The Dog That Didn't Bark: The Political Consequences of Separatist Violence in Quebec, 1963-70

by
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INTRODUCTION

In modern society social violence usually takes one of two forms. Sometimes those involved can be defined on the basis of their class position or revolutionary ideology. The violent clashes between British coal miners and the police in 1984-85, and the terrorist campaign by the Italian Red Brigades in the seventies are good examples of this type of conflict. Often, however, the participants are defined in terms of communal identities, such as race, religion, language or national origin. The ethnic violence in the former Yugoslavia, or the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, are obvious examples of this second type. Communal groups can be defined by two characteristics: first, their members have a strong ascriptive social identity, and second, there is a high degree of social segregation between communities. While the nature of the cleavage is important, there are remarkable similarities among communally-divided societies, regardless of whether they are divided by language, race or religion.[1] Thus, the conflicts in Cyprus, the Basque provinces and Northern Ireland display striking parallels.[2] Of especial significance is the tendency in communal conflicts for violence to lead to political polarization, which in turn leads to more violence in a vicious cycle. This scenario of chronic violence and political polarization seems to fit the recent experience of Cyprus, Northern Ireland and the Basque provinces of Spain. However, it obviously does not describe what happened in Canada. This essay will examine how Canadian politicians responded to violence by the Front de liberation du Quebec (FLQ) and other militant separatists during the period 1963-70, and suggest why this violence did not engender the kind of polarization that occurred elsewhere.

This study is divided into six sections. The first examines separatist violence as a political issue before October 1970, and concludes that during this period violence was essentially a non-issue at the federal level and a minor issue in Quebec. The second, third and fourth sections analyze the situation during the October Crisis, and show that polarization occurred *within* the French community, rather than between English and French.[3] The fifth section compares Quebec with Northern Ireland, and suggests a number of differences between the two cases that explain why Canada avoided the political polarization that is found in Northern Ireland. Some general conclusions about communal conflict are suggested in the final section of the article.

FLQ terrorism took place against a background of industrial and separatist unrest. Separatist demonstrations often turned violent — or were violently suppressed by the police. Bloody rioting marked the celebration of St. Jean Baptiste

Day in 1964, 1968 and 1969. Disturbances occurred in October 1964 during the visit of Queen Elizabeth and in May 1965 on Victoria Day. A series of clashes took place in 1967-68 between Francophone demonstrators and Anglophone parents during the St. Leonard's school dispute. The 1968 "McGill français" march, which ended in looting and vandalism, was also inspired by radical nationalism.

The FLQ campaign began in 1963, with the number of incidents peaking in that year and again during 1968-70. Bombings were the most common kind of attack (70 percent), followed by robberies (22 percent). Three-quarters of all the attacks occurred within Montreal. The violence claimed only a handful of lives. The first victim was a 65-year old night watchman blown up by a bomb in April 1963. The last was the Quebec Minister of Labour Pierre Laporte, who was murdered by his kidnappers in October 1970. (The major incidents of separatist violence are listed in Table 1). The kidnapping of James Cross, the British Trade Commissioner, and of Laporte, represented a significant escalation of the FLQ's campaign and one would expect a marked increase in the amount of political attention paid to the issue. In fact, the increase is so dramatic that the whole period can be divided into two which will be examined separately.[4]

SEPARATIST VIOLENCE AS A POLITICAL ISSUE BEFORE OCTOBER 1970

Prior to October 1970, little overt attention was paid to the FLQ by federal politicians. In the House of Commons there were only a handful of speeches on the topic, virtually all in response to specific acts of violence by the FLQ or separatist demonstrators. Most incidents provoked only a few questions or comments, while several passed unnoticed (or at least unnoted) by the MPs. On 17 May 1963, a question was asked about explosions in mail boxes, and five days later, another criticized the ineffectiveness of the RCMP in tracking down the perpetrators.[5] On 31 August 1964, Conservative Party leader John Diefenbaker asked what steps were being taken by the police in response to an arms theft by the FLQ.[6] Even when a bomb exploded in the House of Commons building in May 1966, there were only four brief references to the event.[7] FLQ attacks received slightly more attention than did riots and demonstrations.

Many speakers called for the government to respond by increasing security precautions, directing the RCMP to investigate bombing incidents or offering rewards for information. Almost invariably the policies proposed can be characterized as hardline. For example, after the bombing of the Department of National Defence building, one backbencher asked, "As a result of this horrible crime, will the minister promptly introduce amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada which would call for capital punishment for all persons found guilty of homicide resulting from the setting of bombing devices and other acts of terror?"[8] The Minister of Justice, John Turner, described the bombing of the Defence building as "a savage, cowardly and insane act" and expressed his sympathy to the victims' families.[9] Apart from condemning the FLQ and the demonstrators themselves, politicians

blamed "professional agitators" and "marxists" for inciting the violence. Only one speaker, a Conservative representing a Quebec constituency, hinted that social grievances might play a causal role or that reforms were required. He noted that a Royal Commission had recently found French-Canadians to have the lowest wages of any ethnic group, and suggested a link between unemployment and social unrest.

Only a handful of MPs were active in the issue and most of these individuals only participated once or twice.[10] A majority were from outside Quebec (64 percent) and a minority (42 percent) were French. The Progressive Conservatives and the Creditistes were most likely to ask questions about the issue, and 83 percent of the speeches came from these two groups. No obvious differences can be seen in the attitudes of French and English MPs, or between those from Quebec and those from other provinces. Political violence was virtually a non-issue in federal politics prior to October 1970. Opposition MPs made sporadic attempts to score political points, but spokesmen for the Liberal government dismissed their concerns.[11]

Since almost all separatist violence took place within Quebec, the issue had more salience at the provincial level. However, even in Quebec the issue received only sporadic attention. The initial wave of FLQ attacks in 1963-64, as well as the bombing of the Stock Exchange in 1969, produced condemnation and announcements of government counter-measures. A certain polarization along party lines is apparent. In 1963-64, the governing Liberals took a hardline stance with Premier Jean Lesage arguing that, "When the police have to fight to crush a revolutionary anarchist movement, it's time for them to use all their powers even extraordinary ones!"[12] Independentistes saw things differently, and Pierre Bourgault declared that although Rassemblement Pour l'Indépendence Nationale (RIN) was "opposed to violence . . . the real guilty parties are not the people who favour revolution: they are the people who make it inevitable."[13] After the bombing of the Montreal Stock Exchange, Premier Jean-Jacques Bertrand declared, "We will not rest until the last of the anarchists still at large has been captured,"[14] and his Union National government increased the reward for the capture of FLQ terrorists. Although condemning the bombing as an "out-and-out barbarous act" René Levesque of the Parti Quebecois went on to add that terrorism is a "symptom of illness, not its cause . . . terrorism will threaten us until we have cured its underlying causes, which are, first and foremost, gaping and neglected social wounds and the frustrations to which they give rise."[15]

Press coverage serves as another indicator of issue salience and reveals a similar pattern. The English language media, for the most part, ignored both the FLQ and separatist demonstrations. The disturbances in Montreal during the Queen's visit in 1964, and the savage riots on St. Jean Baptiste Day in 1968 were the only significant exceptions.[16] French-language newspapers gave the militant separatists more coverage, but the first FLQ communique was published only in *Le Devoir* and the full text was not reproduced. The death of night watchman Wilfrid O'Neill on 20 April 1963 drew a shocked reaction from both *La Presse* ("The FLQ's first murder")[17] and *Le Devoir*. An editorial in the latter condemned "the fireworks

of hate," and went on to say, "The hidden ones pretend they are acting in the name of French-Canadian nationalism; they do their best to dishonor it. French-Canadians, whatever their affiliation, are on the side of the victim." Thereafter, even the most spectacular attacks were often relegated to the inside pages.[18] Magazines and journals also paid little attention to the group.[19]

The absence of pre-1970 public opinion polling data on attitudes toward the FLQ notwithstanding, evidence suggests that their supporters were vociferous and well organized. The first support group was formed in 1966 after "a group of Christians at the University of Montreal" sent a letter to *Le Devoir* expressing their solidarity with Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon. Demonstrations were organized against "political repression" (i.e. the sentencing of FLQ members for acts of terrorism), and were able to mobilize thousands on several occasions. In 1970 the Comite d'aide Vallieres-Gagnon became the Movement de defense des prisonniers politiques au Quebec (MDPPQ). The MDPPQ opposed the anti-terrorist bill passed by the Quebec Assembly in 1969 and undertook to raise $50,000 to defend political prisoners. The sum was chosen symbolically, since it was the same amount set aside by the government to pay informers. But separatist violence remained a minor issue at the provincial level until October 1970, when the FLQ's kidnappings of Cross and Laporte provoked a national crisis.

THE OCTOBER CRISIS AND THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

After the kidnapping of Cross on 5 October and of Laporte a few days later, the federal government responded by invoking the War Measures Act (WMA), arresting several hundred people and mobilizing troops and police in province-wide searches for the missing men. Negotiations with the FLQ fell through and, on 17 October, Laporte was murdered. However, in early December the police discovered the hideout of the FLQ cell which was holding Cross, and he was released safely in return for his kidnappers' safe conduct to Cuba. In this section the parliamentary debate over these events will be analyzed in terms of its themes, the positions that were taken and the cleavages that it revealed. The analysis is based upon 301 speeches during the 6 October to 1 December period.[20]

Certain themes were raised repeatedly. There were expressions of concern over the threat posed by the FLQ. In announcing the proclamation of the War Measures Act Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau referred to the "seriousness of the present situation . . . the fate of the two kidnapped hostages weighs very heavily on my mind as it does on all of us."[21] A Liberal member saw the dangers as obvious: "Let us recall all the events. First there were the kidnappings, then the threats to life and private property . . . there have been bombings, thefts of dynamite and acts of violence of every kind."[22] David Lewis of the New Democratic Party, alluded to "the very serious and critical situation."[23]

One frequent criticism was that the government had ignored previous warnings about the dangers posed by the FLQ and other radicals. Former Prime Minister Diefenbaker made a lengthy speech detailing several such instances.

What, he inquired, was the Secretary of State's attitude now "after two occasions on which he stood up in this House and said there was nothing in the argument of the leader of the Creditistes, that in the province of Quebec, there were several people in Radio Canada who were members of the FLQ. Why were proceedings not taken against the wrongdoers in the Company of Young Canadians?"[24] However, by end of October several MPs had begun to express doubts about the extent and nature of the threat, and had called for a commission of inquiry into the whole affair.

There was strong condemnation of the FLQ and their actions from all sides. Speaking for the NDP, its leader Tommy Douglas said that they were "appalled and disgusted by the abduction of two innocent men."[25] A Liberal called them "traitors and bandits," while a Conservative denounced the "forces of evil at work in Quebec . . . the incipient venom of the FLQ."[26] Nobody defended or justified the violence, but there were occasional attempts to explain it by reference to the social conditions in Quebec. This view was expressed almost exclusively by members of the NDP. Douglas argued,

> We must go back to the root cause. A revolutionary movement has to have a base. Where is the base of the FLQ? The base of the FLQ lies in the disadvantaged and unfortunate people in the province of Quebec. I am suggesting to the government that no revolutionary movement can become a menace unless it has the support of the disadvantaged and alienated groups.[27]

This interpretation was vigorously rejected by other speakers. Réal Caouette (leader of the Creditistes) denied "that those responsible for the abductions or the current situation in Quebec are destitute people . . .. It is quite untrue that the FLQ is made up of disadvantaged, poor people who live in slums." Instead he blamed the unrest on revolutionary agitators. "Those students have been roused by others, by people who told them: 'Let us get together to upset the established order.'"[28] This was an extremely popular position, and there was a general consensus as to who these subversive forces were. They included foreign revolutionaries, the Company of Young Canadians and radicals in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. A Francophone Conservative argued that "Our immigration regulations have not been strict enough. We have admitted from Algeria people who have come here to preach revolution. We have admitted Cubans who have come to set up Maoist groups in Montreal, Quebec and Trois-Rivieres."[29]

There were predictable partisan disagreements over how to respond to the crisis. The NDP and Progressive Conservatives were concerned about the threat to civil liberties from the WMA. Lewis of the NDP called the response of the federal government "excessive, hysterical and unacceptable."[30] Eldon Woolliams, a Conservative from Alberta, objected to the fact that all the provinces were covered by the WMA. "What is going on in Alberta tonight that they need this kind of law? What is going on in British Columbia that they need this kind of law? Indeed what is going on in Manitoba or in Ontario or the Maritimes?"[31] Supporters of the WMA denied that ordinary citizens would be affected by the measures. "Only the quarter

of one percent of the Quebec population who live outside the law and pursue the aims and objectives of the FLQ would be disturbed by the police," said Guilbeault, a Quebec Liberal. LaSalle, a Conservative, agreed. "I do not believe that anybody in my parish is or has been annoyed by police . . .. The job of the police is not to bother innocent people."[32]

It is interesting to note what themes were *not* raised or are mentioned only rarely. There were, for example, very few complaints about the behavior of the soldiers or police, or claims that they used excessive force or otherwise abused the population.[33] Several speakers were careful to distinguish between separatism as a political philosophy and the activities of the FLQ, and to dissociate the PQ from the FLQ.

The themes of the 301 speeches are shown in Table 2. (Since most speeches emphasized several themes, the total sums to more than 100 percent) When Francophone MPs are compared to the rest, no obvious polarization along ethnic lines can be seen. The Francophones seemed to be slightly more concerned about the FLQ threat, or at least were less likely to voice skepticism about it. They were more likely to reject the argument that violence is caused by unemployment, and more likely to blame the media for spreading revolutionary and separatist ideas. A greater proportion expressed support for the WMA, and far fewer expressed concerns about the effect of the WMA on civil liberties. The issue of federal-provincial relations was brought up more often by Quebec MPs than by those from other provinces. In particular, the question of whether Quebec or the Federal Government would pay the costs of deploying the military was raised repeatedly. There was, certainly, no sign of a unified Francophone bloc ranged against the Anglophones. The slight differences between the two groups appear to reflect the partisan composition of each bloc (i.e. a greater proportion of Francophones were Liberals). Party affiliation was more significant than ethnicity, and Francophone Liberals and Francophone Conservatives often criticized one another. The two votes on the WMA and the Public Order Act which succeeded it also revealed the lack of ethnic polarization. A motion approving the use of the WMA was passed 190 to 16 (with all the 16 being non-Francophone New Democrats). The Public Order Act was passed 174 to 31, with 46 French-Canadians voting for, and 10 against.

THE PRESS AND THE OCTOBER CRISIS

The press played several roles throughout the period: they reported the actions of the FLQ and the government, they provided a platform for opinions to be expressed, and they themselves editorialized on the issues. The press both reflected and shaped public opinion. In their editorials the newspapers, for the most part, condemned the FLQ and supported tough policies against them, while rejecting negotiations and concessions.[34] For example, the *Toronto Star* called for "a massive police drive by both federal and provincial authorities to smash this pestilent organization once and for all. And if special criminal legislation is needed to secure

this result, Parliament should give it early consideration at the present session."[35] The *Winnipeg Free Press* asserted that "the FLQ was guilty of treason — and that death remained the penalty for treason."[36] The media generally supported the War Measures Act, though they often expressed concerns about civil liberties. This resulted in a certain ambivalent tone in many editorials.

To the *Winnipeg Free Press* it was a "desperate cure, an unhappy choice between anarchy and a period of repressive government."[37] The *Globe and Mail* made a similar argument. "Only if we can believe that the Government has evidence that the FLQ is strong enough and sufficiently armed to escalate the violence that it has spawned for seven years now, only then can the Government's assumption of incredible powers be tolerated."[38] The *Toronto Star* "would have much preferred to see the Trudeau Government justify this drastic step to Parliament before taking it and to claim only those powers under the act which are absolutely necessary to deal with the Quebec situation. The civil liberties of Canadians are not to be lightly suspended."[39] The *Sudbury Star* was even more skeptical. "Mr. Trudeau must convince us all that his action was neither irresponsible nor ill-considered; that it was, in fact, the only course he could take. Mr. Trudeau must tell us, too, why the Canadian Government failed to recognize armed revolution in its early stage and thereby to take adequate steps against it."[40]

After the murder of Laporte, however, doubts disappeared and positions hardened. The *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* wrote that "the loud protestations of misguided people, in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, about the loss of 'democratic rights' . . . have a mocking ring in the aftermath of Mr. Laporte's murder."[41] The *Globe and Mail* warned that "those who have taken to the streets and the public squares with their bullhorns to attack the courageous stand of the Canadian Government in this grave hour should be plainly informed that the vast majority of our people are no longer in a mood to indulge in long and academic arguments about possible threats to our civil liberties."[42] The *Toronto Telegram* urged all MPs to vote for the War Measures Act.[43]

If the editorial positions taken are cross-tabulated against the language and region of the newspaper, the consensus appears less impressive. Although the English-language newspapers, both inside and outside Quebec, were uniformly hostile to the FLQ and generally supported the government and its hardline policies, the French language press were more divided.

La Presse took a consistently hardline stand. On 6 October it argued that "neither the municipal government, the provincial government, nor the federal government should at any time give in to this blackmail . . . there is something even more disgusting than blackmail and that is to give into blackmail."[44] A later editorial gloomily predicted that "When the terrorists have been locked up, they will be tried according to the laws that govern us . . .. They will begin to have the air of victims and will look like heroes. In Cuba these men would be killed on sight the instant they were identified."[45]

Le Devoir initially favored negotiations with the FLQ, but after the murder of Laporte, which it condemned with "horror and repulsion," it shifted its position and accepted that exceptional measures were necessary. However, it urged that they be applied "with maximum discretion since the exclusive use of protective devices and manhunts will not solve much, however, over a long-term period."[46] Claude Ryan, the editor of *Le Devoir*, was concerned that Quebec's autonomy had been compromised during the crisis and that premier Bourassa had allowed the federal government to dominate. He returned to this topic repeatedly. Even after the killing of Laporte he argued that "our immediate aim is not to save the prestige or authority of this person or that, but to save democracy in Quebec."[47] Eventually, this consideration led Ryan to urge Bourassa to form a provisional government composed of all Quebec parties and political personalities. (Although various individuals were contacted, nothing came of this attempt.)[48]

The leftist and pro-Separatist *Quebec-Presse* thought the FLQ's analysis of Quebec society was ,

> well-founded and correct . . .. There were many signs of the innate corruption within our political and economic system . . .. In answer to this violence the FLQ responds with violence. A type of violence aimed at getting rid of the oppressors to replace them with a political and economic system based on the needs of the people of Quebec and controlled by them.[49]

Not only did *Quebec-Presse* offer a justification of the FLQ, but even after Laporte's death, they refused to condemn the action. "It is too easy to say that Pierre Laporte was killed by a handful of terrorists. But who put the gun into their hands? . . . I refuse to pass judgment."[50] The editors called for passive resistance against the War Measures Act, which they saw as protecting only the ruling class. "For proof one only has to see where the military have been posted in the Montreal area. There are very few in the Francophone eastern section and there are very many in Westmount. It is the owner minority which must be protected. The army is not in Quebec to protect the population. It is in Quebec to protect the owners."[51]

The findings of this sample of editorials are consistent with Arthur Siegel's more systematic analysis. Siegel found that in their coverage of the crisis, the French-language papers emphasized the theme of negotiation, while the English-language papers emphasized the manhunt, and that the Francophone press was more concerned with the relationship between the Quebec and federal governments. As one might expect, the Francophone focus was on the consequences for Quebec, while the Anglophone papers had a wider Canadian perspective.[52] Siegel concludes that in their editorials,

> English newspapers were more hostile to terrorism generally and the FLQ specifically, provided far stronger support for both the Ottawa and Quebec governments, enthusiastically endorsed the decision to invoke the War Measures Act and emphasized consistently their support and concern for Canadian unity.

> French editorialists provided extremely strong support for negotiations, had a comparatively low support level for Canadian unity, generally did not relate separatism to terrorism . . .. Social and economic injustices, almost always associated with French Canadians in the editorials, were a frequently raised issue and a matter of considerable concern. French papers were far more concerned about what was happening to civil rights in Canada.[53]

However, the differences between the two groups was usually one of degree. For example, 95 percent of the English editorials were "strongly opposed" to the FLQ and 5 percent were "opposed," while the comparable figures for the French editorials were 67 percent and 23 percent. Siegel's data also show that while the English papers overwhelmingly supported the WMA (93 percent were strongly favorable or favorable), the French papers were more divided with 69 percent in favor and 23 percent opposed.

PUBLIC OPINION AND ORGANIZED GROUPS DURING THE CRISIS

During the debates in the House of Commons, several speakers referred to public revulsion against the kidnappers and support for the WMA.[54] The polls confirm this assessment. An October survey found that 78 percent of Montrealers "totally disapproved" of the kidnappings, and a majority thought the maintenance of law and order more important than saving two lives.[55] The polls on attitudes to the WMA suggest a rather strange fluctuation, but reveal that a clear majority supported the act throughout the period.[56] Initially, French respondents were noticeably less in favor, but by December the level of support in both groups was very similar.

Although the supporters of the FLQ constituted only a small minority, they were highly visible. During the October Crisis there were mass rallies in favor of the FLQ as well as teach-ins and student strikes.[57] At the Université de Montreal, social science students voted to strike, while at the Université de Quebec students occupied the administrative offices and promised to keep the campus closed "until the victory of the FLQ." At several junior colleges teach-ins took place to study the FLQ manifesto.[58] The activists who demonstrated in favor of the FLQ and against the WMA seem to have been primarily students and intellectuals. Although some radical trade unionists were also involved, few ordinary, blue-collar workers participated in the protests.[59] Thus, those taking part in FLQ protest marches included the president of l'Alliance des professeurs de Montreal, the president of le Syndicat de fonctionnaires provinciaux, an ex-president of la Corporation des enseignants du Quebec, and the president of le Syndicat de la construction de Montreal. Pelletier mockingly remarked that "one of the chief strategic successes of the FLQ is to have succeeded in ranging against the Government almost all the Quebec intellectuals and even a portion of the Anglophone intellectuals of Canada."[60]

The only major organization significantly involved in the issue was the Confederation of National Trade Unions. With two other unions they condemned

the WMA as a "regime of force imposed by the Trudeau government."[61] Other organizations that expressed support for the FLQ, or opposition to the WMA, included the Quebec Federation of Labor, the Quebec Teachers Union, the Jeunesse Ouvriere Chretienne, the Quebec Civil Liberties Union, and the Quebec New Democrats. Even the Pastoral Council of the Archdiocese of Quebec issued a statement sympathizing with the goals of the FLQ, and condemning the WMA.[62]

In assessing the effect of the October Crisis on public attitudes we can also consider election results. On 25 October municipal elections were held in Montreal and Front d'Action Politique (FRAP), a coalition of students, intellectuals and trade unions, was soundly beaten by Mayor Jean Drapeau's Civic Party, which obtained 92 percent of the vote.[63] The election was seen as a referendum on the FLQ and the WMA. Drapeau had called for federal intervention to stop an "apprehended insurrection," while FRAP had been ambivalent — to say the least — about the FLQ. Paul Cliche, the leader of FRAP, declared at a mass rally that FRAP's "main objective is the accession of the workers of Quebec to political and economic power and in this sense, it agrees with the FLQ."[64] They did not endorse but did not condemn FLQ violence, and Jean Marchand, a federal cabinet minister, accused them of being a "front" for the FLQ.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN QUEBEC AND NORTHERN IRELAND

In the late 1960s while the FLQ was active, so was the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Indeed in one of their communiques, the FLQ expressed solidarity with "the revolutionary Catholics of Northern Ireland." Several writers have pointed to the similarities between the two countries,[65] yet FLQ violence never polarized Canada in the way that IRA violence polarized Northern Ireland. In Ulster, Protestants and Catholics have very different attitudes toward antiterrorist policies. For example, 52 percent of Protestants supported internment as compared to only 5 percent of Catholics (since the vast majority of those interned were Catholic republican activists). Divisions within the general public are mirrored by partisan disagreement among politicians, with Nationalists almost invariably favoring softline and Unionists hardline policies. Internment itself produced bitter division with the SDLP calling for civil disobedience and refusing to participate in constitutional discussions with the British government until the policy was ended. Unionists, for the most part, supported internment as an effective means of dealing with the IRA. The SDLP favored negotiations with the IRA, the Unionist parties were opposed. The SDLP wanted concessions made to the hunger strikers, the Unionists opposed any concessions. The Unionists favored capital punishment for terrorists, the SDLP was opposed.[66]

There are three interrelated factors which explain the ability of Canada to avoid this polarization: the political position of French-Canadians, the ideology and campaign of the FLQ, and the impact of the WMA on the Quebec population. Radicals in Northern Ireland and Quebec used exactly the same metaphor to describe ethnic relations. Pierre Vallieres called the French "Negres blancs,"[67]

while to Liam de Paor "Northern Irish Catholics are blacks who happen to have a white skin."[68] If interpreted in an economic sense the comparison is somewhat exaggerated but plausible. One frequently cited measure of racial disadvantage in the United States is that a black household in 1960 received only 60 percent of the income received by a white household. In Northern Ireland the comparable Catholic-Protestant statistic was 85 percent while in Quebec the French disadvantage was somewhat greater, with Francophone workers earning only 80 percent of the wage paid to Anglophone workers.[69] In terms of occupational differences, Quebec is also more like the United States than is Northern Ireland, as table 5 shows. These facts show that one cannot explain the different levels of violence and political polarization in Quebec and Northern Ireland as a result of the differences in their class structure. If economic disadvantage explains the severity of the Northern Irish conflict, then presumably the level of violence in Quebec should have been even greater. Thus I would dismiss Aunger's claim that in Northern Ireland "class conflict is synonymous with religious conflict because . . . it is the Protestants who are advantaged and the Catholics disadvantaged."[70]

Despite the economic parallels between French-Canadians and Northern Irish Catholics, there were profound differences in their *political* situation. Unlike Ulster Catholics who were excluded from political power at both the national and the provincial level, French-Canadians played a significant role at the federal level, and dominated Quebec politics. They were *part* of the system, not alienated from it. Thus in October 1970, not only the prime minister but one quarter of the federal cabinet were Francophones.[71] Furthermore, the link between politics and ethnicity in Canada at the elite level was very different from that in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland all Catholic politicians are nationalists and all nationalist politicians are Catholics. The result is that political debate in Northern Ireland is inevitably sectarian in its nature, with Catholics aligned against Protestants. However, in Canada, Francophone MPs could be found in the Liberal party, in the Progressive Conservative party and in the Ralliement Creditiste, while in Quebec, they dominated the Liberals, the Union National and the Parti Quebecois. In Canada, therefore, political debate is as likely to pit Anglophones against other Anglophones, and Francophones against Francophones, rather than along ethnic lines.

These political differences are largely a result of demography. Since they constitute almost a third of the Canadian electorate, French-Canadians cannot be ignored by federal politicians, and as the majority in Quebec they effectively control provincial politics. The electoral option for French-Canadians — even if they seek an independent Quebec — makes more sense than armed struggle. Why support the FLQ when you can support the PQ?[72] For Northern Irish Catholics the electoral possibilities are less appealing. They elected only three Westminster MPs so their influence in UK politics was trivial. Within Northern Ireland, they were a minority condemned to political impotence by sectarian bloc voting. McCann describes how nationalists thought Irish unity might be achieved. "Some said that Catholics

because of their higher birth-rate would one day outnumber Protestants in the six counties . . . and then there were always those who said that sooner or later we were going to have to fight for it."[73]

The political role played by French-Canadians meant that the ideology of the FLQ was very different from that of the IRA despite some superficial similarities. The IRA is a classic example of a nationalist group, and its goal is a thirty–two county Irish Republic. Although some of its leaders espouse a vaguely socialist rhetoric, this is irrelevant to its military strategy and popular support. Rhetorically and in practice its targets are defined in ethnic/national terms: the British and the Protestants. The FLQ is more difficult to classify, because its targets and ideology changed significantly from 1963 to 1970. In the beginning, they attacked targets symbolizing English domination, their first manifesto was addressed to "patriots" and the enemy was "Anglo-Saxon colonialism." By 1966, under the influence of Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon, the FLQ ideology became increasingly Marxist and their strategy shifted to "the defense of the workers."[74] During the October Crisis, the FLQ's communiques emphasized the class character of their enemies. Their manifesto, broadcast over Radio-Canada, is a good example.

> The Front de liberation du Quebec is a group of Quebec workers who have decided to use every means to make sure that the people of Quebec take control of their destiny. The Front de liberation du Quebec wants the total independence of all Québécois, united in a free society, purged forever of the clique of voracious sharks, the patronizing big bosses and their henchmen who have made Quebec their hunting preserve for cheap labour and unscrupulous exploitation. The Front de liberation du Quebec is not a movement of aggression, but is a response to the aggression organized by high finance and the puppet governments in Ottawa and Quebec.[75]

However, the political role played by French-Canadians, as "henchmen" of the bosses in the "puppet governments," meant that for the FLQ they were the enemy as much as the Anglo-Saxon capitalists. Indeed, within Quebec separatist writings, there is an emphasis on "le roi negre" which is virtually absent from Irish republicanism.[76] Yet, to attack fellow ethnics is very dangerous for nationalist terrorists since such attacks undercut the ethnic solidarity upon which these groups depend for their support. The IRA rarely kills Catholics and when it does, goes to great lengths to justify the action. The FLQ not only deliberately murdered Laporte, but most victims of FLQ bombings were working class French-Canadians.[77] Nationalist insurgents who harm their own people can hardly expect to receive much support. Consequently, the result of the FLQ campaign was a polarization not between French and English, but *within* the French community. The alignments resemble those found during outbreaks of revolutionary terrorism. Revolutionary terrorists typically recruit and draw their support from young, students and intellectuals, as did the FLQ.

Jerrold Post suggests that the psychological dynamics of nationalist and revolutionary groups are completely different.[78] For the youth of Belfast becoming a terrorist is an act of loyalty to anti-regime parents; for the youth of Germany or Italy it is an act of dissent against parents loyal to the regime. Thus the high degree of support for the IRA among the Catholic community is rooted in a tradition of militant nationalism, which is transmitted through family, church and school. Most Irish nationalists are nationalists for the same reason that they are Roman Catholics — because they were taught to be so. In McCann's words, "We came very early to our politics. One learned quite literally at one's mother's knee that Christ died for the human race, and Patrick Pearse for the Irish section of it." He goes on to describe how all the institutions of the Catholic community in Derry inculcated and reinforced these nationalist beliefs. Devlin describes her "militantly republican school," its vice-principal Mother Benignus (to whom "everything English was bad. She hated the English"), and how "their combined effect . . . turned me into a convinced republican."[79]

In Quebec, such a tradition was absent, and the FLQ activists were rebelling against their parents' values. Psychologist Gustave Morf describes their ideals as involving "the rejection of the father, and the values he represents; impatience with the constitutional process and accepted morality; a simplistic view of world politics; and the substitution of a Maoist new religion for a Catholic upbringing."[80]

The WMA did not have the alienating and polarizing effects that British counter-insurgency policy had in Northern Ireland, despite the similarities between them. In both cases, there were troops deployed, house searches and mass arrests. Such measures not only disrupt public life, but often result in abuses by the security forces. The Quebec Provincial Police were accused of using mock executions to make prisoners confess, beatings and other abuses. In both Northern Ireland and Quebec most of those arrested appear to have been innocent in that they were later released without charge.[81]

However, unlike Northern Ireland where no Catholic politician supported the emergency measures, French-Canadian politicians from Quebec and most of the French language press were as hardline as their Anglophone counterparts. Hence the WMA was legitimized for most Quebeckers by their political leaders. Even more important was the character of the security forces. In Northern Ireland both the British Army and the RUC are composed of outsiders. Catholics are arrested by Protestant policemen, their houses searched by English soldiers. Given the hostilities between these groups, there are more likely to be abuses by the security forces, and their actions are likely to produce hostile confrontations. In Quebec, since those engaged in security operations were French-Canadians, this factor did not provoke such bitter antagonism among those affected by the WMA.[82] Almost all arrests were carried out by the Quebec Provincial Police (QPP) and the Montreal Municipal Police. Federal troops were deployed around government buildings and to guard government officials, but were not used to search houses or make arrests.

Surveys show that the Quebec population had a positive image of the police, and were satisfied with the way they carried out their duties.[83]

CONCLUSIONS

This article has attempted to do two things: first, to show that separatist violence in Canada did not lead to polarization between the Francophone and Anglophone communities and politicians; second, by comparing Canada to Northern Ireland, to identify the factors that produced this benign outcome. Two general points concerning communal conflict — one substantive, the other methodological — can be suggested on the basis of these findings.

The dominant paradigm in analyzing communal conflicts, which might be called the civil rights or grievance model, is derived from the race-relations dispute in the United States. This view assumes that most communal conflicts are rooted in discrimination which results in the minority being economically deprived, or denied full social equality. The Quebec case certainly does not fit this model, probably because the model is inappropriate? Throughout the contemporary world the most violent and enduring conflicts between communal groups involve nationalist demands for *political* changes, not economic amelioration. If multi-ethnic states can devise a political framework to accommodate minority identities, they will avoid violent conflicts, regardless of economic disparities between groups. Federalism appears to be an effective strategy of accommodation, and is associated with low levels of violence in several societies, including Switzerland, Belgium and Canada. There may also be a methodological rationale for studying such societies: to see if any other characteristics can be identified that explain their ability to resolve communal conflicts peacefully. Indeed, Quebec may be significant for the study of violence primarily because of what did not happen.

Table 1

Major FLQ Incidents of Separatist Violence 1963-70

April 1963	b. Wilfrid O'Neill killed
May 1963	b. Sergeant Major wounded
August 1964	b. robbery—owner of gun store and employee killed
October 1964	demonstrations against Queen's visit (police brutality)
May 1965	violent demonstrations on Victoria Day (150 arrests)
May 1966	b. Therese Morin killed—three wounded
May 1966	b. House of Commons (man who set bomb killed)
July 1966	b. Jean Corbo (FLQ) killed
June 1968	St. Jean Baptiste Day Riot (250 injured, 292 arrests)
November 1968	St. Leonard demonstration, vandalism
January 1969	b. 2 wounded
February 1969	b. 1 wounded b. 27 wounded (Stock Exchange) b. 4 wounded
March 1969	Operation McGill Francais (18 injured)
June 1969	St. Jean Baptiste Day Riot
June 1970	b. Jeanne D' Arc Saint-Germain killed —2 wounded
October 1970	kidnapping of James Cross and Pierre Laporte Laporte murdered

Table 2

Opinions Expressed in House of Commons Speeches

	All MPs	French MPs
Concern over threat from FLQ	41	15
Government slow to act in the past	9	1
Doubts about threat from FLQ/ WMA unnecessary	12	1
Condemn violence by FLQ	21	3
Violence caused by unemployment, etc.	3	-
Violence not a result of unemployment	8	4
Blame foreign revolutionaries, Algeria, Cuba	23	9
Blame CBC/Media	20	4
Blame Company of Young Canadians	8	5
Support WMA/hardline (e.g. capital punishment)	38	23
Offer rewards	68	-
Civil liberties concerns, abuses	92	9
Need for reforms	11	6
Use security forces/support s.f.	7	4
Negotiate with FLQ	4	1
Don't negotiate with FLQ	3	1
Provincial-Federal relations	37	24
Anti-separatism	14	9
FLQ not same as PQ	7	2
FRAP and Montreal elections	16	5
Police efficiency, coordination	16	1
Favor New Public Order Bill	5	2
Compensation for wrongful arrests	3	2
Other	21	4
(Total number of speeches)	**(301)**	**(88)**

Table 3

Editorial Positions Taken by Newspapers

	English	French
Condemn FLQ violence/ FLQ has no support	7	10
No negotiations/get tough/ pro WMA	24	10
Anti-WMA/counter productive/ civil liberties concerns	10	4
Pro-negotiations/concessions	1	3
Justification of FLQ	-	4
Federalism/Quebec autonomy	1	3
Other	2	-

Table 4

Attitudes to War Measures Act

	19 Oct 1970[1]	15 Nov 1970[2]	27 Nov 1970[3]	14 Dec 1970[4]
Support	60	85	73	87
Oppose	12	10	16	6
Don't Know	28	5	11	7
English Only				
Support	73	-	87	89
Oppose	8	-	-	5
French Only				
Support	51	-	70	86
Oppose	15	-	-	9

Sources: (1) Toronto Star
(2) Omnifacts
(3) CROP
(4) Gallup Canada

Table 5

Male Occupational Distributions by Ethnicity in Three Societies

	Northern Ireland (1971)		Quebec (1961)		USA (1960)	
	Prot	**Catholic**	**English**	**French**	**White**	**Black**
Prof/Managerial	16	9	15	6	25	7
Lower non manual	17	12	13	7	16	7
Skilled manual	27	23	-	-	23	12
Semi-skilled manual	24	25	-	-	22	27
Unskilled manual	16	32	4	12	15	47

Endnotes

1. It is often a moot point as to what the "real" cleavage is in a particular society. Thus, the "religious" conflict in Northern Ireland is also between "native Irish" and "British settlers." In nineteenth-century Canada, the division between French Catholics and British Protestants often emphasized religion as much as language.
2. See Christopher Hewitt, *The Effectiveness of Anti-Terrorist Policies* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), pp. 28-30.
3. The terms French and English are used throughout the article as equivalent to Francophone and Anglophone.
4. The number of pages in the House of Commons Debates serves as one indicator. From 1963 through September 1970, there are 22 pages with references to the topic, while during the crisis of 6 October to 1 December there are 592 pages. Thus 96 percent of the political attention paid to the issue took place in less than two months. In the *Canadian Annual Review*, 78 percent of the reported political speeches that dealt with public order during 1963-70, were in 1970. Only a handful of political speeches on the topic before 1970 are cited in Louis Fournier, *F.L.Q. Anatomy of an Underground Movement* (Toronto: NC Press, 1984).
5. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 17, 22 May 1963.
6. Ibid., 31 August 1964.
7. Ibid., 18 May 1966.
8. Ibid., 24 June 1970.
9. Ibid.
10. Stephen Paproski, Progressive Conservative from an Alberta riding, made three speeches — the most participation by any MP, if we exclude ministerial responses.
11. Behind the scenes, federal officials displayed more concern. In September 1964, Prime Minister Lester Pearson ordered security checks on those active in the separatist movement, and when the Royal Commission on National Security was set up in 1966 much of its attention focused on the danger from militant separatists. See Fournier, *F.L.Q.* pp. 73 and 107.
12. See Fournier, *F.L.Q.*, p. 39.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 150.

15. Ibid., p. 151.
16. When Marcel Chaput, a separatist leader, warned that the Queen would be in danger if she visited Quebec, there was widespread anger and alarm throughout English Canada. *Canadian Annual Review*, (1964), pp. 46-47. Trudeau's courageous behavior, when separatist demonstrators attacked the reviewing stand during the 1968 St. Jean Baptiste Day parade in Montreal received extensive coverage. One account concludes that "the affair gave the Liberal campaign a considerable boost. On their way to the ballot booths the following day, the Canadian voters read headlines such as "Trudeau Defies Separatists," and "Trudeau Keeps His Cool," *Canadian Annual Review*, (1968), p. 52.
17. Fournier, *F.L.Q.*, p. 36.
18. An article in *Le Devoir*, 5 May 1963, offered a psychoanalytic interpretation of the terrorists as unable to resolve their infantile and adolescent conflicts with authority.
19. The *Canadian Periodical Index* lists only eleven articles under the headings violence, terrorism or FLQ, of which eight were in French-language publications.
20. The end date chosen is that of the vote on the Public Order Bill, after which the issue received little attention.
21. *Debates of the House of Commons*, 16 October 1970.
22. Ibid., 17 October 1970.
23. Ibid., 16 October 1970.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 17 October 1970.
27. Ibid., 16 October 1970.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., (Gilbeault); 17 October (LaSalle).
33. Stanfield called for a commission to review the working of the WMA for possible abuses (4 November), and again (on 25 November) proposed that there be an inquiry into allegations of brutality by the Quebec Provincial Police.
34. This section and Table 3 are based on material in the *Canadian Annual Review*, (1970); Gérard Pelletier, *The October Crisis* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971); and my own sampling of Canadian Newspapers in the Library of Congress microfilm archives. A total of 66 editorials were examined.
35. *Toronto Star*, 6 October 1970.
36. *Winnipeg Free Press*, 8 October 1970.
37. Ibid., 17 October 1970.
38. *Globe and Mail*, 17 October 1970.
39. *Toronto Star*, 17 October 1970.
40. *Sudbury Star*, 17 October 1970.
41. *Chronicle-Herald*, 19 October 1970.
42. *Globe and Mail*, 19 October 1970
44. *La Presse*, 6 October 1970.
45. Ibid., 14 October 1970.
46. *Le Devoir*, 19 October 1970.

47. Ibid.
48. *Le Devoir's* position was supported by 55 percent of French but only 25 percent of the English letters written to the editor. For an account of the affair see Claude Ryan, *Le Devoir et la crise d'Octobre' 70*, (Ottawa: Les Editions Lemeac, 1971).
49. *Québec-Presse*, 11 October 1970.
50. Ibid., 25 October 1970.
51. Ibid., 18 October 1970.
52. Arthur Siegel, *Politics and the Media in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1983), pp. 210-18.
53. Ibid., p. 217.
54. Trudeau had "received 2500 telegrams and 2600 letters, 97 percent of them supporting the government's action." *Debates of the House of Commons*, 23 October, p. 511.
55. The poll, taken shortly before the kidnapping of Laporte, asked respondents how they regarded each kidnapping separately, but the only difference was that 2 percent "totally approved" of the kidnapping of Laporte and 1 percent that of Cross. However, another 3 percent "moderately approved," and 5 percent "approved as much as they disapproved." It should be noted that 39 percent refused to be interviewed. See *Toronto Star,* 10 October 1970.
56. These variations may be due to sampling differences, since the first survey was taken in Montreal, the second in Montreal, Quebec City and Hull, while the third drew from the whole province. However, according to the report in *La Presse*, 30 November 1970, there were no regional differences in support by the time of the third survey.
57. A rally addressed by Vallieres on 15 October drew 3000 protestors, and was one of the grounds for the proclamation of the WMA. In fact, federal government concern about the visible drift of public sentiment toward the FLQ was apparent even before that rally. See, for example, Minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Security and Intelligence, 14 October 1970 (morning session).
58. Fournier, *F.L.Q.*, pp. 241-42.
59. The FLQ's lack of a base in the labor movement had been acknowledged by the FLQ themselves more than a year earlier. In *La Victoire*, 24 June 1969, they claimed that "The FLQ has shown the only valid road. Its action permitted the student body to become aware of its strength and, above all, of its role as men of tomorrow. The students are no longer alone in the struggle: a small but surely growing group of workers has joined with them."
60. Pelletier, *October Crisis*, p. 155.
61. *Canadian Annual Review*, (1970), p. 98.
62. Dan Daniels, ed., *Quebec, Canada and the October Crisis* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1973), pp. 99-102.
63. In a pre-election survey by the *Montreal Star*, 31 percent favored FRAP. Several members of FRAP, including two candidates, Jean Roy and Henri Bellemarre, were arrested under the WMA. Coincidentally perhaps, these two received the highest vote of any FRAP candidates. See Daniels, *Quebec, Canada and the October Crisis*, pp. 76–86.
64. Fournier, *F.L.Q.*, p. 236.
65. E. A. Aunger, *In Search of Political Stability* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981). K. O'Sullivan-See, *First World Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
66. For details of political polarization in Northern Ireland see Christopher Hewitt, *Consequences of Political Violence* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1993).
67. Pierre Vallieres, *White Niggers of America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).
68. L. DePaor, *Divided Ulster* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).
69. R. Rose, *Governing Without Consensus: An Irish Perspective* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971). Peter Li, *Ethnic Inequality in a Class Society* (Toronto: Will and Thomason, 1988).
70. Aunger, *In Search of Political Stability*, p. 32.

71. The share of Francophones in federal ministries reached a low of 15 percent during the Diefenbaker years (1957-63), increased to 39 percent under Pearson (1963-68) and averaged 27 percent under Trudeau.

72. The PQ won the provincial elections of 1976 but one could argue that the results of the 1970 election in which they won only seven seats despite getting 24 percent of the vote led some nationalists to become disillusioned with the electoral option.

73. E. McCann, *War and an Irish Town* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 3.

74. Crelinsten gives an excellent account of the lack of central leadership and historical continuity among the various FLQ cells. The first FLQ cell was set up by Georges Schoeters, a Belgian immigrant with a right-wing monarchist background! Ronald Crelinsten, "The Internal Dynamics of the FLQ during the October Crisis," in David C. Rapaport, ed., *Inside Terrorist Organizations* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), pp. 59-89.

75. Fournier, *F.L.Q.*, pp. 223-27.

76. The concept of "le roi negre" derives from the French colonial practice of ruling through native leaders rather than directly. Since there were virtually no Catholics in the Northern Irish government no comparable term exists.

77. The FLQ lost support when they killed Wilfrid O'Neill, and attempted in vain to defend their action by arguing that he was not really French-Canadian — though he was a French speaker and son of a French mother. Gustave Morf, *Terror in Quebec* (Toronto: Clark, Irwin, 1970), pp. 6-7.

78. Jerrold Post, "Inside the Mind of the Terrorist," *Washington Post*, 28 September 1988.

79. B. Devlin, *The Price of My Soul* (London: Pan, 1969).

80. Morf, *Terror in Quebec*, p. 118.

81. Crelinsten notes that "the police rounded up anyone who had ever shown the slightest propensity to participate actively in anything nationalist, leftist, radical, labour oriented or vaguely progressive. As such, they often reached back to those who had not been active in radical politics for some four or five years." Crelinsten, "Internal Dynamics," p. 64. A total of 453 people were arrested of whom only 15 were convicted. Even Pelletier admits that "people were arrested when the evidence against them was clearly insufficient, that suspects were manhandled during interrogation, that searches were conducted blindly, and that there were other incidents of the sort." Pelletier, *October Crisis*, p. 163. See also, Daniels, *Quebec, Canada and the October Crisis*, pp. 94-97.

82. The RCMP were considered an alien force, and there was a poor relationship between them and the QPP. However, they numbered fewer than 300, and most were French speakers. (See 30 October statement by Justice Minister Turner in the House of Commons).

83. For example, only 7.7 percent thought the police had too much power, and 89 percent that police should have the right to ask for IDs on the street. Centre International de Criminologie Comparée, *Les Attitudes du Public Canadien envers la Politique Criminelle* (Montreal: Université de Montreal, 1978).