are portrayed to diminish since the Maastricht Treaty (Niedermayer, 1995: 67-69). Consequently, researchers are increasingly recognising the existence and interaction of both phenomena. Hooghe and Marks (2004: 415) have argued that citizens do take into account economic consequences of integration but that group membership and identity appear more important. Similarly, McLaren (2002) recognises the value of utilitarian contributions but emphasis on the importance of 'perceived cultural threats'. Generally though, it seems that European citizens are paying growing attention to the European integration process as the National-State erodes. As a result, the 'permissive consensus' that was traditionally associated to popular lack of concern and interest in the process is withering away, as corollary to integration (Carrubba, 2001: 142).

3.2 The 'Utilitarian' Explanatory Factors

The utilitarian (utility-specific) perspective covers a wide range of work conducted since the 1970. From economic costs and benefits calculations to similar calculations as regard to institutions, political systems and stability; citizens are perceived as to making calculations, accounts, of what is best for themselves, their community, and their country. Lindberg and Scheingold introduced the conception of utilitarian support as opposed to affective support where the former explores attitudes towards the European projects and undertakings, and the latter investigates support on the ground of community feelings (see Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970).

3.2.1 Economic Rationality

The major contributions to the utilitarian perspective on European support have been made by Gabel's works which have also inspired considerable subsequent works. He has focussed on economic rationality and therefore studied market liberalisation and its consequences on citizens. Gabel and Palmer (1995) investigated the consequences of EU market liberalisation (capital, goods and labour) on support for integration. According to the authors, citizen's support for integration is positively related to the welfare gains they make from integrative policy. The calculations are grounded in specific socioeconomic situations and will consequently shape their attitude towards integration on the basis of welfare gains. Following the logic, a negative calculation of such consequences is likely to bring the citizen to take its distance from the project, to become sceptical.

Gabel and Palmer (1995) claim that liberalisation of EU markets creates winners and losers. High-skilled and educated people are favoured at the expense of un-skilled citizens which has direct effect on their level of support. In other words, high-skilled and educated citizens are more likely to support integration whereas un-skilled citizens may be expected to show lower support. Hence, unskilled workers are expected to be more Eurosceptic and managers to be more Euro-supportive in richer member states while the reverse phenomenon is supposed to take shape in poorer member states (*cf.* Hooghe and Marks 2004: 415).

Similarly, liberalisation of capital favours citizens with higher incomes because of greater investment opportunities. The counter-part for low-income citizens is a reduced welfare related to wages that is also expected to worsen. In addition, those same citizens become more dependants on social welfare spending which is also constrained by capital mobility (Gabel and Palmer 1995).

Finally, Gabel and Palmer (1995) argue that free movement of goods and people influence citizens differently whether they reside close to borders with a neighbouring Member State. The benefits from interactions between neighbouring countries are likely to positively influence citizens living close to such borders, while the others might simply not perceive those benefits.

Citizens are also portrayed to be sensible to possible gains from economical incentives and financial redistributions such as in the field of agriculture, for instance. Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect net recipients of European spending to be more inclined to support European integration, while those in donor countries to be somehow more sceptical (Brinegar et al. 2004 in Hooghe and Marks 2004). Thus, following a similar logic found in federal states where poorer regions are generally keener to see the scope of redistribution increased, as opposed to most prosperous regions which are likely to favour decentralisation (*cf.* Hooghe and Marks 2004: 416).

Most researches on popular support have assumed that support is a function of economic calculations (Sánchez-Cuenca 2000: 147). Whether citizens take into account specific variables such as; inflation, unemployment, GDP growth as suggested by (Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993) and to the degree of confidence they have about the economic future, can be expected to influence the level of support/confidence they have on European integration. Nevertheless, the salience of the phenomenon is far from self-evident. The poor results obtained by Eichenberg and Dalton, (1993, in Sánchez-Cuenca 2000) were contradicted by Gabel (1998b) which has proven the exact opposite: declining inflation and unemployment, and rising GDP growth are associated with lower support for integration (Gabel 1998b in Sánchez-Cuenca 2000). Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) attributes these, perhaps, surprising results to a different evaluation that lies on public satisfaction and opinion of their national political institutions and governments. The author goes further and asserts that economic evaluations cannot account for some dimensions of public opinion on integration.

3.2.2 'Politico-Institutionalist' Rationality

The 'utilitarian' support for European integration may as well involve political and institutional aspects in citizens' evaluation and opinion building on the process. Several authors have stressed the importance of national politics on the degree of support to the European project. This should be understood as a cost efficient calculation based on something citizens know well (national government) to make judgement about something they are less familiar with (Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren 1994, Franklin, van der Eijk and Marsh 1995, in McLaren 2002). European Parliament elections have been portrayed as 'second order' national elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980), which are held on national issues by national figures and political parties. Similarly, the different referendum campaigns held on EU treaties over the last fifteen years have shown that debates were oriented on national issues rather than Europeans'. It is therefore not surprising that scholars have tried to understand the prevalence of national governments' popularity, performances, or systemic evaluations over the European project and its relative support, especially in the wake of Maastricht (Franklin, Marsh, and McLaren 1994; Franklin, van der Eijk and Marsh 1995; McLaren 2002).

Differently, Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) proposes another model in which support is the consequence of interplay between supranational and national politics. In both cases support for integration is the purpose but results are obtained from calculations that leave the European project as secondary. The model proposed by Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) is fairly simple, as he suggests himself: the higher citizen's opinion of the functioning of supranational institutions and the lower that of national institutions, the greater their support for integration. In other words, the worse opinion of the national political system, the lower the opportunity cost of transferring sovereignty to Europe. Or, the worse the political system works at home and the better at the supranational level, the smaller risk involved in transferring national sovereignty to the supranational level (*cf.* Sánchez-Cuenca 2000: 148). Generally, this is fairly the opposite of Anderson's views (1998) which asserts that satisfaction of national governments and politics translates in greater support for the European integration. Nevertheless, national politics and governments' popularity undoubtedly play a role on support for the EU. According to Sánchez-Cuenca's model, countries with low corruption, political and democratic stability, as well as fine developed state welfare might be more reluctant to further integrate as opposed to countries with political difficulties which might perceived the EU as a solution to political failures.

3.3 The 'Affective' Explanatory Factors

The 'affective' (diffuse) aspect of support is at least as old as European integration itself. Authors have tried to encapsulate the importance of identities and attachment of citizens following European integration (Deutsch 1957; Haas, 1958; Inglehart, 1970, Lindberg and Scheingold 1970, etc). But one again should stress out the anachronism of using models adapted for a project that has went through tremendous changes and deepening; from the Steel and Coal Community to the current European Union which is becoming a non-negligible actor in Europeans' life. The conceptual 'affective' support should hereon encapsulate a wide range of models and theories related to the importance of identities and attachment to one's culture and society. If the affective support was originally studied to evaluate support on European integration, it can be said to have become more importantly used to explain its reverse phenomenon: lack of support, and eventually Euroscepticism. It is precisely this angle that is presented in this section: fears and threats of others that are believed to have increased since Maastricht.

3.3.1 Identities

It is not fortuitous to put identities under the affective conceptions of support even if one could argue that identities may as well be developed consequently to 'utilitarian' impacts. Generally though, identities are forged at an early stage in life and are therefore relatively stable over time. Consequently, what is interesting

– and necessary, to investigate is the influence of those regional / national identities on support for European integration. Whether identities are inclusive or exclusive plays a significant role on one's capacity to identify with Europe (Hooghe and Marks 2004: 416). Are those identities positively or negatively oriented to multiculturalism (idem)? Ultimately, is there a 'European' identity?

“To understand how the public views European integration, one needs to consider how individuals frame their national identity. Do citizens consider national identity as something that can go hand in hand with European integration, or do they believe that European integration limits or threatens their national identity” (Hooghe and Marks 2004: 416)? Responses to European integration may vary accordingly to the nature of identity one holds. If the identity tends to be exclusive and based on ethnic nationalism, for instance, one might be more inclined to perceive the European integration as a threat. Concretely, as Maddens *et al.* (1996) assert: Individuals who identify themselves exclusively as Belgian or exclusively as Flemish oppose multi-level governance, while those who identify themselves as both Belgian and Flemish support it (in Hooghe and Marks 2004: 417).

There is yet no far reaching European identity, despite numerous efforts in that sense. In any case, a European identity would resemble nothing like a national identity. The latter; more exclusive, is oriented on nationalist traits whereas the former, much more inclusive, is being directed towards more universal traits such as democratic norms, values, and human rights (*cf.* Fossum 2005). Moreover, Risse suggests that identities are not exclusive and that it would be wrong to see the 'European identity' as compared to nation, regional, or local loyalties in a zero-sum fashion (Risse 2000). Individuals may very well hold multiple identities and feel, for example, strongly Flemish, Belgian, and European (Hooghe and Marks 2004; Diez Medrano 2003; Marks 1999; Risse 2000).

Following this logic, it seems reasonable to suppose that strong national (exclusive) identities are likely to produce more sceptical attitude towards integration in mono-national Member States as opposed to plurinational Member States characterised by more inclusive identities. Haesly (2001) has demonstrated a positive association between Welsh and European identities, and between Scottish and European identities (in Risse 2000, also see Maddens *et al.* 1996).

All in all, identities are portrayed to play a significant role on individual evaluations of European integration. We can, in the same vein, expect an intensification of the identity prevalence over the integration process as it goes further.

3.3.2 Cultural threat and the Socio-psychological Approach

The affective perspective of support should be underlined as more diffuse than the utilitarian dimension of support which can more easily be isolated and evaluated through researches using sets of data, for instance. The affective dimension of support can often be contradictory and influenced by external factors which are similarly difficult to identify. Generally though, the importance of those cognitive

mobilisations is likely to refer to feelings, emotions that become salient over one's evaluation of a political entity. It seems that scholars on support for integration have underestimated the magnitude of this, perhaps, new reality. The pioneers that have studied and investigated the importance of the affective dimension (Deutsh, Haas, Inglehart, etc.) were mostly concerned about the impact of integration on identities. It seems, however, that the causal effect should be turned on its head as 'national' identities now appear to be conditioning integration. The relatively recent literature on support is eloquent in this regard: many scholars have started to recognize national identities as more relevant to evaluate support for integration (Carey 2002; McLaren 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2004).

Concretely, as the EU grew and integrated, it has become to be perceived by some as an alien to their identity and culture. It has turned into a threat that is based on the erosion of the national-state and its capacity to protect cultural and societal traits. The EU is in this perspective perceived as a cultural 'bulldozer' that not only threaten cultures but might as well impose alien 'standardised' features. Lauren McLaren asserts, in a very enlightening article (2002), that: "the literature on support for European integration misses the hearth of the nature of opposition to this process by ignoring the notion of perceived threat" (McLaren 2002: 551). She argues that people are essentially hostile towards the European project because of their fears and perceptions of threat posed by other cultures (ibid: 553). Furthermore, this antipathy towards other cultures is uneven from a Member States to another – probably following inclusive versus exclusive model of identity – and is based on nationalistic attachment (ibid: 551). Intolerance and reserves based on cultural affinities and identities is, perhaps, becoming the most important factor accounting for rejection of further integration.

Similarly, studying support for sovereignty in Quebec, Maurice Pinard has developed an approach based on psychological and sociological fundaments which focus on a wide range of factors, such as: "resentment, feeling of status denial, ethnic grievances and self confidence, along with the perceived costs and benefits of sovereignty and federalism" (Mendelsohn 2003: 512). This somewhat novel approach may nevertheless reveal to be relevant for one studying the shortage of support for European integration. The grievances mentioned by Pinard are what ultimately condition the degree of support to the 'Union'. The more the relative grievances are high, the more the nationalist movement grows. Nevertheless, as he reveals himself, this cannot account entirely for the degree of support (shortage) and its fluctuations since grievances have been present for so long (Pinard in Mendelsohn 2003). Moreover, along with grievances, there must as well be incentives which lie on strong confidence that those grievances may be redressed (and rewarded) through sovereignty. (Pinard and Hamilton 1986: 235-240, *in* Mendelsohn 2003: 512-513). Finally, "to the grievances and the incentives, voters must also believe that there is a reasonable chance that the movement will succeed (and hence redress the problems)" (Mendelsohn 2003: 513). In a European context, one could eventually use this approach to understand the strong "No" of the last referendums on the Constitutional Treaty proposal. Referendums being, perhaps, the only occasion Europeans have the opportunity to

speak their minds and ‘succeed’ in breaking the integration process (grievances versus incentives).

All in all, it is now generally recognised that several factors are involved when it comes to support for further integration and Euroscepticism. The main challenges lie in the difficulties to separate those factors that are often intermingled and conditioning one another. Operationalisation of those concepts therefore faces potential biases while the role of intervening variables is sometimes difficult to encapsulate.

3.4 Assumptions and Focus of the Analysis

There is no single explanatory factor accounting for support (and lack of support) for integration. Rather, support is conditioned by an interaction of utilitarian (specific) and affective (diffuse) factors which is likely to differ from a region to another. In other words, citizens take into account elements of both aspects when it comes to evaluate the Union and its consequences for themselves, and their communities. Hence, calculations will vary from a Member States (and region) to another and from time to time, in conformity to the degree of importance (and prevalence) individuals pay to the different dimensions. Similarly, mobilisation – for or against integration, will vary accordingly.

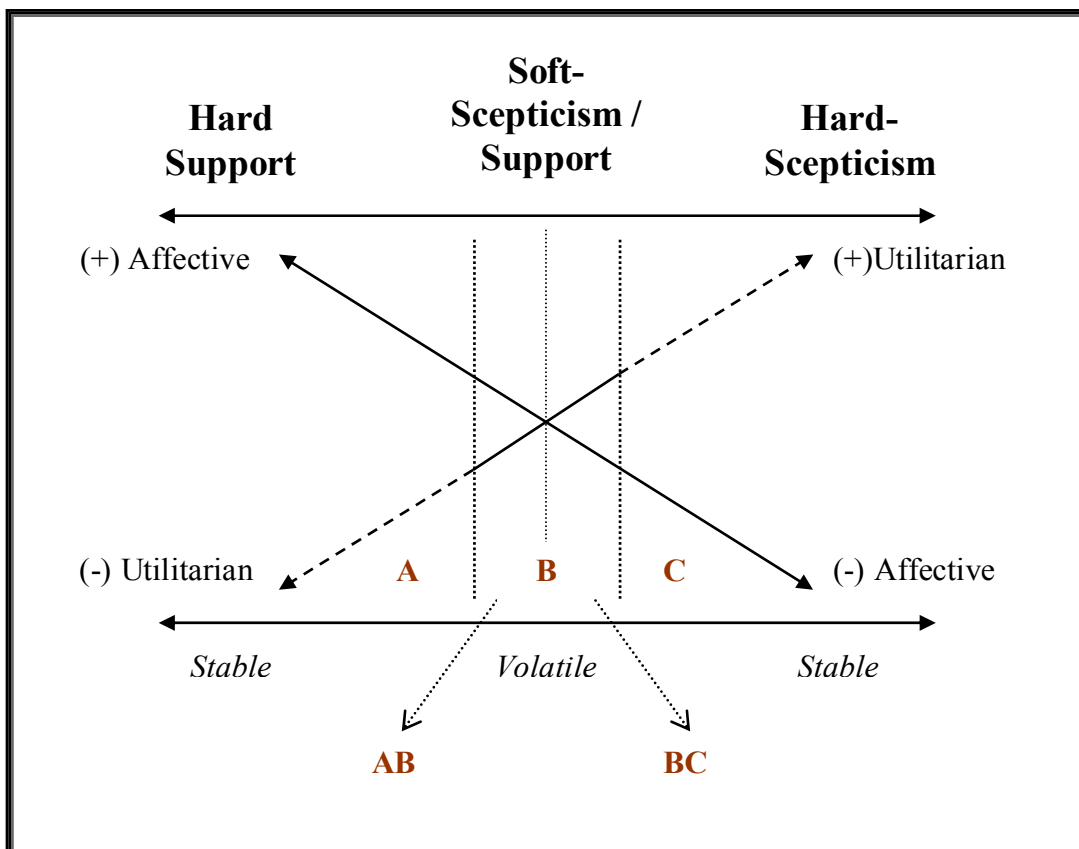
Following a rational choice reasoning, an individual will take position and adopt a specific behaviour resulting from a personal cost-benefit calculation. I argue that both Canadians and Europeans somehow proceed similarly to evaluate the costs and benefits of their Union. Among with utility-specific concerns, identities and diffuse factors may as well be included and even prevail over utilitarian factors in such calculations. For instance, one’s strong sense of belonging to the Union is likely to overcome apprehensions on, say, liberalisation of services. Reversely, one that opposes strongly the Union may simply not consider the economic benefits of it. This is the intermingled nature and the biggest challenge for interpreting scepticism.

However, from preliminary findings, I will posit identities and affective factors as predominant in such calculation, and overcoming utility-specific factors in scepticism formation. Furthermore, I present in the followings a set of assumptions, lines of reasoning that may help explaining support variation over time (also see figure on next page).

- Attitude (towards the Union) based on negative evaluation of utilitarian factors is volatile as it results from an evaluation of specific gains and losses that are often conditioned by external dynamics such as governments’ and economic performances. Such attitude may therefore only translate in soft-scepticism since the situation may be redressed.

- Attitude (towards the Union) based on negative evaluation of affective factors is more stable as it results from perception of identity grievances that are unlikely to drop off. Such attitude may therefore translate in hard-scepticism since the (perceived) grievances are not expected to be redressed over time.
- Soft-scepticism may transform in hard-scepticism when the evaluation of utilitarian costs and benefits becomes significantly negative to come across the affective dimension.

Figure 1 Bi-dimensional conceptualisation of factors and degree of support / scepticism



The above figure illustrates how the utilitarian dimension loses importance when the affective dimension becomes predominant (A and C). Indeed, utilitarian factors are significant in one's evaluation only when affective factors do not prevail (in B). Most of the European electorate is located in the B area and whether they shift from AB to BC, or from BC to AB, is very significant and may have stark consequences on their attitude towards the Union. It is in the B area that negative evaluation of utilitarian factors may switch to affective, and the other way around.

4 Understanding Canadian Alienation

4.1 Introduction (soft versus hard-scepticism)

There are several factors accounting for people's discontentment towards the 'Union' in Canada. First, following the model elaborated in the previous chapter: identities (and languages) seem to be highly important as Canadians were never able to agree on a unique definition of common identity. Secondly, there are clear clashes between different conceptions of the country that tend to lead to misunderstanding and frustration. Consequently to these feelings of alienation and exclusion a wind of decentralisation has been blowing over the country, taking origin on both coasts and meeting in Ottawa. The 2006 federal elections was a clear demonstration of frustration towards the Union: 'westerners', specifically on the basis of negative evaluation of utilitarian factors and Quebecers, more importantly on the basis of affective factors. Hence, decentralisation is on the agenda of three out of four federal political parties⁶, including the governing Conservative Party. The Canadian experience demonstrates that only alienation based on affective factors is likely to transform in hard-scepticism. Reversely, alienation based uniquely on utilitarian factors is more likely to translate in soft-scepticism. Ultimately, affective factors (positive and negative evaluations) prevail over utilitarian factors.

4.2 In Search of a Common Identity

Former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien used to depict Canada as the most post-modern of all countries. Coming about a common identity for citizens of a post-national State cannot strictly rely on nationalist traits proper to nation-states. Rather, the Canadian identity – in its most encompassing definition, is based on fraternity and commitment to shared values and norms, such as democracy,

⁶ The governing Conservative Party (CP) was elected in January 2006 with a clear agenda in this matter. The Bloc Québécois (BQ) is a sovereignist party. The New-Democratic Party (NDP) recognizes the ability of provinces to opt-out federal programmes that interfere with provincial jurisdictions. The Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) is centralist and has governed the country for most of its history. It is strongly associated to what Canada is today.

human rights, peace, etc. Former Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Stéphane Dion, has once suggested that the Canadian identity consisted of respect of basic rights and respect for diversity⁷. Such a far-reaching and inclusive definition of identity is nevertheless only a common minimum ground for identification. Canadians, from a region to another have different visions of their own country and citizenship which are often contradictory to one another. This contention usually is the main factor to bringing about clashes and misunderstanding that ultimately lead to alienation.

4.2.1 The Two Founding People and Identities

From its original conception of two founding peoples, the Canadian citizenship has become more inclusive and multicultural; recognising the contributions of the numerous First Nations⁸ and Neo-Canadians. Nevertheless, the Canadian dilemma still is carried on by the bi-national and unsolved core conception of the federation. There is no doubt that both 'communities' have distinct visions on the essence of the federation: For French-speaking Canadians, the confederation is a pact between two nations, while for the English-speaking Canadians, all provinces are equals and there can be only one nation: the Canadian nation. For this reason, Canadians were never able to accept a common definition of national identity. Also, as John Erik Fossum (2005) underlines: Canadian nationalism presuppose federalism.

Hand in hand with the Canadian 'integration' conducted in the 20th century, major efforts were made to provide Canadians with a better cohesion. The creation of an inclusive Canadian identity seemed fiercely needed in a time where Canada was still the land of Britons and French descendants. It was only in 1965 that Canada adopted its own flag; only twenty years later that it has adopted the national anthem, in 1985. Even more importantly, Canada became officially bilingual only in 1971 with the adoption the law on multiculturalism and bilingualism: the face of the federation was fundamentally modified. The two 'solitudes' were called to meet under a single identity. More than thirty years later, the bilingual and multicultural conception of Canada is profoundly anchored in East-central Canada⁹ while the notion loses strength going west. Paradoxically perhaps, the sovereigntist movement in Quebec has been the central element that has favoured this transition and willingness of the federal government to shape the country around its 'genuine' composition.

⁷ Speech by Stéphane Dion to the 7th Triennial NACS Conference, Reykjavik, Iceland, August 1999). In Fossum 2005: 18

⁸ Autochthonous nations of Canada: approximately 600 communities in Canada.

⁹ Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. The reality is Central-East Canada somehow resemble the Belgium assemble.

4.2.2 Unity in Diversity

The Canadian population is far more heterogeneous than one would imagine. In spite of clear linguistic differentiations, the English-speaking part of Canada is not one single bloc as the Franco-Quebecers tend to perceive it. Also, space so characteristic to Canada, seems to be of first importance in a country that covers slightly less than ten million kilometres square. Indeed, human-geographers often look at Canada as an urban archipelago. Distance combined to cultural and origin differentiations contribute to tangible differences between, for instance, an Ontarian, an Albertan and a Newfoundlander. Hence, the perception of the country one holds from a region to another can only be as diversified.

Generally though, the Canadian identity lies on diversity, and respect of that diversity. Consequently to this very inclusive identity, Canadians are known for their openness *vis-à-vis* other cultures and immigration. The ‘fear factor’ probably is relatively important only in Quebec in the perspective of assimilation.

4.2.3 ‘Banal Nationalism’

There have been countless efforts to create an overwhelming Canadian identity capable of encompassing all members and realities. The relative success of the Canadian identity based on multiculturalism and bilingualism is however, everything but natural. If all nations and nationalisms are creations as suggested by Michael Billig (1995), the Canadian identity is a flagging one. It was conceived and put forward in the spectre of Quebec secession. The federal government, most exclusively under Liberal administrations (LPC) adopted diverse measures following the ‘visibility principle’ where, for instance, federal investments were conditional to the prominent display of the ‘Maple leaf’ flag. Similarly, departments and organisations were created to augment the visibility of the government of Canada in Quebecers’ life: from workfares to television, passing by magazines, etc. Such strategy is risky as it may have adverse effects. All in all, it may be said to have greatly influenced many: sometimes negatively but most of the time positively.

4.3 Attitude towards the Union: Two logics, One Aim

Canadians are committed to federalism more than to any other formula. In 2003, 75% of Canadians held this preference.¹⁰ However, Canadians not all agree on the essence of the federation. Moreover, 56% of the population, coast to coast,

¹⁰ CRIC 2003

believed in 2003 that the federal government had too much power and that both provincial and local level of governments should see their power increased.¹¹

Generally, the popularity of a federal government and economic performances of the country do not affect the loyalty of Canadians towards the federation, at the exception of Quebec, where such perspectives give munitions to the secessionist movement and its leaders. In English-Canada, such perspectives are more likely to translate in government disaffection and eventual support to some other political party. Just like in any 'regular' State.

However, there seems to have different visions about orientations and for the role the federal government should play. The early 1990s have been characterised by severe economical and political crisis. On the verge of bankruptcy due to astronomical budget deficits and high unemployment, the federation was also facing an unprecedented political incertitude.¹² The political and economic situation led to the creation of two 'regional' political parties: the westerner Reform Party (Right) and the Bloc Québécois (Centre-left) which drastically changed the Canadian electoral picture as well as political balance. In 1993, the sovereigntist Bloc Québécois became the Official opposition in the House of Common. With slogans like: "The West Wants In" and "*Heureusement, ici c'est le Bloc*"¹³ the dissensions and regional alienations of Canadians became obvious. Paradoxically perhaps, the emergence of the two political parties favoured the election of the most centralist party (LPC)¹⁴ until recently, for four consecutive mandates (1993-2006).

There is no doubt that the creation of those political parties was a clear sign of alienation. However, both movements were created on different basis and for different purposes. Quebec alienation is based on cultural, linguistic and identity differentiations and wishes for recognition, whereas western alienation is based on negative evaluations of utility matters. Nevertheless, it is most probable that despite their ideological orientations, both movement (and regions) might be called to work together if they want to decentralise the country.¹⁵

¹¹ CRIC 2003

¹² Consequently to the failure of the Lake Meech Negotiations (1987-90) and rejection of Charlottetown Treaty (1992) that would have permitted the province of Quebec to finally sign the Canadian Constitution. Among other things, Quebec would have been recognised as a 'distinct society' in Canada. Consequently, support for sovereignty rose up to 70% in Quebec. The situation led to a second referendum on *souveraineté-partenariat* (October 30, 1995) which was defeated by 54 288 votes.

¹³ "Thankfully, here it is the Bloc". The 2006 Bloc Québécois slogan.

¹⁴ The LPC was brought to power greatly because of its strong support in Ontario which holds a third of all seats in the House of Common. This reality, again, could only reinforce the regional alienation.

¹⁵ The debate recently amplified based on the so-called '*déficit fiscal*' between the federal and provincial governments. The economic austerity practices of the federal government during the 1990s have led to serious reductions of transfers and equalization payments to the provinces. Ottawa's participation in shared programmes was considerably reduced, where for instance, its participation to Medicare dropped under 20% of the total costs during the 1990s. Moreover, the exasperation of provinces has increased in the light of the enormous surpluses engendered by the federal government. Quebec first denounced the imbalance and was joined by other provinces in its endeavour. Moreover, the economic factor became an argument for the sovereignists.

4.3.1 Western Alienation

At first glance, the first component of western alienation is one of representation. Traditionally more Conservative, westerners make governments only once in a blue moon. With 70% of the Canadian population living in two provinces, Ontario and Quebec make and unmake governments easily with only little regard to the other regions. This severe reality has influenced the definition of the Union around the two founding peoples and bilingualism which hardly suits to western Canada. Also, the imbalance caused by the electoral system has contributed to the successive election of relatively progressive governments (left-centered) and strongly centralist which, again, does not reflect western realities and priorities.

In addition, as net contributors to the Union's welfare, Albertans for instance, do not perceive the benefits of the Union the same way other provinces do: six out of ten Albertans (61%) believe they do not get enough for their money from the federal government, compared to the Canadian average of 43%.¹⁶ The various Canadian redistributive programmes deprive Albertans of billions of dollars year after year¹⁷. Consequently perhaps, westerners are the strongest advocate for decentralisation: 73% of Saskatchewanians, 72% of Manitobans and 64% of Albertans assert that the federal government has too much power, far above the Canadian average of 56%.¹⁸

Nevertheless, westerners remain strongly attached to the federal idea and to Canada by extension. Albertans again, are the most supportive (85%) although only a few points above the Canadian average (75%)¹⁹. For this reason, one can only associate western alienation to soft-scepticism since it is solely based on economic and utility calculations. Furthermore, the affective factor (in its original definition) seems highly correlated to support to the Union despite cultural and ideological disparities. However, if Quebec were to separate from Canada in a near future, one would be permitted to speculate on the outcomes for western Canada as well as for the faith of the federation without Quebec.²⁰

4.3.2 Quebec Nationalism

The *nationalisme Québécois* is fundamentally linked to the French language. From its original predecessor of French-Canadian²¹ (*Canadien*) nationalism, it has moved from a Diaspora nation (scattered on the Canadian territory) to a well

¹⁶ CRIC 2003; see table 9.1 in Appendices.

¹⁷ Alberta is the Canadian 'Norway' and is very rich in oil resources.

¹⁸ CRIC 2003; see table 9.2 in Appendices.

¹⁹ CRIC 2003

²⁰ See Taylor 1993

²¹ There are approximately 1 million 'Francophones' outside Quebec: most of them living in Ontario and New-Brunswick.

defined socio-political nation²². This shift provided Quebecers with a political vehicle to push forward their search for recognition within the federation. Moreover, it has had the merit of shifting the identity from a rather ethnical conception to a civic one.

The abandon of the French-Canadian nationalism by Quebecers is also marked by an important transition in their traditional demands and standing position towards the federation. The long-established autonomist discourse of Quebec became starker in the 1960s with the emergence of two sovereignist parties. The first sovereignist government²³ was elected in 1976 and led to a first referendum on *souveraineté-association* in 1980. Sovereignty is not synonymous to independence in this context. Quebec's traditional claims remain, only the means change, or as Charles Taylor (1993) points out: "what gives Quebec's nationalism its strength is 'recognition' rather than complete independence".

Quebecers are greatly shared on the Canadian issue which sometimes lead to profound paradoxes. For instance, Quebecers are said to prefer a federal system over any other political system (67%)²⁴. Also, a great majority of Quebecers confess their pride of being Canadians (75%)²⁵. In the same time, according to the same survey, 58% consider themselves as autonomists; 55% as nationalists; 45% as sovereignists, and finally 33% see themselves as federalists²⁶.

Regarding sovereignty support, opinion polls generally confer between 40% and 60% to the option. If we follow the logic presented in chapter 3; this means that factors other than identity are likely to influence about 20% of Quebecers in their evaluation of the project (in BC area). Indeed, if we assume that the bottom line for hard-scepticism (sovereignism) is 40%, the following portion (20%) is likely to be influenced by governments' (and leaders') popularity, performance, as well as by economic and utility specific calculations. The rhetoric found in Quebec in this regard acknowledges this assumption. Commentators regularly categorise sovereignists along the hard-soft (*dur-mou*) line to identify the ones that are likely to adopt a different position.

Perhaps the greatest paradox found in Quebec is in regard to the role of the federal government and its importance in the governance system. Quebecers generally recognise – and often more importantly than other Canadians, the economic benefits of being part of the federation.²⁷ This, in spite of the

²² According to Seymour (2000), a socio-political nation is a political community which involves a 'national' majority of people sharing a common language, culture, and history. It also involves national minorities and communities with different origins.

²³ Provincial government: or National government, nowadays.

²⁴ CRIC 2003

²⁵ Leger Marketing 2005

²⁶ Leger Marketing 2005. The great ditch between support to the 'federal idea' and being federalist (67% vs. 33%) echos the disaffection towards the current federation (*status quo*), and the federal government.

²⁷ CRIC 2003. See table 9.1 in Appendices "From which level of government do you feel you get the least for your money?" Quebecers were only 37% to identify the federal government (the lowest score among the regions) whereas Albertans were 61% to point it out. Figures changed in the 2004 study where Quebecers reached the Canadian average.

sovereignist discourse found in Quebec which alleges that the federation is a costly system and that Quebec would gain economically being sovereign. One can assume that this is probably due to the fact that the province is a net beneficiary of the federal redistributive programmes: the biggest in fact, in terms of absolute financial transfers and equalization redistributions.

All in all, Quebecers and westerners alike seem more influenced by the affective dimension of the costs/benefits calculation. The utilitarian dimension may at best explain variation in support but not translate in hard-scepticism. However, if the affective dimension is determining in Quebec; whether a Quebecer is risk averse or not may influence her calculation on support for sovereignty (Nadeau *et al.* 1999 in Mendelsohn 2003).

5 Understanding Euroscepticism

5.1 Introduction (An ever closer Union)

Euroscepticism has been portrayed as the corollary to increasing integration, suggesting that alienation feelings are not about to wither away but on the contrary can only be called to grow with further integration. Several scholars have demonstrated empirically that support for integration (both diffuse and utility-specific) has constantly diminished since Maastricht and the creation of the European Union.

The little influence European voters have on the process and its orientations is also a source of discontentment among the European populace. This situation seems to – at least partly, explain the misfit between high support for the European Union and referendum outcomes. Similarly, party politics is of major importance in Europe as most issues are discussed on national *tribunes*.

As a start, one should make a distinction between support to the Union, and support to the EU and its orientations. The huge majority of Europeans support the idea, the project of European unification; be it, to be more competitive in face of globalization, for geo-politics reasons, for more cognitive reasons, etc. But numerous Europeans disapprove the path the Union is taking. The question is if that is sufficient to reject the European Union as a whole: I argue that it is most likely not the case.

Following the model presented in Chapter 3 and further developed in chapter 4, hard-scepticism tend to be linked to the rejection of the fundamental idea of ‘Union’, whereas soft-scepticism is more likely to be influenced by policies, government performances and popularity, etc. A non-negligible number of authors have argued that Euroscepticism was on the rise consequently to the perception of national sovereignty erosion. Also, this should be understood as a threat to national identity that one may perceive more concerning than one another and therefore, potentially lead to harder scepticism (switch from AB to BC). Complete rejection of the European Union seems to be related to strong national identities and potential threat on national social models, and cultural threat has an ensemble.

In the light of available studies and data: the Eurosceptic phenomenon seems to be more marked by soft-scepticism than its hard version which nevertheless is said to be increasing. Again, Identities seem to be a fundamental factor for level of support to the Union.

5.2 Common Ground for Identity

Despite the absence of a common European identity which may be said to be under construction, there is undoubtedly a common ground for such development. Europeans share a wide range of values and principles that go far beyond borders. Their commitments to those norms and values are very likely to bring about feelings of compassion, fraternity and respect of one another in a more cosmopolitan spirit. Already, according to Eurobarometer, 67% of respondents declared in 2004 to be proud of being Europeans, compared to an average of 92% as regard to national pride²⁸. Furthermore, 54% have declared to see themselves as citizens of both their country and Europe²⁹ implying that there is room for dual loyalties. Indeed, the significance of identities on level of support to European integration is importantly correlated to the nature of national identities: whether they are more exclusive, or more inclusive.

5.3 National Identities

The ‘old continent’ is known around the world for its rich cultural diversity and degree of sophistication. Europeans are well entitled to be proud of those distinctions as well as being concerned about protecting those components, so closely related to their national identities. However, these are not at stake with the European project, on the contrary, one could presume those elements to only reinforced national prides as well as a European sense of belonging where, say, a German may enjoy a glass of *Cassis de Dijon* with and a tiramisu, on a sunny Spanish beach. Rather, when one refers to identity threats, it relates to society values which are closely related to the (exclusive) national ability to protect the national *acquis*. The growing role of the European Union in economic, but also social, political as well as legal spheres has, somehow, caused uncertainty to some Europeans about the impact this might have on their societies.

5.3.1 European Integration and its Impacts on National Societies

There seem to have different visions about the European project: too exclusive, or too inclusive (Taggart 1998: 365-366). Citizens seem to be concern about the impact the EU will have on their ‘society’, home country. Indeed, a too liberal

²⁸ EB62 (2004)

²⁹ EB62 (2004). EU citizens were 47% to declare being citizens of both their country and Europe: 7% saw themselves as citizens of both Europe and their national country. A marginal 3% responded seeing themselves only as Europeans whereas they were 41% to assert seeing themselves solely as citizens of their country.

vision of the EU is likely to perturb citizens living in member states that have enhanced welfare coverage and social programmes. Reversely, a too social approach might as well alienate citizens living in more liberal societies. Or, as Hooghe and Marks (2004: 416) elaborate the phenomenon: “If European integration converges on a mixed-market model, citizens in social-democratic Scandinavian economies can expect to see their welfare system diluted, while citizens in liberal market economies, such as Britain, can expect more redistribution. Hence in social democratic systems, the left will be opposed to European integration and the right will be supportive. In liberal market systems, the left will support integration and the right will be opposed.” (Hooghe and Marks, 2004: 416) Liberalisation of market, labour, capital and eventually services has been strongly decried by many over the years. Popular attachment to national (symbols) companies such as System Bolaget in Sweden, or Gaz de France, for instance, has caused serious apprehensions. Similarly, delocalisation of companies and industries from a Member State to another also has had tangible effects on public opinion. Thus, confirming this contention, Hooghe and Marks (2004) have discovered that the ‘type of capitalism’ is able to explain 15% of variation in support: which is yet less important than their findings for identities.

5.3.2 Exclusive versus Inclusive Identities

As presented in chapter 3, authors are increasingly recognising the importance of national identities on evaluations and support for European integration. Carey (2002) has, for instance, demonstrated a non-negligible relation in this sense. Also, some authors have tried to understand if the nature of one’s identity had an influence on support for integration. Assuming that plurinational, multicultural states would be more inclined to support additional integration. Such correlations were found in the UK (Haesly 2001) for instance, but the contribution of Hooghe and Marks (2004) in the field is important as they also compared the (15) Member States with one another in this respect. They first confirmed that national identities were contributing to – as well as diminishing, support for further integration. Their innovation has been to demonstrate empirically that: ‘exclusive national identity’, ‘multiculturalism’, and ‘national attachment’ together accounted greatly (20,8%) for variations in support for integration, as well as for two thirds of the difference of support between Member States. The extent to which national identity is exclusive or inclusive is proven decisive: the same study as revealed a difference of 19,5 % between the two ‘natures’ of identities one holds and its impact on EU support.

5.3.3 The Cultural Threat

The cultural threat model advanced by McLaren (2002) is closely related to the exclusive nature of one’s identity, and moreover, to the threat caused by the degradation of the nation-state. The author recognises identity as a strong

predictor of Euroscepticism which is widespread among mass public, and not confined to extreme-right parties has suggested by scholars such as Taggart, working on party-based Euroscepticism. She demonstrated that support for integration decreases by 10-16%, from a member state to another when correlated with perceived threats. She argues that national attachment to symbols, in combination to a certain tendency to consider primarily societal-level needs rather than individual, is likely to lower support for integration (*cf.* McLaren 2002).

Similarly, Carey (2002) has also investigated the role of threat perception (as well as other identity factors) on level of support for integration. He has demonstrated that fear related to national identity and cultural losses, and for language being less used, were indeed negatively correlated to support for integration, accounting for 21% of differences between respondents that believed their country's membership is a good thing (43% to 64%)³⁰.

5.4 Post-Referendums Analysis

Most commentators agree that the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty proposal by the French and Dutch populations is not an indicator of dismissal for the European project. On the contrary, according to Eurobarometer investigations conducted in the aftermath of the referendums, 88%³¹ of the French respondents have reiterated their belonging to the Union, while they were 82%³² to acknowledge the same in the Netherlands.

Both campaigns have been characterised by struggles and debates that were often aliens to the 'Constitution' itself. It seems that national political leaders, political parties (and fractions) have used the Referendum momentum for making political gains. The French Presidential election scheduled for 2007 clearly was in the background during the May campaign. Also, unlike in Spain where the populace was still in honeymoon with the newly elected Socialist government when they voted "Yes" (77%), both national coalitions in France and the Netherlands were suffering from low approval rates among their constituencies. Government popularity seems to have played a central role in the outcomes of both referendums, somehow corroborating Franklin and van der Eijk's assumptions (1998).

Nevertheless, in the light of the same studies, French and Dutch "No" voters showed a great deal of distinction in regard of the reasons for voting "No". First peculiarity, the Dutch respondent ("No" voters) were 32% to identified 'lack of information' to justify their choice whereas only five percent (5%) of French

³⁰ Carey (2002) Data from Eurobarometer 54,1 (2000) Question: Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of: The loss of our national identity and culture; our language being used less, etc.

³¹ Flash EB171 (Juin 2005) "Constitution Européenne : Post-Référendum France"

³² Flash EB172 (June 2005) "European Constitution: Post-Referendum Netherlands".

“No” voters made the same assessment. Notably, the other main contrast reflects a complete dissimilarity in the ways French and Dutch voters have evaluated their options. Indeed, approximately half of the Dutch “No” voters have identified reasons closely related to identity, national sovereignty degradation, and enlargements to justify their vote.³³ On the other hand, relatively few French “No” voters did. Rather, they largely identified socio-economic factors such as the ‘too liberal’ character of the ‘Constitution’, high unemployment, further pressure on employment, etc.³⁴

Referendum results are rather surprising for those two traditionally Europhile countries. In the case of France, the campaign was conducted along the theme of ‘*Europe Sociale*’ and is therefore not shocking that French “No” voters have identified reasons closely related to the campaign debate itself. On the other hand, the Dutch campaign may be said to have also played a major role in opinion building. The unpopularity of the governing coalition – as well as the popularity of some extremist, and populist parties as well as leaders, combined with the immigration issue that raises debates and passions, have greatly contributed to the defeat of the “Yes”.

All in all, in the light of those results and further investigations, it is difficult to classify Euroscepticism, its nature, and if spring 2005 marked another chapter in the European integration. One certainty though, party politics is a major, if not “the” explanation for support variation, and Euroscepticism.

³³ Flash EB172 (June 2005) “European Constitution: Post-Referendum Netherlands”. See table 9.4 in Appendices

³⁴ Flash EB171 (Juin 2005) “Constitution Européenne : Post-Referendum France”. See table 9.3 in Appendices.

6 Comparative Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In the light of the previous analyses, the EU and Canada do indeed share a great deal of similarities, but also reveal major distinctions. This is conceivably not surprising because of the elementary nature of the two entities: one being a federation and the other more closely related to some supranational entity and deprived from autonomous political leadership. Consequently, it makes no doubt that Canada is far more integrated politically than the EU, which primarily depends on the will of Member States.

Both Canadians and Europeans strongly manifest their preference for having the Union. However, they often disagree with the path the Union is taking which leads to alienation and scepticism. Also, just like Europeans, Canadians primarily see themselves as ‘citizens’ of their province³⁵, and Canadian by extension. The Canadian experience is a very interesting case for understanding the fundamentals of support for the Union and the primacy of specific factors in citizens’ calculations. The regional aspect of the different attitudes helped clearing up the concepts. However, the picture is different in the EU where such fine delimited attitudes are more blurry; perhaps because the process is relatively recent.

6.2 Economic versus Political Integration

One of the main differentiations between the EU and Canada lies on the very nature of both Unions. On the one hand, the EU essentially is an economic Union, although making substantial efforts to integrate politically as to fill the gap of the so-called ‘democratic deficit’; on the other hand, Canada is taking the opposite path through decentralisation. This brings about an interesting paradox that involves the perception of citizens on the legitimacy of the Union to operate certain activities. Canadians believe the federal government has too much (political) power whereas Europeans, on the other hand, are increasingly concerned by the growing impact of European economic policies on national

³⁵ Only Ontarians see themselves as Canadians first.

sovereignty. Also, the lack of strong democratic institutions at the EU level deprives European citizens of the power to sanction or embrace EU's accomplishments. To some extent, the liberal aspect of the EU's common market goes far beyond what is found in Canada. Such liberal scheme is not yet to be found in Canada, in spite of its participation to NAFTA. The Canadian provinces seem in this regard much freer than European Member States to manage their economies. The lack of accountability caused by the EU's democratic deficit may very well account for growing scepticism.

The paradox malingers; Europeans seem to be reticent in front of political integration that would lead, say, to a confederation because of national sovereignty losses. Canadians, on the other hand, are fairly well committed to the federal idea but would under no circumstances accept such a liberal scheme of liberalisation as found in the EU. Indeed, if the federal government of Canada were to adopt a similar approach as regard to liberalisation and de-regularisation – and if only it had the power, the country would most probably be dismantled in a matter of months. Canadians are often strongly attached to their provincial symbols such as alcohol monopolies, public-owned health care systems or state-owned electricity companies, etc. An invasion on those grounds would simply not be permitted.

What can explain this distinction? There is no doubt that European and national Elites have played a major role in the European process. Also, it seems that the democratic shortage has left Europeans speechless in front of integration. Europeans' reticence to see political integration deepened has had vicious effects as regard to democracy within the EU. I have argued that the EU is to some extent more integrated economically than Canada, but not politically, which has tangible consequences on public support and the identity factors.

6.3 Languages and Identities

A second main distinction between the EU and Canada is as regard of languages and their influence on identities. As multicultural as Canada is, there is nevertheless only two languages that prevail in the Union. As diverse as English-Canada is, the use of a single common language has bounded English-Canadians together. Similarly, the use of French in Quebec has favoured the creation of a single identity, often by opposition to “the others”. This reality has had a negative impact on the establishment of a common identity and further contributed to the formation of two distinct identities, often by opposition to one another, and strongly related to cultural distinctions, at least in the case of Quebec and the First Nations.

In Europe, the grand variety of cultures and languages should be perceived as an asset rather than a fracture for common identity formation. The unity in diversity motto seems much more suitable to Europe than to Canada, where unity in duality seems quite inconsistent. Quebec's hard scepticism is based on feelings of alienation: the perception of not being recognised. A majority of Quebecers

believe that the ‘other Canadians’ have a poor opinion of them (57%) while they confess to have a positive opinion of English-Canadians (82%)³⁶. One would assess that this is a typical attitude for a minority. Despite the increasing use of English as a functioning language in the EU, there is no evidence that national languages will be threaten over time, nor cultures related to their use. Moreover, as English is maternally spoken in only two Member States of the Union, the same alienation risks are not about to take shape. Rather, an identity encompassing diversity and respect of that diversity is the best option for the European Union.

6.4 Identity and Costs-benefits calculations

This brings us to a fundamental question concerning support for integration and attitudes towards the Union. I have presented a bi-dimensional conceptualisation of factors contributing for support, and lack of support for the Union. On the whole, costs-benefits calculations of utility factors, as well as identities, were portrayed as major explanatory factors for both the EU and Canada. Nevertheless the line between the two dimensions seems rather thin in the EU context (within the B area). Indeed, citizens’ calculations of costs and benefits have different outcomes consequently to the degree to which one factor intervenes on the other. In other words: how to explain that Hungarians and Romanians are the two nations that show the greatest pride of being Europeans (87% and 83%)³⁷? Can this pride be related to the ‘utilitarian’ factors and perceived benefits such as political stability and economic gains? Reversely, are Britons less proud of being Europeans than any other nation (50%) because they do not perceive the benefits of the Union?

I have also tried to differentiate soft from hard-scepticism in both systems. The distinction has been clear for Canada but was not self-evident for Europe. Generally though, complete rejection of the project seems to be fiercely related to identity matters – just like in Canada, and to be relatively stable, or slightly increasing over time. Soft-scepticism, on the other hand, is likely to emerge from national divisions on the European issue. Moreover, the degree to which Europeans are perhaps not falling into hard-scepticism lies on their relatively strong commitment to the European unification. However, if the EU is to further integrate politically and witness the emergence of a genuine democracy, I would foresee an increased division among Europeans and national elites of a same Member State, hence, similarly to what characterises Canadian politics.

³⁶ Léger Marketing, 2005. “Québec survey”.

³⁷ EB62 2004. Romania is a candidate country and show largely more pride of being European than in France (68%)

7 Conclusions

7.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to come about a better understanding of the variables influencing the development of Euroscepticism. The phenomenon has been presented has a shortage of support for integration. For this reason, a theoretical model was elaborated based on theoretical explanations accounting for support; assuming that they should as well be able to explain ‘non-supportive’ attitudes. Lindberg and Scheingold’s (1970) bi-dimensional model of utilitarian (specific) and affective (diffuse) factors of support has been used to help distinguishing degree of scepticism as well as for explaining variation. Taggart and Szczerbiak’s (2002) typology of soft and hard-scepticism have been associated to the previous model in a set of assumptions. Basically implying that only scepticism based on affective factors was likely to transform in hard-scepticism.

The main contribution of this paper has been to compare the EU with Canada, another highly complex and plurinational polity that is also facing legitimacy problems and popular alienation. The same model was applied to both systems with interesting findings which, somehow, corroborated the initial set of assumptions developed in chapter 3.

7.2 Research Findings

Hard scepticism is relatively stable in both Canada and the EU and is not likely to diminish as the perception of grievances produced by the Union are unlikely to be redressed. Consequently, hard-scepticism may only increase as integration goes further. Soft-scepticism, on the other hand, is more volatile. It may fade away when costs-benefits calculation shift from negative to positive or reversely. It is not likely to transform in hard-scepticism if affective factors to the Union are positively evaluated. In order words, I have demonstrated that western alienation in Canada is one of soft-scepticism because it is not based on the systematic rejection of the Union. Moreover, the strong sense of belonging of westerners overcomes the negative evaluations they make of economic and utility-specific factors. The reverse phenomenon takes place in Quebec which, again, corroborates the assumption of affective factors’ supremacy. Indeed, a negative

evaluation of affective factors overcomes the positive evaluation of economic costs/benefits.

In the EU, a similar pattern is noticeable. Hard-scepticism is relatively insignificant simply because the sense of belonging to Europe weights more in one's evaluation of the Union and integration. However, the line between soft and hard-scepticism is getting thinner over the years consequently to a convergence of utilitarian and affective factors. In other words, the more the economic integration deepened, the more the national-state erodes, the more likely is the issue to interfere with national identity and cause alienation (based on affective prevalence). Or, based on the figure presented in chapter 3: a move from AB to BC, and perhaps even towards a stark C.

Finally, the role of national elites, national politics and political parties is of first importance for both Canada and the EU. Elites' division on the European issue may only strengthen polarisation and emergence of scepticism in the future.

7.3 Future Research

Throughout the redaction of this study, the significance of party politics on support has appeared to be of first importance. I was well aware of this reality early in the process of this thesis. Nevertheless, I have opted to emphasis on popular scepticism which I perceive to be the heart of the phenomenon. Hence, a similar comparative study on the EU and Canada relatively to the role played by political parties, elites, and leaders would be a great complement to this study.

I have argued that attitudes are not static and therefore forgeable. Political parties of both entities have exploited – and will continue to exploit the Union issue, sometimes for political gains and quest for office. Paul Taggart has revealed that there are a growing number of national political parties that are taking positions against the EU. If the European Union was to transform in some kind of democratic confederation, one would probably be permitted to expect further polarisation, somehow similarly to what takes place in Canada.

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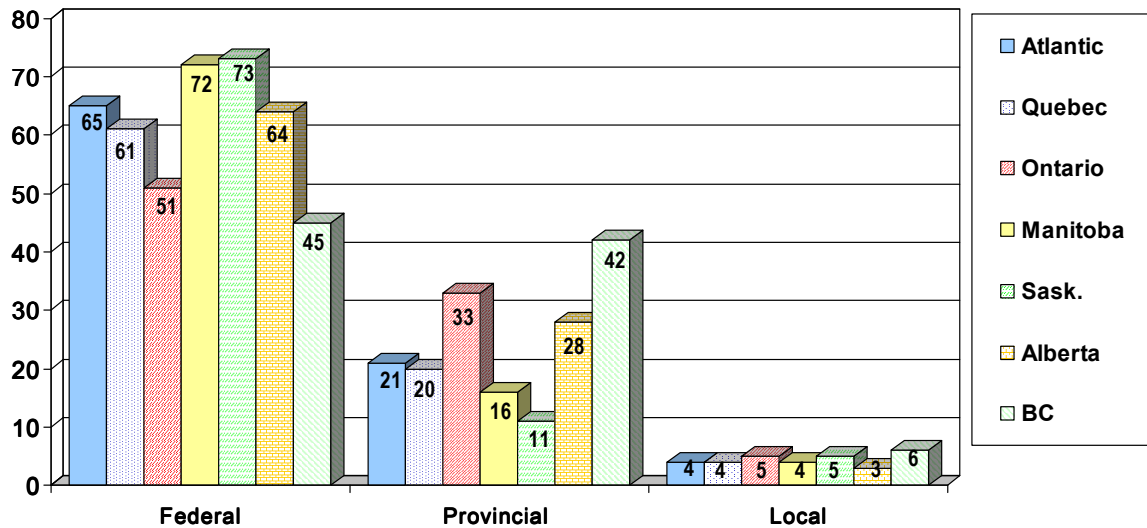
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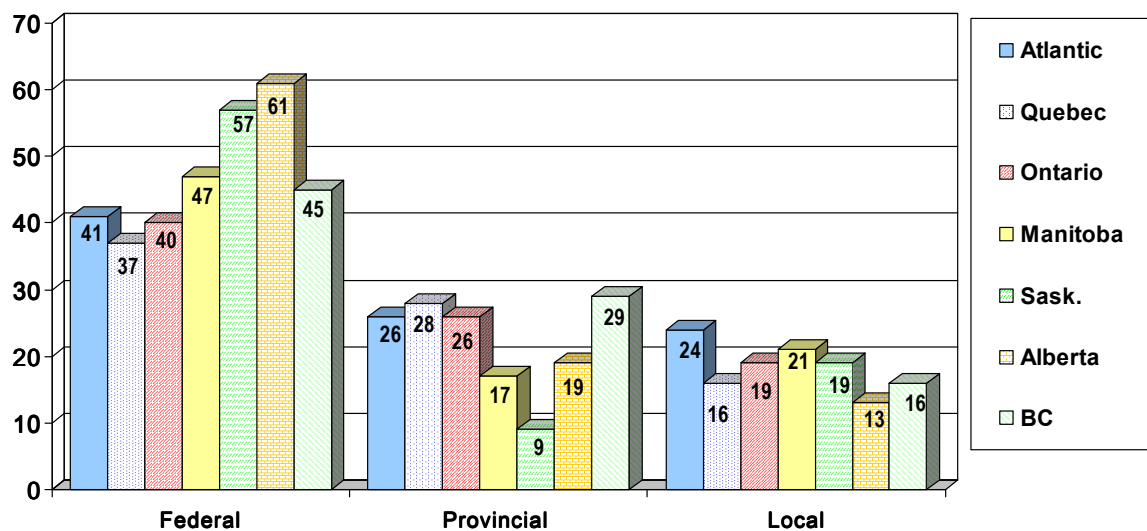
9 Appendices

Table 9.1 Which Level of Government Gives You Least for Your Money?



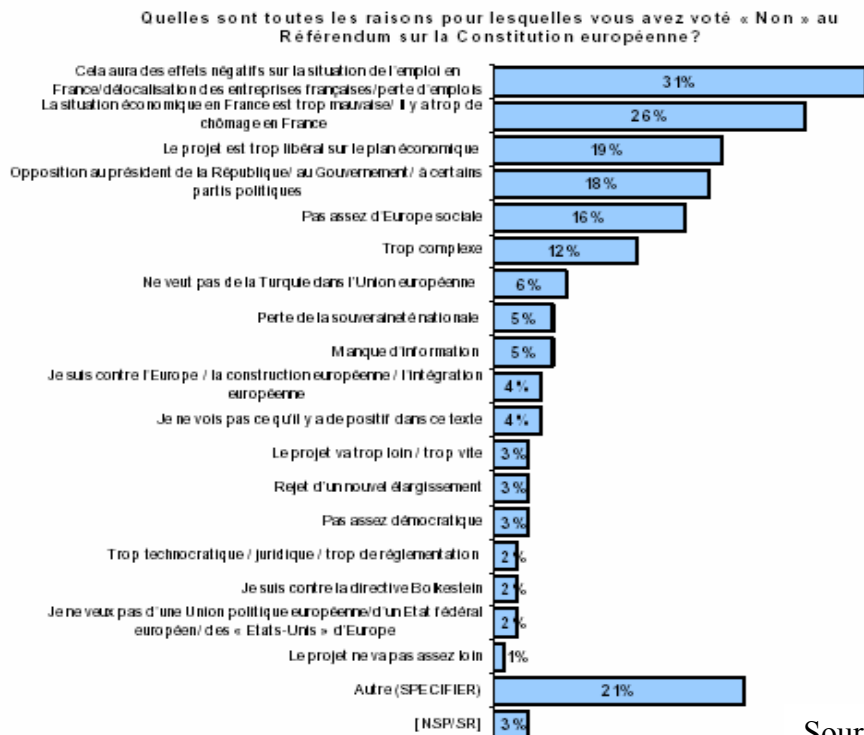
Source: www.cric.ca (2003 Comparative Federalism Survey)

Table 9.2 Which Level of Government Has Too Much Power Today?



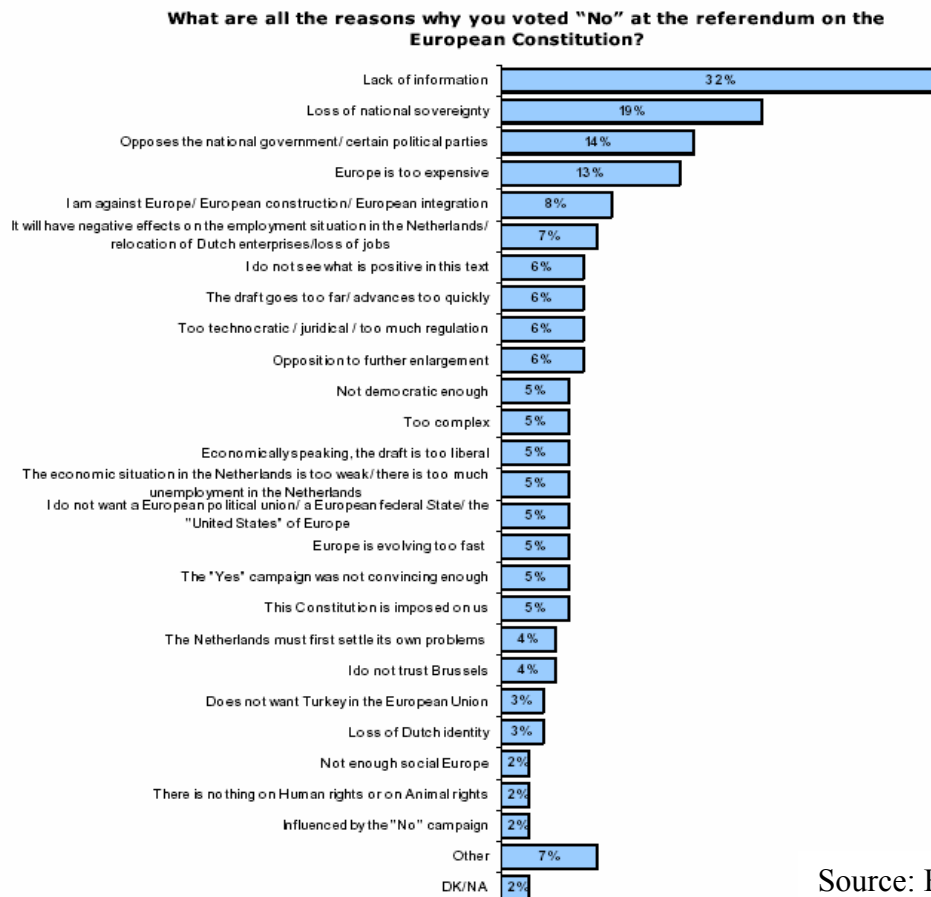
Source: www.cric.ca (2003 Comparative Federalism Survey)

Table 9.3 Reasons to Vote "No" to the Constitutional Treaty Referendum (FR)



Source: Flash EB171

Table 9.4 Reasons to Vote "No" to the Constitutional Treaty Referendum (NL)



Source: Flash EB172